

Quick Guide...

Setting up a Rural Event

Rural Working Group

A significant proportion of parishes within the Church of Scotland are rural. Being rural has its own set of opportunities and challenges.

Some of the challenges you face might include

- Limited access to public transport
- Geographical isolation and long distances
- Dispersed populations
- Adverse weather conditions
- Poor internet connections
- Deprivation including fuel poverty

The opportunities are great too and it is important that the rural aspect of the Church is acknowledged. The Church of Scotland values its rural members and has set up a Rural Working Group in the Mission and Discipleship Council to help resource and celebrate the rural church. The Rural Working group aims to ensure that the rural church continues to have a strong voice and an opportunity to flourish within the wider platform of the Church of Scotland.

We acknowledge that for many of our rural parishes the church is often the last public service left as other amenities go. The rural church continues to be the life blood of such communities.

Sometimes, working together with neighbouring communities can help the rural church thrive. Though these communities may have strong distinct identities, partnership and interdenominational working can lead to great opportunities and mutual support.

One of the ways rural congregations can thrive is to come together for events - giving support, sharing resources and equipping themselves and each other.

This could take the format of either a rural forum or even a conference. In essence, it is just a 'time of gathering' - a place to meet together and come up with ideas or share resources; it might allow opportunities for relevant missional activities, both denominationally and ecumenically in rural areas.

Detailed below are some areas to take into consideration when putting together a rural forum. The suggestions listed below are not exhaustive but, hopefully, will provide a starting point.

Things to consider

Why have the event?

- First assess the need, the aim of the event, who the target delegates are and what the anticipated outcome of the event is.
- Is there a theme or is it an opportunity to allow people to discuss concerns and issues in rural charges?
- Is the event designed to feed into particular charges or to the presbytery as a whole?
- Is the event for your particular presbytery area or would it be beneficial to open it up to other neighbouring presbyteries?
- Is the event about supporting rural congregations to thrive and not just survive?
- Do you have a group of people who are willing to lead on this and are able to take this forward?

How long should the event be?

Think about whether it serves better as a

- Whole day event
- A shortened day; 11 - 3pm or
- A half day

Bear in mind travel distances of those who you would want to attend and time of year for travelling.

Venue

- Does the location mean an acceptable travel time for the majority of attendees?
- How accessible is the venue for public transport, parking?
- What facilities does the venue have especially if using more rural venues and church halls - sound, projector, area for group discussions, catering?

Catering

- Who will supply the catering?
- What sort of catering will you have, what is practical?
- Will you charge or ask for donations?
- Are there the facilities to cater for tea and coffee for large numbers?
- Will you use disposable cups?
- Is there access to hot water flasks?

Publicity and promotion

- Does it need to go to presbytery for approval before it can be taken forward? If so, think about the timeline required for this to happen - so that it does not impede or delay the date of the event.

- If using printed promotion will this be printed in house or outsource to a printer?
- What is your timescale for promoting the event; are there committees within your presbytery which need to give prior agreement?

Registration

- Who will be responsible, the key contact?
- Do you have administrative support you can access to help?
- What information will you send out to applicants registering for the event - for example sign up for workshops, gathering dietary requirements, accessibility needs?
- Is there a limit to numbers that can attend – capacity of the venue?
- What are your timings for registering from a catering perspective (numbers and dietary requirements)?

Content of the event

- What is your programme?
- Are there key note speakers?
- Will there be group discussions; if so who will be your facilitators?
- How will you gather feedback?
- And once you have feedback what will you do with it?
- Who will do what on the day and in the lead-up?
- Will someone take on the role of timekeeper and/or chair for the day?



Resources

Resources to assist with the running of rural events or forums have been purchased by Mission and Discipleship Council and are available on loan.

Four pop-up banners depicting rural church have been designed and can be borrowed for your event. To book the banners please contact the Congregational Learning Team (details below).

There are 2 sets of resource boxes containing the following equipment that you may need to host an event in a rural venue.

- PA
- 2 x wireless mic
- Projector
- HDMI cable
- External DVD
- Laptop
- Extension cable
- Tie clip mic

A user's guide with all the instructions required to make use of the equipment is included in the resource box.

One box of equipment is stored in Edinburgh and the other in Inverness. To book a box and co-ordinate carriage please contact the Congregational Learning Team:

Mission & Discipleship Council, 121 George Street,
Edinburgh, EH2 4YN

Tel: 0131 225 5722

Email: mandd@churchofscotland.org.uk

Online

The Rural Working Group has a webpage on the main Church of Scotland website. It is under the connect tab – it can be found here:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/rural_church.

We also have a lively Facebook page where we are building an ecumenical network for all to contribute and share. The page is a public group entitled 'Rural Churches in Scotland'.

The Rural Working Group is part of Mission and Discipleship Council. Every month the Mission and Discipleship Council send out an e-newsletter. You can sign up to receive this newsletter by email here:

<https://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/resources/enews>

Want to run a church event in a rural parish but don't have the equipment?



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About the author

The Mission and Discipleship Council is responsible for supporting and resourcing rural congregations and does so through the Church of Scotland Rural Working Group. The work of the group is carried out by Council members and co-opted individuals who have insights and interest in the rural context. The Church of Scotland Rural Working Group works within the Congregational Learning Team of the Mission and Discipleship Council.

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