



St. Molios Shiskine

Presbytery Health Check Report

23rd June 2010

Presbytery Health Check Reporting Form

Name of the Congregation St. Molios Shiskine

Name of the Minister Revd. Angus S. Adamson

Names of Visiting Team Members Revd. Marjory Mackay,
Mr. Ron Lavalette,
Mrs. Sheena Marr

Date of visit with Representatives 23rd June 2010

General Overview of Arran

The Church in Arran has seven congregations: Brodick linked with Corrie linked with Lochranza and Pirnmill linked with Shiskine forming the parish of North Arran; Whiting Bay and Kildonan; Lamdash linked with Kilmory.

This is a large area and the geographical distances to be covered in Arran are not insignificant. The road system runs round the perimeter of the island with two roads running across the spine of the island. The latter are challenging with passing places, blind bends and sometimes impassable in wintry conditions. The visiting team identified an East / West distinction with each village having its own identity. Those relying on public transport are bound by ferry-related times of buses. This means that forward-planning is essential in order to justify travelling by car since petrol on the island is expensive. Living costs in general are higher than on the mainland. Employment is mainly dependent on tourism, agriculture, forestry and those businesses which produce what could be termed the 'Arran Brand'. Housing has become prohibitively costly for locals, especially younger families. There is a high percentage of holiday homes / second-home ownership – many of the latter choose to retire to the island later. The resident population consists of a relatively small number of people born and bred on Arran.

There are seven primary schools and one secondary school on the island. Although not as marked as on the mainland, there is an awareness of some social issues related to alcohol and drug dependence. At weekends, young people have little to do in the evenings. The churches have been working ecumenically towards the appointment of a Youth Worker who, at the time of our meeting, was anticipated to take up the position in September 2010. This went ahead and the Youth Worker has been in post since 13th September 2010.

It was generally agreed that there is very good NHS provision of health care for residents.

Response to the Questionnaire:

From Congregational Statistical Return – as of 31st December 2009 there were 71 on the Communicant roll. From 2005-2009 there have been 5 admissions by profession of faith, 15 by certificate and 3 by restoration. As of 31st December 2009, those involved in the life of the congregation aged 17 and under number 16; those aged 18+ but not on roll number 19; of these numbers there is 1 recorded as receiving communion. From 2005-2009 there are recorded 9 baptisms – with one adult included, and 2 acts of blessing of children; 20 weddings and 30 funerals. Of the 71 communicant members and 16 aged 17 and under, the age profile shows the largest representation of 27% to come in the 61-70 age bracket, followed by 21% in the 71-80 age bracket, followed by 18% in children aged 10 and under. However, all ages from birth to 81+ are represented with 75% comprising elderly and 25% children and parents. Prior to the Visiting Team's meeting with Representatives, the following attendances at Sunday worship were recorded:-

09/5/10 -----	45
16/5/10 -----	42
23/5/10 -----	37
30/5/10 -----	62
06/6/10 -----	60

Milestones in the history of St. Molios Shiskine:

The timeline exercise dated from 1887 – 2006.

- St. Molios was built in 1887
- 1929 brought linkage with Torbeg
- In 1959 St. Molios was the sole place of worship
- 1969 brought linkage with Kilmory which lasted until 1977, followed by linkage with Lochranza
- Especially helpful pastoral care offered in 1986 to the parish was remembered as significant
- St. Molios' centenary was celebrated in 1987
- Ten years later in 1997 the first female elder was admitted to the Kirk Session
- Weekly coffee mornings were established in 1998
- 2001 saw the appointment of Mrs. Jean Hunter as locum
- Between 2002 -2006 there ensued linkage with Lamlash, Pirnmill and Lochranza
- With the ordination and induction of the Revd. Angus Adamson in 2006, the parish of North Arran was formed with Mrs. Jean Hunter as Parish Worker. A new ministry began.

The nature of the parish:

In identifying who lives, works and plays in the parish – who are our neighbours?

From the group exercise -

- Strong family units
- Retired people
- Mixed age group
- Employment is found in farming, hotel and tradesmen
- Holiday homes make up 35% of residential property
- There are 41 pupils in the local primary school
- Many tourists visit the area
- Garage

The strengths of living in Shiskine:

- It is a welcoming, kind, caring community with a strong community spirit
- There is a large WRI
- Golf Club
- Many and varied social activities are on offer
- All ages mix well
- There are activities for the young residents of the area

The weaknesses of living in Shiskine :

- Housing is expensive
- The cost of living in the area is expensive e.g. petrol, food, etc.
- Travel costs are also not insignificant
- In winter the climate can be harsh
- Public transport is limited
- It is difficult for youngsters to get to winter activities
- There are some social issues concerning alcohol abuse and a growing drug culture
- There is “nothing sacred” i.e. in a small community, everyone is aware of what's happening in the lives of others. This can also be viewed as a strength as the warmth of fellowship in the community is very evident and the Team envisage the congregation being very willing to be there for others in both their joys and sorrows.

Health of the congregation:

Applying the five marks of a healthy congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, fellowship, service and evangelism;-

Worship

Strengths -

- It is enjoyed – not endured! – in both its traditional and modern format
- There is congregational participation
- There is a rota of those who read the Scripture lessons
- There is an excellent Worship Team of five members who take services 5 times per year
- There is a Reader-in-Training
- Family Services

Hopes / dreams / visions still to be realised -

- ✓ Since time of worship is important for families, perhaps consideration could be given to different / additional times of worship
- ✓ Hold some open-air services e.g. on the beach

Team's reflections – The Worship Team's involvement is a positive initiative and it is good that they are given the opportunity to take services. What different / additional times of worship would be considered an advantage? It is encouraging that members come to worship in anticipation of it being an enjoyable experience.

Discipleship

Strengths -

- Opportunity to participate in Bible Study Group
- Attendance at joint monthly Health and Healing Service
- Watchnight Service – particularly when younger members of the community come along who are not normally at weekly worship
- Seasonal studies
- Participation in joint Holy Week Services
- Through daily actions
- Through volunteering

Hopes / dreams / visions still to be realised –

- ✓ To continue and expand upon the above opportunities for ongoing adult spiritual growth.

Team's reflections – From the questionnaire it is noted that 15 attend the joint Bible Study Group.

Could those involved offer to take others along with them? The ecumenical Taize Worship attracts 24 which is encouraging.

Fellowship

Strengths -

- Coffee Mornings
- Cards sent to the sick and bereaved
- Contact is made with the community through the visiting of the parish and through outreach
- Welcome Leaflets go into holiday homes
- Friendship is shared at the social events that are held
- The Church magazine is a means of contact with those in the community
- Contact is maintained with friends from other churches on the island

Hopes / dreams / visions still to be realised -

- ✓ None was recorded in the group exercise

Team's reflections – The Church community is active in social visiting particularly of the elderly and housebound. A network of communication is in place which ensures that Christian friendship is extended to anyone who is in need of a visit. Similarly, new residents / families are visited as a gesture of welcome. The Coffee Mornings provide an environment for socialising; also a venue for young mums to meet while their children are happily occupied in the play area. It is commendable that carers bring residents to the Coffee Mornings for stimulation and to meet with local residents. The Coffee Mornings are viewed as a commitment of fellowship to the community rather than a means of achieving any economic advantage.

Service

Strengths -

- Volunteers who are willing to be drivers to take people to the shops, appointments, etc.
- World Vision
- Christian Aid
- Montrose House
- Care Homes
- Reading for the visually impaired
- Life Line
- Pastoral Support Team
- Youth initiatives

Hopes / dreams / visions still to be realised -

- ✓ To continue what is already in place and to be aware of further areas of need in the parish.

Team's reflections - This congregation is very much involved not only in the areas of service they can offer locally but also in the wider work of the Church.

Evangelism

Strengths -

- Good Friday Walk of Witness through ACT
- Combined praise service arranged by ACT
- School services held in the church
- Coffee mornings

Hopes / dreams / visions still to be realised -

- ✓ To establish a continued stability in the congregation's outreach and witness
- ✓ To focus on personal contact with others as a means of encouraging them to be a part of all that St. Molios are doing.

Team's reflections – The coffee mornings are clearly an arena in which evangelism is developed albeit not in an overt way.

Conclusion

The Visiting Team found the officebearers to be enthusiastic in engaging in the Health Check. While we expected 12 to be present, we were delighted to meet all 27 who not only wanted to be there but who also had much to contribute to the exercise. This old and distinctive church has a history of which its members are rightly proud. Equally, this congregation is very loyal to the Fertile Valley of Shiskine and its identity as a community. They are to be commended in their determination to maintain a Christian presence at the heart of their community and to be effective in their life and witness.

Taking into account the relatively small membership and the remoteness of the parish with its accompanying challenges, the Team were impressed by how much this congregation achieves. Though small in number, the number of admissions between 2005-2009 is noteworthy, as is the number of young people aged 17 and under involved in the life of the congregation. All age groups are represented and the quality and commitment of St. Molios' members reflect a healthy balance of all five areas outlined above. Although no hopes / dreams / visions still to be realised under Fellowship were recorded, that was due more to shortage of time than to lack of such unrealised visions.

The ministry of Angus and Jean is much appreciated and the Visiting Team sense a desire in this congregation for them to continue working with them in their ministry in order to build on and develop that which is already in place.

A happy evening was enjoyed!