



Parish Profile

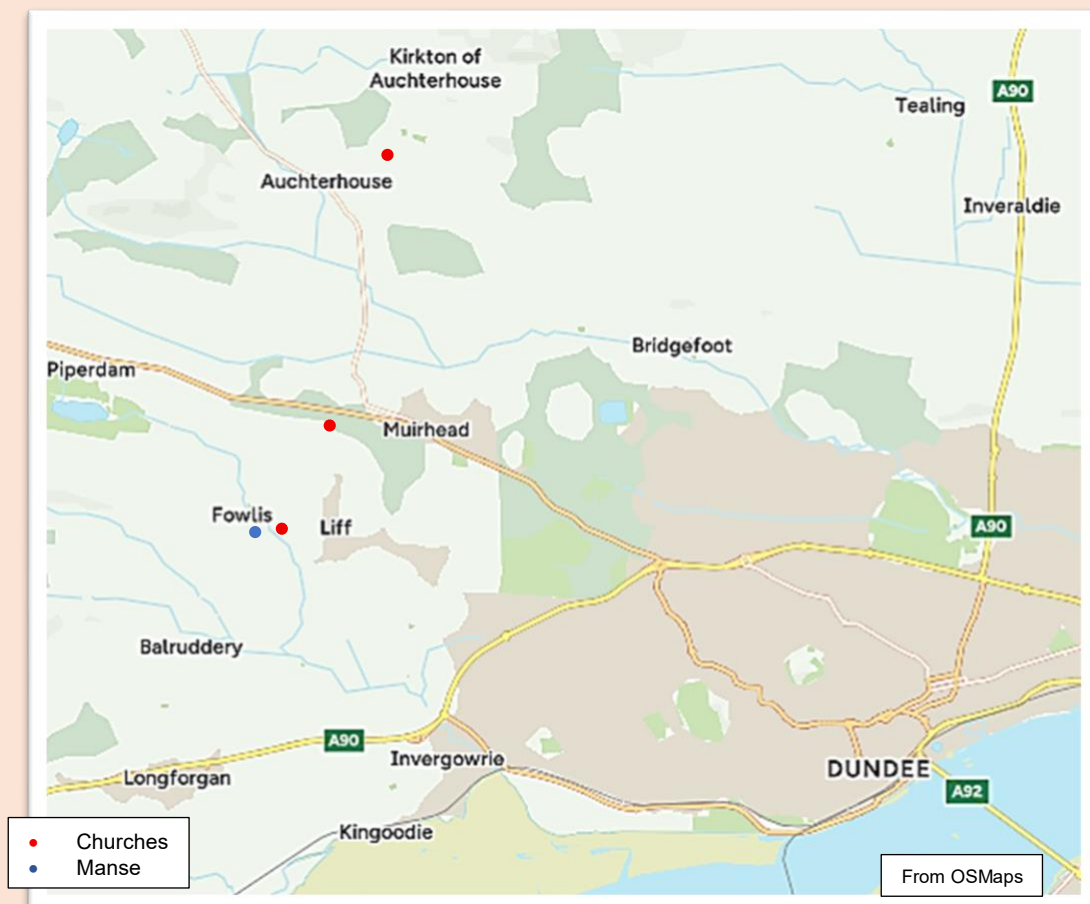


Sidlaw Parish Church is actively seeking a new minister who is a good communicator and will inspire faith and spiritual growth. We would like them to be visionary, authentic, approachable and a good listener.

We are keen to grow and to develop a greater involvement with our local community. We hope for a positive, friendly relationship with our new minister, whilst forming a strong and effective team with them.

Our current priorities are:

- youth and children's ministry;
- pastoral care and counselling;
- worship and liturgy;
- church growth and development in the community; and
- outreach and evangelism.



Summary

- **Vacancy:** Minister retired October 2025; Sidlaw Parish had been created in February 2024 from three congregations.
- **Parish:** Semi-rural with a population of around 4,600 and 350 members; currently there are around 50 to 80 weekly attendees as well as active groups and a monthly joint service.
- **Worship:** Two Sunday services; Zoom streaming; Messy Church; Holiday Club; Remembrance involvement.
- **Community & Education:** Three primary schools, secondary school in Monifieth; strong youth organisation links.
- **Pastoral Care:** Visiting team providing strong support for elderly, Foodbank collections; 16 funerals last year.
- **Ecumenical:** Work with Carse of Gowrie churches grouping and local Roman Catholic parish; active Eco-Congregation.
- **World Church:** Supports Toilet Twinning, Blythswood Shoeboxes, Christian Aid, Mary's Meals, and more.
- **Finance:** Income £139,000 (2024) with assets of £972,000; Giving to Grow 2026 contribution is £74,000.
- **Buildings:** Three churches (one closing), updated facilities; modern 4-bed manse in Fowlis.
- **Lifestyle:** Quiet rural area with good access to Dundee; strong amenities and recreation.

Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	History of the Charge/Congregation	4
3	Community Profile of the Congregation	4
4	Worship Life	4
5	Pastoral Care	7
6	Christian Education	7
7	Ecumenical Context	9
8	World Church	9
9	Stewardship and Finance	9
10	Staffing	10
11	Church, Manse and Halls.	10
12	Living in Sidlaw Parish	12
13	Web Links for Further Information	12

1 Introduction

The current vacancy has occurred due to the retirement of the minister, Rev Donna Hays, in October 2025. Rev Hays was appointed 21 years ago as the minister for the linked congregations of Lundie & Muirhead and Fowlis & Liff.

We are seeking a new minister to lead the recently united churches. Sidlaw was formed in February 2024 following the union of Auchterhouse and Fowlis & Liff and Lundie & Muirhead Churches.

Our semi-rural parish is situated to the north-west of Dundee between the Sidlaw Hills to the north and the Carse of Gowrie and River Tay to the south. Muirhead and Birkhill are approximately 5 miles from Dundee.

The population of the parish is around 4,600 and there are 380 members on the church roll. There are two services every Sunday and a joint service on the last Sunday of the month. Weekly attendance is approximately 50 to 80. Communion is celebrated 3 times a year and at Easter and Christmas. Church groups include a Friendship Group, Soup Lunch, Messy Church and the Guild. There are also social and fundraising activities such as the plant sale, Big Quiz for TearFund, craft and walking groups.

The Kirk Session is departing from the historic and current practice of the Church of Scotland and is open to permitting the ordination, induction or appointment of a minister who is in a civil partnership or a same sex marriage.

2 History of the Charge/Congregation

Sidlaw Parish Church of Scotland was formed from the union of Lundie & Muirhead, Fowlis & Liff, and Auchterhouse congregations. Lundie & Muirhead had previously been in a linkage with Fowlis & Liff. Auchterhouse was linked with Murroes, Tealing and Monikie.

There are currently three church buildings in the parish, along with the manse:

- **Muirhead Church** was built in 1843 during 'The Disruption'. It is on the outskirts of Muirhead, with onsite parking. The previous **manse**, to the rear, was sold in 2024 and a modern replacement bought in Fowlis village;
- **Auchterhouse Church** is a more traditional building with pews for seating. It sits on the outskirts of Kirkton of Auchterhouse village beside the primary school. The building dates back to the 13th century, with the present church built in 1630;
- **St Marnock's Church** in Fowlis is scheduled for closure. Conversations between the General Trustees and potential owners are ongoing. It continues to be used for services once a month in the interim;
- The **manse** is situated in Fowlis village.

3 Community Profile of the Congregation

The community profile is basically that of a rural and semi-rural area. There are few areas of deprivation and most of the population sits within deciles 8, 9 and 10 (least deprived) of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The main centres of population in the parish are Birkhill/Muirhead (1,950), Fowlis/Liff (1,889) and Auchterhouse (700).

There are primary schools in Birkhill, Liff and Auchterhouse. The associated secondary school is Monifieth High School.

4 Worship Life

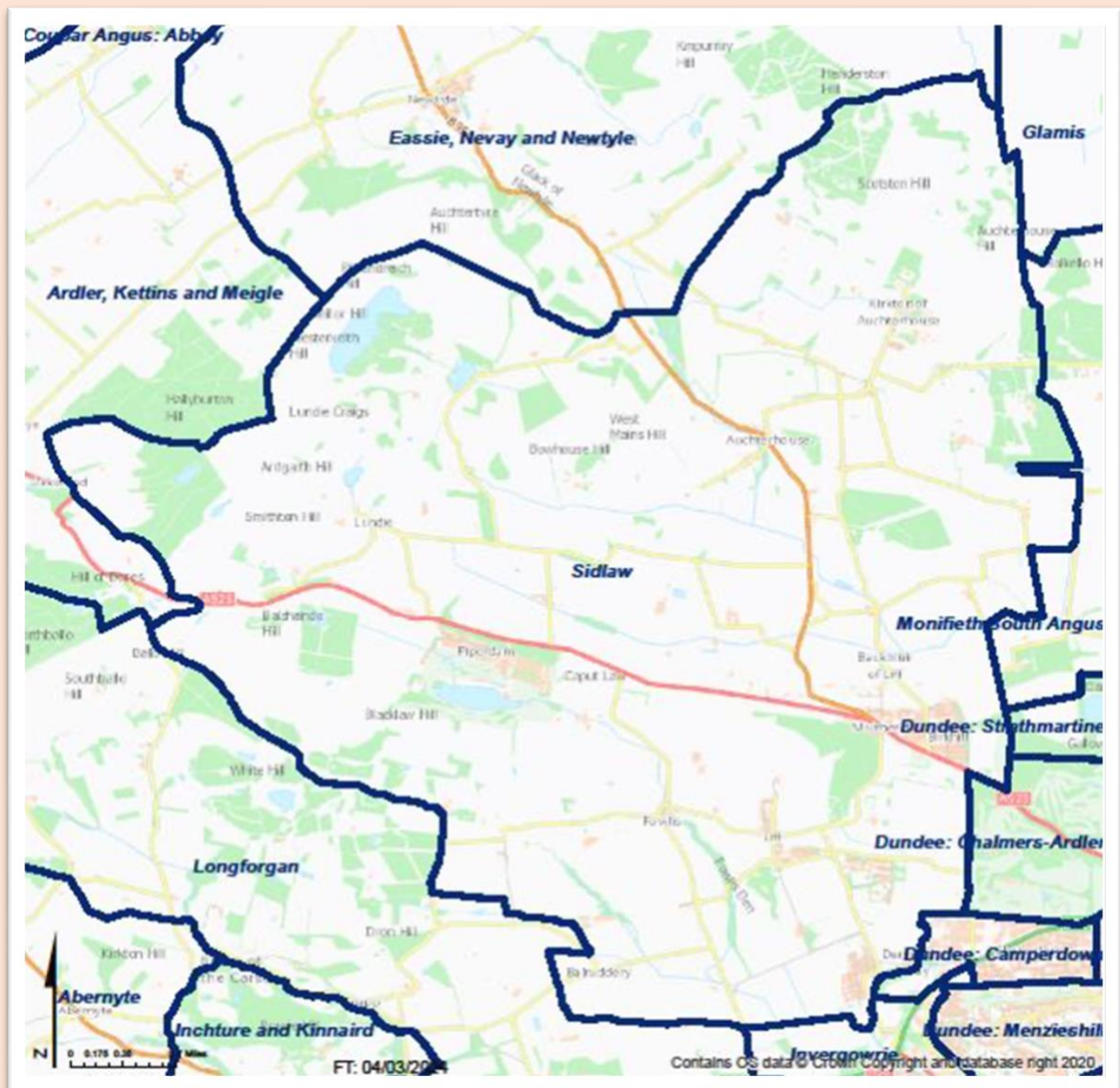
Currently, on the first Sunday of each month, there is a service in Auchterhouse at 09:45 and one in St Marnock's at 11:00. On the final Sunday of each month there is a single, joint service at 11:00 which alternates between Muirhead and Auchterhouse. Communions are scheduled for joint services. On all other Sundays, there are services in Auchterhouse at

09:45 and at Muirhead at 11:00. The 11:00 service is streamed live via Zoom. This continues the practice begun during the pandemic. The Zoom link for joining services online and the Church News are distributed by email to members and adherents each week.

There are regular organists in all three churches. CH4 is used as the basis for congregation singing, occasionally supplemented with hymns from other publications. PowerPoint is used to project or display the words in Auchterhouse and Muirhead, whilst hymnaries are used in St Marnock's. There is a rota of welcomers and bible readers from the congregation. A rota of volunteers provide the weekly flowers which are distributed after each service to someone in the community who is ill or needing a friendly visit. Refreshments are served after most services. There is limited space at the rear of the buildings in Auchterhouse and St Marnock's.

As well as those physically present in our church buildings, there are also around 10 to 20 attendees on Zoom each week. Children occasionally attend services and have access to toys and colouring sheets.

Map Showing Sidlaw Parish Boundary



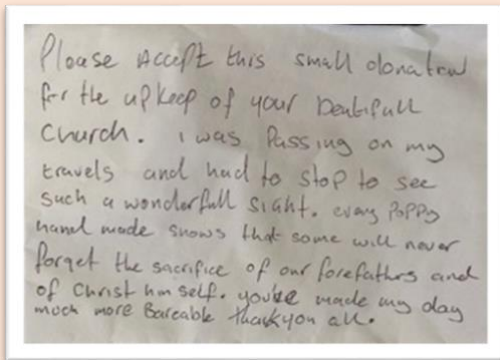
Messy Church is held in Muirhead Church on the last Saturday of each month. This is now a local church grouping initiative, but was begun by the previous Sidlaw minister. These meetings feature family fun, food and fellowship. This year's themes include Love, Courage, Integrity, Community and Justice.



Sidlaw Church has run a Holiday Club in Muirhead at the end of the school summer holidays for over 15 years. This has been for young people in the vicinity and has introduced them to basic Christian concepts, framed by an overall theme such as outer space or science. The week has featured physical activities, challenges, drama, craft and comedy. The venue for activities has latterly been Muirhead Church. The week is concluded with a well-attended family service in the building, focusing on the children's achievements.



Sidlaw Church has taken a lead in the local commemoration of Remembrance Day, with the coordination of community activity to create and display poppy falls in both Muirhead and Auchterhouse. This was extremely popular in the community and very positively reported in social media.



5 Pastoral Care

Pastoral care in Sidlaw Church begins with a warm welcome extended to everyone coming into church for morning services. It continues with the tea, coffee and fellowship after the service. For those unable to attend, or who welcome a visit, there is a Pastoral Care Team who make regular visits. A close working relationship with the Minister ensured that this information was passed both ways. The Pastoral Care Team consists of elders, but members of the congregation make equally important informal visits.

There is a long-established sheltered housing complex in Birkhill. The Minister visited the social area within the complex for communion services as well as visit some residents. Home Communion is available on request.

Care for others is also recognised in the regular and ongoing collection of food and toiletries for the local Foodbank.

There have been 16 church funerals in the past year.

6 Christian Education

There are primary schools in the parish at Liff, Birkhill and Auchterhouse. The Minister visited the primary schools frequently, engaging with pupils and taking part in

Remembrance, Christmas and end of the school year services. Schools have also held their annual Nativity and end of term services in Sidlaw Parish Church buildings.

There is a long standing, active gathering in Muirhead Scout Hall supporting Brownies, Cubs, Scouts, Guides and Venture Scouts, with young people coming from all round the Parish. Social events are held throughout the year, open to the whole community.

Monthly Messy Church and the summer Holiday Club attract a good number of children. Teenagers from the community help at these events. A teenage member of the congregation has helped with Communion and has given Bible readings in services. There is no formal Sunday School at present. However, child-friendly facilities are provided at services and there is usually a safeguarding registered person present to work with children if needed.

Bible study classes and prayer meetings have been held in the recent past. Presently, our locum provides texts and uplifting personal words daily during Advent and twice weekly during Lent, sent by email to participating members.

Sidlaw Church has monthly craft sessions and, during the better weather, a walk and talk group starts and finish at Auchterhouse Church with refreshments. There are also coffee mornings and plant sales. An early morning "Son-Rise" Easter service was started many years ago by climbing a local hill, holding a service at the top then walking down to a local farm for a sumptuous breakfast. Now, an early morning service is held outside Auchterhouse Church with breakfast afterwards.

Sidlaw Church also runs popular monthly soup lunches, including tea, coffee and shortbread, which engage the wider community. Similarly, its Friendship Group involves church members as well as other local residents who enjoy a wide range of presentations in meetings. They enjoy occasional trips as a group and a local Christmas lunch.



Discipleship is demonstrated across these social activities, sharing food and companionship. The volunteers who undertake all these activities show a dedication to the principles of our Christian faith, using their time to the benefit of the church and congregation.

7 Ecumenical Context

Sidlaw Church is part of a wider grouping of churches, called the Carse of Gowrie Churches. Joint services are occasionally held, such as choir-led Songs of Praise services in local churches. A series of Desert Island Hymns has been held across Sidlaw Church buildings, involving interviews with a local person and singing their chosen hymns.

St. Ninian's Roman Catholic Church in Menzieshill is one of our closest churches. Sidlaw has worked with St. Ninian's on a joint prayer service in Muirhead Church and has also been invited to Christmas services with members of both congregations taking part.

Sidlaw Church is part of a wider ecumenical organisation of Eco-Congregations, established throughout Scotland.

8 World Church

Sidlaw Church has long been a supporter of the Toilet Twinning project, supporting communities in Burundi to have access to toilets and clean water. For many years, a huge number of decorated boxes have been collected every autumn for Blythswood Shoebox Appeal, enabling them to give support and pleasure to people in eight East European countries. More than 100 boxes are collected every year from church members and the community.

Our strong Sidlaw Church Guild demonstrates effectively our engagement with the wider World Church through fundraising support for a variety of charities at home and overseas. Its theme for this year is Living Stones. Four main projects are chosen each year and have included Christian Aid, Tearfund, CrossReach, Mary's Meals, Mercy Ships, Bear Necessities (for building a Church in Bulgaria), World Mission Council, Scottish Bible Society and Release International.

Church collections for Christian Aid are held in May and are supplemented with donations throughout the year from serving tea and coffee after services. Collections are held at Christmas for Shelter, which includes carol singing at the Auchterhouse Christmas lights ceremony.

Caring for our planet is an increasingly important part of our church commitment to the wider world as well as here in Britain. Sidlaw Church recognises this with recent membership of Eco-Congregations Scotland. This is an ecumenical programme, helping churches make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith. It is about practical action in the church and lives of individuals, locally and globally. As an initial step, our buildings have boxes for collecting and recycling used blister packs and small batteries which cannot be recycled in domestic collections. There is a book exchange in Muirhead Church and in the telephone box in Auchterhouse. Used stamps and pennies are also collected in our buildings. Members of Sidlaw Church work in the Auchterhouse community garden. There is a wild flower patch in the cemetery and swift nesting boxes in the Auchterhouse Church tower.

Fairtrade tea and coffee is used across our buildings, in recognition of the need to support small scale farmers and growers around the world.

9 Stewardship and Finance

The financial position of Sidlaw Parish Church for the last two years is shown below.

£	2025	2024	2023
Total Income	127,548	139,179	126,808
Total Expenditure	116,484	94,308	88,195
Net Income	27,692	61,373	51,910

In 2024, total assets were £972,397 which included £747,974 of fixed assets, namely Muirhead Church and the manse which are owned locally. Net current assets were £224,424 comprising cash in the bank plus deposits and investments.

In 2025, the Consolidated Fabric Fund (CFF) Capital account held £282,195 (market value £313,067), the CFF Revenue account held £39,996 and fixed assets were unchanged.

The Giving to Grow contribution for 2026 is £74,415: the net contribution is £46,164 after deducting stipend endowment income and glebe rent.

Two external organisations regularly use Muirhead Church. Bookings are managed by the Booking Secretary through the church website. In 2025, hall lets contributed £1,055 to congregational income.

The congregation is encouraged to support the church through giving and fundraising activities. Most members donate by regular standing order and some by freewill offering envelopes or open plate donations. Most donations are eligible for the gift aid or gift aid small donation schemes.

10 Staffing

Sidlaw does not have any Ministries Development Staff and there is no church secretary or church office. The minister is assisted by the Session Clerk and also by the Finance, Pastoral, Social/fundraising, Fabric and Audio-Visual/IT teams, with support from the Kirk Session.

The organist at Muirhead is employed locally. There are no other locally employed staff.

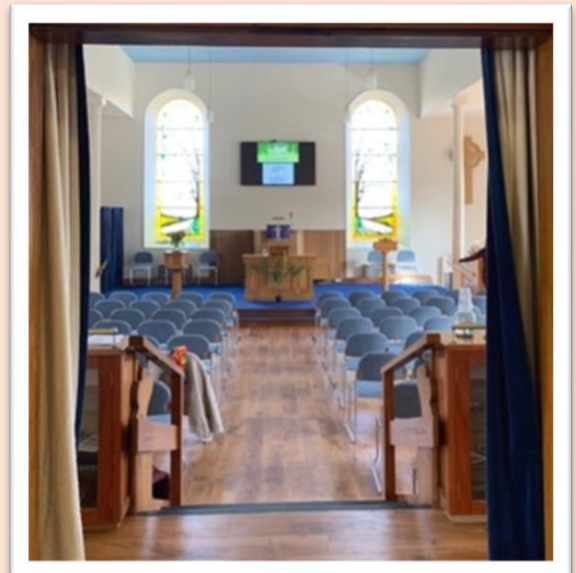
11 Church, Manse and Halls.

Muirhead Church and the manse are held by local trustees. Auchterhouse and St. Marnock's Church in Fowlis are held by the General Trustees.

Muirhead church building has had many improvements and alterations made over the past few years, including

- the commissioning and replacement of the windows in the sanctuary,
- removal of pews and levelling of the floor,
- installation of audio-visual equipment and soundboards, and
- the redesign and expansion of the kitchen area.

The church is hired by a number of local groups, including Pilates and Baby Signing. It is also the location for Messy Church, which is a local church grouping initiative. The church has Wi-Fi connectivity, two toilets, a vestry, an outdoor store and a garage with automated doors for further storage.





Auchterhouse church building has disabled access, a disabled toilet, a small kitchen area and a vestry. It has audio-visual equipment, controlling microphones and allowing for projection of PowerPoint presentations during services. The hall, close to the primary school, is owned by Angus Council Education Department and is used by the school during school hours. Outside these times, the volunteer Hall Committee manages letting to a variety of community organisations.

The **manse** is at [8 Smiddy Brae, Fowls DD2 5SD](#). It is a detached two-storey villa built in 2002. It has three public rooms, four bedrooms and two bathrooms. There is double glazing

throughout the building. It also has a double garage and extensive driveway, with a garden mainly to the side and front of the house.



12 Living in Sidlaw Parish

Nestled in a serene rural setting, our attractive manse offers an excellent blend of countryside charm and urban convenience. While situated in the quiet village of Fowlis, you will have easy access to Dundee. There are also excellent links to other parts of Scotland and beyond.

EDUCATION & FAMILY

Primary: There are three excellent local primary schools.

Secondary: Fowlis is within the catchment area for Monifieth High School. It has a good academic record with a dedicated Support for Learning and Inclusion department, aimed at integrating pupils of all abilities into mainstream classes.

Higher Education: Dundee has two world-class universities, known for their expertise in Computer Science and Biology. St Andrews University is also within commuting distance.

LIFESTYLE & AMENITIES

The local area is rich with recreational opportunities, including beautiful parks, golf courses, bowling clubs, and active youth organisations. Dundee itself provides a vibrant hub of culture, entertainment, and professional sporting venues including the only [V&A](#) museum outside London, which is the first ever dedicated design museum in Scotland.

13 Web Links for Further Information

There is a website which contains links for all of the local grouping of churches, including our buildings listed above. This can be found at: <https://carseandsidlawchurches.org>

Church of Scotland statistics relating to Sidlaw parish can be found here:

<https://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/church-finder/data/statistics/parish-profiles/281719.pdf>

Facebook: Individuals currently post updates directly on individual community pages for Auchterhouse, Birkhill and Muirhead, Fowlis and Liff.

Come and Join Us!

