



Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church

Parish Profile

Presbytery of Lothian

Charity Number SC005237



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Introduction

The parish of Aberlady and Gullane is located on the East Lothian coast between North Berwick (4.5 miles to the East) and Longniddry (3 miles to the West). The villages themselves are three miles apart and, according to 2020 estimates, have populations of 1,260 (Aberlady) and 2,810 (Gullane). With significant expansion of house building in East Lothian, both communities are experiencing substantial growth and, in due course, this will result in a lower age profile.

The Vacancy

Our previous minister retired in December 2020, since when we have enjoyed the services of locum ministers and interim moderators from Lothian Presbytery. We are now looking for a part-time (0.5) minister who will inspire and challenge us, assist us build on our strengths, and help us move forward in a newly created Union.

Lothian Presbytery has granted the charge unrestricted tenure. Both the churches in Aberlady and Gullane will be retained for the foreseeable future and will continue in regular use for worship and other activities. If the need arises, the congregation has adequate resources to refurbish and equip both churches.

The Kirk Session recognises the need to explore various options for providing ministry to the parish and looks forward to discussing this with applicants. It has looked at two possible patterns, namely working the equivalent of two full days each week plus Sunday mornings, leading worship most Sundays, or working full time for two weeks a month with two weeks off, leading worship twice a month with others trained and equipped to lead in the other half of the month. It is open to other alternatives. The Kirk Session understands that pastoral cover, mission, outreach and community engagement will need to be provided collaboratively by the congregation along with support from the minister.

We accept that a part-time minister cannot fulfil all the traditional roles and expectations of a full-time minister. By way of preparation for our changed circumstances, we are currently:

- exploring ways in which members of Session and congregation can provide relief and assistance with pastoral and worship duties. Two elders completed the Church of Scotland Faith and Nurture Forum training course at New College in 2022, others already have experience of leading worship, and we now have a team which leads worship normally once a month.
- Offering joint services in Aberlady and Gullane at 1030am on the first Sunday of each month, alternately at Aberlady and Gullane Churches
- investing significant sums in better communication facilities, which would allow input from other sources for a Sunday service (as well as on-line streaming)

We are also keen to work more closely with St Andrew Blackadder, a very active church in North Berwick, with whom we now share a Parish Grouping. In essence, we are developing skills to further the mission of God and grow the interaction between our churches and expanding local communities. We seek a minister to share and help us develop our vision.

We therefore commit to:

- Flexibility in attitude
- A shared approach to the tasks of ministry
- Developing lay ministry in the congregation; and
- A missional attitude to all of church life.

The Manse

A modern, attractive, detached five-bedroom manse with double garage will become available in June 2023. Located in Saltcoats Grange, Gullane, the manse – a CALA ‘Tranter’ home - is nearing completion, furnished with every home comfort considered for energy efficient and low maintenance living. For example, the kitchen and utility rooms are equipped with a touch control induction hob, an integrated fridge/freezer, stainless steel electric oven and integrated microwave oven.

If an appointment is made with a start date earlier than end-June 2023, rented accommodation will be provided until such times as the manse is ready to be occupied. Removal expenses will be met in full should two sets of removal costs be incurred.

What is Good and Attractive about Aberlady and Gullane?

An excellent friendly, community spirit is to be found in two villages steeped in history. Bus services to Edinburgh and North Berwick are timetabled to run every 30 minutes throughout most of the day and there is a main line railway station at Longniddry. A range of community and other facilities located within or near Aberlady and Gullane include:

- Two primary schools
- A secondary school in North Berwick
- One care home
- A doctor’s surgery and pharmacy
- A dental practice
- An Optician’s practice
- Community Halls in each village
- Three (smallish) supermarkets and a range of other shops
- Several restaurants, hotels, cafes, hairdressers, etc.
- Golf courses with a national and international reputation.

History of the Charge

The ruins of The Church of St Andrew still survive at the western end of Gullane village and have been dated as being from the second half of the 12th Century. Aberlady also features in Church history from the 12th Century. The history of Aberlady Parish Church dates from about 1452 when the records of the Bishop of Dunkeld show that a watch tower was built, to which a church was added.

Detail of the history of both churches can be found on the website:

www.aberlady-gullaneparishchurches.org.uk

Aberlady and Gullane Parish Church has been linked since 1986 and in August 2022, with the unanimous and enthusiastic support of both Kirk Sessions and congregations, the church formed a Union. We are also part of the North Berwick Association of Churches.

The Kirk Session of the church has agreed to depart from the traditional practice of the Church of Scotland regarding the appointment of a minister who is in a same sex civil partnership or marriage.

Our Worship

Sunday Church services are presently held at 9.45am in Gullane and 11.15am in Aberlady. Both churches value a style of worship which is, broadly speaking, traditional. Hymns from CH4 are the principal source of sung worship, using either hymn books or lyrics projected on a large screen. Elders and members read the intimations and Scripture lessons each week. Special services, run on an inter-denominational basis, are held during Holy Week and are much valued by those who attend. At Advent and at Christmas, there are carol services and Christmas Eve services in both churches, some of which are taken by a member of the congregation. During our previous minister's tenure, joint services between Aberlady and Gullane and with congregations of other denominations were held which we are keen to continue.

The sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated in both churches on four occasions each year, usually on the last Sunday of February, May, August and November and, in recent times, children have participated in the celebration of Holy Communion.

Aberlady and Gullane has 429 communicants on the roll, with 20 - 30 usually attending worship at Aberlady, and about 40 at Gullane. The age profile is predominantly over 60 but recent years have seen considerable growth in the number of younger attendees. The congregations share a unity of purpose and a core of generous, warm and friendly people who attend services on a regular basis, and who seek good teaching and sensitive pastoral support to strengthen their faith.

We are part of a parish grouping with St Andrews Blackadder in North Berwick. In terms of cooperation there will be things that each congregation can and should do separately and other things that the two congregations can do better together. The congregations within the grouping will explore work in the following areas:

- Youth and children's work
- Community outreach
- Discipleship and Evangelism
- Other areas as may be agreed.

Church magazines were published four times per year and issued prior to Communion. Now that Union has taken place, a single magazine called 'Connect' covers news and events in both communities, published on four occasions throughout the year.

Aberlady and Gullane Church have regular organists and pianists who accompany worship in both of our churches. Organists liaise with the minister about hymn and music choices.

Church Secretary

A part-time church secretary provides administrative support to the Minister, Session Clerk and Treasurer. Duties include preparation of Weekly Orders of Service, co-ordination and preparation of weekly intimations, liaison with organists, planning and preparation for Kirk Session meetings, and drawing up elders' duty rotas. The Secretary also receives articles from Convenors for the Church magazine and provides general oversight leading to publication and distribution of copies to the congregation.

Volunteers serve in various other ways.

- Roll keeper who uses an electronic database roll book
- Church website, recently redesigned and regularly maintained
- Facebook and twitter pages showing upcoming events and church news
- Power Point slides prepared for every service

Church Buildings

Aberlady

Surrounded by a historic graveyard, the beautiful old church in Aberlady is one of the finest in Scotland. Over the years it has proved to be a popular venue for weddings, but Covid impacted adversely on demand. Aberlady's church hall, known as the Kirk Stables, is situated 150 yards from the church and includes a church office as well as kitchen and meeting rooms. At the rear of the Kirk Stables, there is a large garden. The vegetable boxes in the garden are maintained by members of the community.

Gullane

Gullane's smaller church building has an attached hall with kitchen. Members of the congregation come together for coffee after morning service and the church facilities are widely used by the community at, for example, weekly coffee mornings. The south and north-east sides of the church have garden areas maintained by church members.

All our properties are regularly inspected and maintained with safety and compliance high on the agenda, and a focus on renovation and improvement.

Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths

On average, in Aberlady, our minister officiates at 3 baptisms, 2 weddings and 7 funerals per year. In Gullane, the figures are broadly comparable at 3 baptisms, 2 weddings and 10 funerals.

Youth Work

We are fortunate to have an active/successful children's church with young people attending drawn from both communities. A JAM Club (Jesus and Me) is available to young children and, more recently, around 30 older children (P4-P7) are attending monthly EJAM (Evening Jesus and Me) sessions, gaining a great deal from themed Bible teaching and discussion, but also from the camaraderie of seeing their friends and eating together. The children all have their own bibles, and enjoy quizzes, worksheets or games in a relaxed and fun environment. The Kirk Session provides financial support up to £1500 pa for EJAM and it is proving to be a worthwhile and rewarding financial commitment. SU resources are used by leaders in the JAM Club and these have proved helpful in terms of bringing ideas and continuity. A creche rota operates each Sunday and events such as spring walks, picnics on Gullane Beach, craft afternoons, annual nativity and Easter trails are part of a full programme of activities which feature throughout the year. More recently, links have been established with St Andrews Blackadder (e.g. their Messy Church), to hear what each church provides for local children while, contemporaneously, encouraging a sharing of ideas, resources and thoughts for the future.

We have a small but dedicated and imaginative team of JAM and EJAM leaders and, over time, we aim to supplement our voluntary resources with the appointment of a children's worker.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is an integral part of the work of the minister and the Kirk Session. Traditionally, as in all parishes, the minister has taken a lead in pastoral care, supported by a small pastoral care team who have undertaken training. The Kirk session accepts that in the new circumstances of a 0.5 ministry, pastoral care will require to be a shared responsibility. Currently, in Gullane, a named elder has overall responsibility for co-ordination in each community and is notified of bereavements or those in need of pastoral visits. Each elder undertakes pastoral care via the most appropriate method to meet the individual's needs, including phone calls, e-mails and personal

visits. In common with other churches, elders have their own districts and visit members regularly to deliver the quarterly magazine as well as on other occasions. In Aberlady, while nobody is in overall charge, most of the pastoral care and support comes from the former Session Clerk. Over time, teams will develop a harmonised approach to pastoral care and other aspects of church life

Both Aberlady and Gullane continue to support the work of charities, Christian and non-religious, offering support at both home and abroad. During the past year Christian Aid, the NHS appeal and the British Red Cross Afghan appeal were supported financially. Beyond that, we have continued to provide donations of food and other household goods on a weekly basis to the East Lothian Foodbank, at which several members volunteer making up and distributing parcels. At Aberlady, perishable goods from Harvest Services have gone to Rachel House, the children's hospice at Kinross or to Cyrenians in Edinburgh. Non-perishable items/cash donations have gone to the Foodbank. At Gullane, goods from the Harvest Services are distributed to members of the local community.

Visits are also made to the residential care home based in Gullane.

Stewardship and Finance

After our Service of Union on 25th August 2022, the Kirk Session agreed it will be served by various teams which meet as required. A Session Clerk and Treasurer have been appointed and teams established in pastoral/outreach, property, family and children, safeguarding, and communications. A roll keeper has also been reappointed.

In early 2021, the decision was taken to sell the Manse in Gullane which had lain empty all year. The sale was completed in October 2021 and the net proceeds are held by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. With the appointment of a part-time minister some of the proceeds have been used to buy another Manse and develop and maintain our existing buildings.

Financial results for 2021 show that, despite Covid, the balance sheet remains strong with good levels of cash reserve and a strong investment portfolio which helps to provide additional income. Over the years, the Ministries and Mission contribution has been met in full in both churches and funds have been available for any new initiatives or projects the minister and Kirk Session wish to pursue. Our finances are up-to-date and meet the requirements of the Church of Scotland, OSCR and HMRC. Good stewardship is of critical importance, and we manage our resources well.

A copy of the most recent financial accounts will be made available on request.

The Future

We feel strongly that our church and its people should be at the heart of our community. The Union of Aberlady and Gullane brings an opportunity for us to worship, work together and grow in new and exciting ways. The current vacancy has been seen as a time to take stock, assess where we are and where we would like to be. We offer a new minister a warm and welcoming congregation and are committed to working with a minister to embrace the change, explore opportunities and share the Christian message.

It is difficult to include everything about church life in a Parish Profile. Should you wish additional information, about any of the above, or wish to visit our church and parish, our Interim Moderator, Revd. Dr Jock Stein, would be pleased for you to be in touch with him by phone or e-mail using the contact details on the front page.