

Currently it is proposed that Cluny Church and Cluny Hall with the designation of Category B should be closed. This is a complete reversal from the initial draft proposal which designated both buildings as Category A.

We the members and office bearers of Cluny Church wish to submit the following in response to this re-designation on behalf of the congregation and community.

The General Assembly of October 2020 endorsed the Five Marks of Mission, agreeing that for the Church to be fit for purpose in the 21st Century, these five marks must be evidenced at local, regional and national levels. Originally developed by the Anglican Communion in the 1980s as a way to define Christian mission.

Cluny Church meets these 5 Marks of Mission as follows:

1. To proclaim the good news of the kingdom
 - Cluny church has held weekly Sunday services throughout its history, except for joint summer services with our neighbouring linked church in July and August in more recent years.
 - Cluny Church introduced a Newsletter over 30 years ago that is circulated to every home in the parish through volunteers. Currently we print about 450 copies. The Newsletter includes a letter from the manse, reports on what is happening in the church and in the community, a list of baptisms, marriages and deaths as well as a note of encouragement for readers to submit articles as well as recording or thanks for those who put flowers in the church or help in any specific way.
 - A church calendar is also produced on a twice yearly basis and included within the newsletter.
 - Email addresses for members are gathered to enable easier and cheaper communication but this still had a long way to go to be comprehensive.
 - We have for some time been using a projector and video equipment that enables hymns and videos to be shown on screen to encourage “singing out” within the congregation.
 - I.T. has been used to inform and guide visitors to the church, eg over the Christmas period where a nativity stable was set up out of doors with Information Boards displaying the story of the nativity both in words and also via an app to link to the audio storyboard.
 - This technology also enables church services to be broadcast when a minister is not present as well as sharing information and worship across our parish grouping
 - Children and young families were catered for in-house through our own Sunday School and Kirkers club, but more recently this has been combined with our neighbours, Monymusk, to enable larger numbers to come together across our two parishes and to encourage fellowship

- Special services are held at Christmas with the joint Cluny/Monymusk choir taking part
- Also special services at Easter, Pentecost and Harvest and Remembrance Sunday, to name but a few. These are often followed by an opportunity to socialise in the Church Hall where teas and coffees are served or in some cases a Pentecost breakfast or brunch and a soup 'n sweet lunch after Remembrance Sunday service.
- Cluny Primary school comes to Cluny church for its end of term services, continuing the long established connection between our minister and the school through chaplaincy.

2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

- New communicant classes are offered by our minister and new members are welcomed formally in to the body of the church
- Children are always welcome to attend church but as stated above our formal Sunday School is now held at Monymusk although we do have special services where the Sunday School comes to Cluny, eg at Easter where painted eggs are rolled down the glebe adjacent to the church car park, all well away from traffic in a safe environment.
- Parents and children of pre-school age participate in weekly one and a half hour sessions of Mainly Music (Christian worship songs) in partnership with Monymusk. Adult volunteers from Cluny provide help and support.
- The church has held a "Praise in the Park" informal outdoors service in the playpark in Sauchen every August for approximately 14 years. The music for this is provided by the Granite City Brass Band, with bales of straw for seating provided by one of our local farmers. This event attracts people from the local community that would not normally attend church. See photograph below



- Members of the local community are generous and there is a great deal of goodwill shown towards the Church. One major example of this occurred during the Covid period when there was a need to clean the church buildings on a regular basis to a strict standard. This could not be done by one person. A call went out to the local community via social media to seek volunteers to do this cleaning. We were overwhelmed by the response from non-church goers, when 21 people responded and were added to our own member volunteers to make up a weekly rota.

3. To respond to human need by loving service

- The parish is split into districts each with a designated elder to carry out visits and pastoral care.
- Elders and other members are encouraged to report any illness or requests for a visit directly to the minister, and these are always responded to whether to someone's home or in hospital.
- Funerals are an increasing part of our service to the community, and Cluny church is well appointed to hold large numbers in the church and spill over to the hall if necessary with additional recording / relaying equipment in place in the hall.
- Funeral teas are most often held in the Church hall with a caterer appointed and the hall has sufficient facilities in the kitchen, with china to host up to 100 people.
- The Hall is well appointed, with disabled toilet as well as Gents and Ladies and is approached either via steps or a ramp. It can be used for church as well as private functions.
- The hall is well used within the community, viz national and local elections; community council regular meetings; Miss Eliza Fraser Mausoleum meetings, and a venue for a local band to regularly practise
- The church gathers food donations for those in need all year round, as well as identifying separate charities to benefit from eg Christmas carol services and Harvest Thanksgiving.
- The church community has provided informal transport services to and from hospital as well as to and from church when needed
- The church through its fundraising activities, eg plant sales, daffodil teas, Burns Suppers etc provides not just fundraising but forms an important element of the social interaction within the local community

4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation

- Cluny Church supports local and national charities, eg The Cyrenians, Foodbanks in Inverurie, Instant Neighbour Trust, Mental Health Aberdeen and Neo Natal unit at ARI to name only those supported in recent years.
- For a number of years we were in regular contact with our Missionary Partners in Malawi, supporting their work both in words and prayer as well as practically, but sadly this connection has ceased since the couple have retired.

5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth
 - Cluny is an active supporter of the principles of fairtrade. Fairtrade church status has been awarded. The church promotes and uses Fairtrade products at social events.
 - One member annually hosts a Barnardo's fundraising event with Fairtrade products both in use and on sale.
 - Harvest Thanksgiving is a very important part of the Cluny Calendar, as being a rural community farming is the main industry. Donations generally are given to Instant Neighbour or local Foodbanks.

Buildings Evaluation Table

The Church and Hall (although technically not adjoining is within the same site and only a dozen or so steps apart) are well maintained with disabled access and toilets in situ. There is a large car park and easy access. However there is a discrepancy within the Table regarding the Church Hall as it has been included within "Separate Hall on Separate Site" whereas it is actually within "Separate Hall on Same Site" and should be scored as such.

Cluny Church scores reasonably well with a total of 65 representing 56% as a percentage of the total available, and placed 5/8. .

A comparison could be made with Chapel of Garioch which scores 40 within the Minimum standards column, same as Cluny and both scoring 62% as a Percentage of Total score (in minimum standards) However it has been proposed that Chapel of Garioch remain open.

On another column "Wind and Watertight" Cluny has been scored at the lowest (12) however the roof was completely replaced only a few years ago and although it is known some pointing is required we have not been allowed to carry out repairs during the time of this review. It is felt this scoring is unjust.

Accessibility has scored well and this reflects the location and access to the church and the hall. Although Cluny is in a rural community, there is ample car parking, with paths, steps or ramps to both buildings. Also a disabled toilet is available in the hall.

An observation - It can be seen from the table that 5 churches score below 60% yet some are to remain open whilst others are to close.

Cluny Church – its history and place in the community

Cluny Church is first mentioned in taxation documents of 1225 located in the small graveyard to the north of the present church building. It belonged to Aberdeen Cathedral and dedicated to St Machar. However in the later 18th century it fell into disrepair and became ruinous, and was eventually completely demolished in 1789 when the new church nearby

opened. There was a former Free Church in the village of Sauchen built in 1843 just after the Disruption. This has been closed for a number of years and is now a private house.

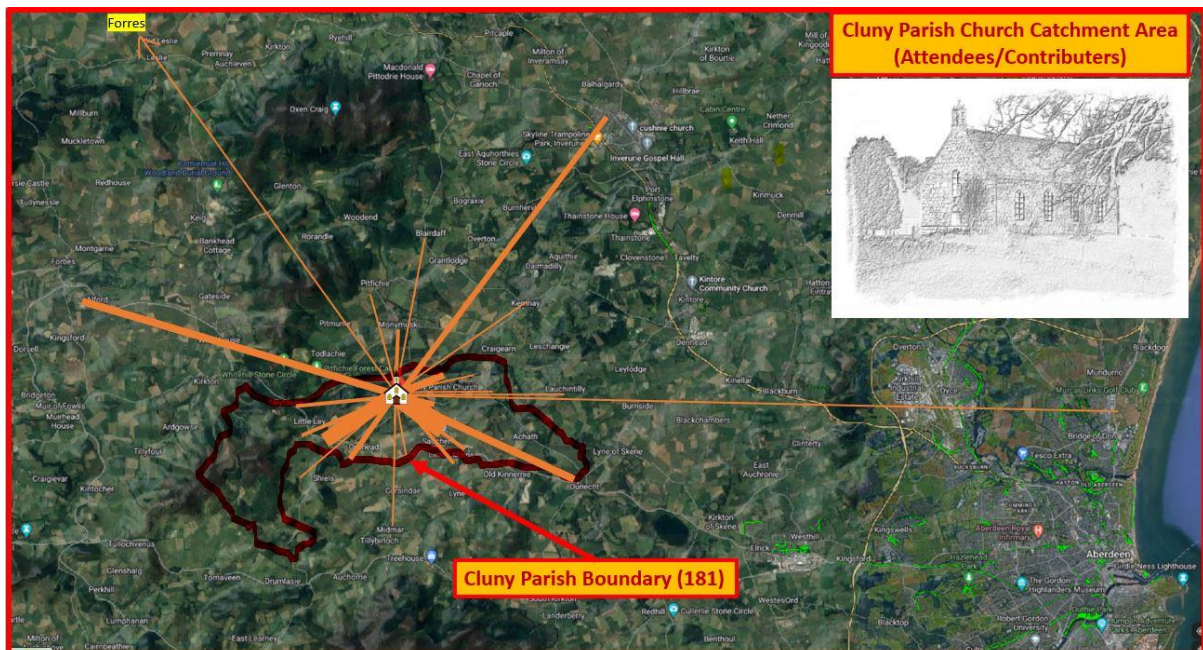
The parish of Cluny is a rural area with a scattered population. It doesn't have a single cluster of facilities but the Church and Hall are in a **central** location and within a **short** distance of Cluny Primary School (1.2 miles), the ever-growing settlements of Sauchen (2.2 miles) and Millbank (2.2 miles). The rurality of the site has not deterred attendance. People living in rural communities accept that they have to travel to attend facilities and the church is no different.

Additionally there is a glebe of 11 acres where the income is used as an offset to the Minister's stipend.

As stated above the local community are generous with both time and money. Fundraising has been held over the years to replace the church roof, repair the organ, develop a centenary garden, grass cutting, maintaining the car park and its environs. Ongoing fundraising events are held both in the Cluny Church Hall and also in other local venues to spread events throughout the wider community.

Cluny has a membership of 154 on its most recent survey. These statistics are very representative of the roll as numbers are checked on an ongoing basis.

Members come from a wide area – see illustration below:



Anne Harrison, Session Clerk, Cluny Parish Church

Ann Wilkinson, Clerk to the Board, Cluny Parish Church