

A Profile of Contin Parish Church of Scotland

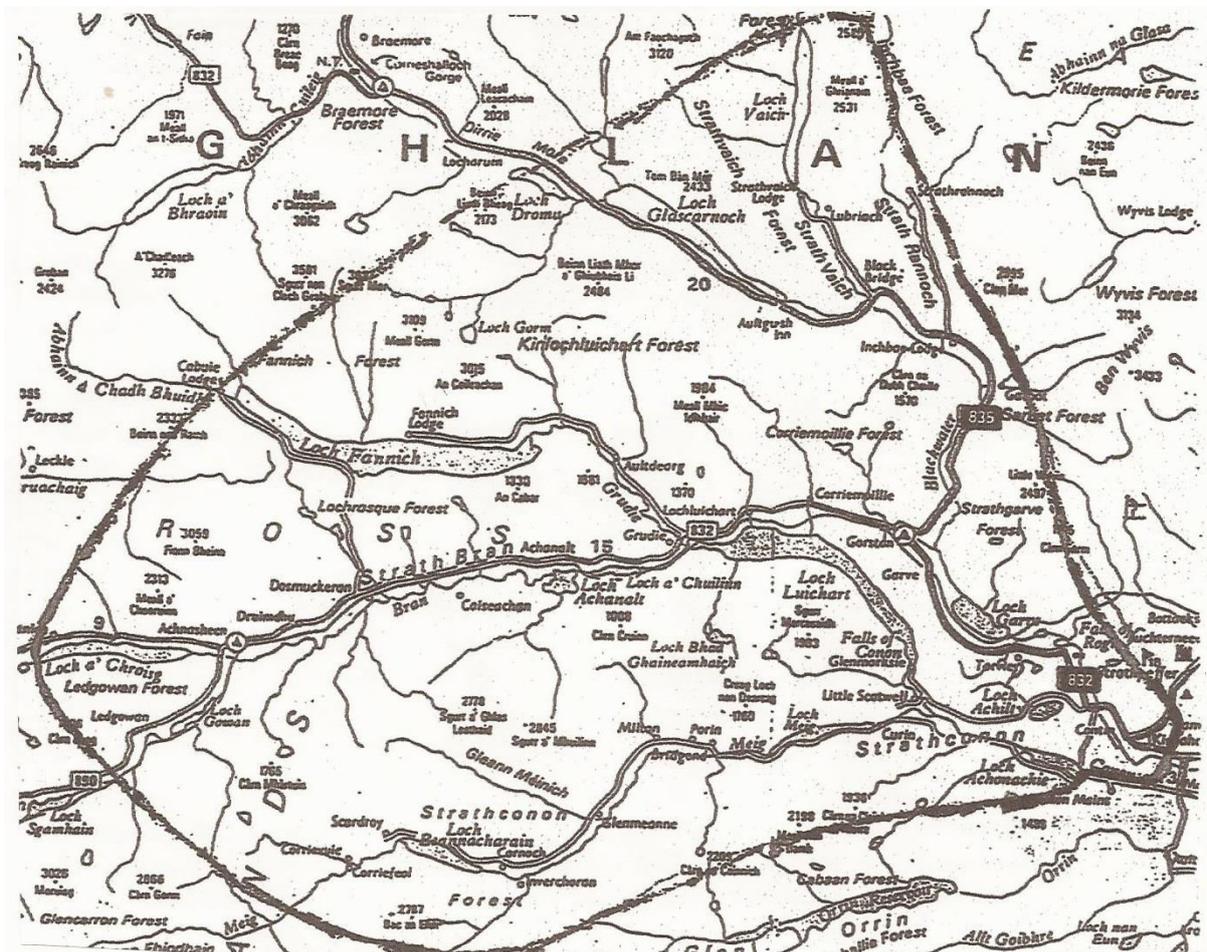
Congregation No.392196

Scottish Charity No. SC011897

Situation

Contin Parish extends over a very wide and beautiful area of Mid Ross: '197,465 acres,' according to The Third Statistical Account, 'one of the largest parishes in Scotland.' It comprises in the east the very fertile farmland of the Conon and Blackwater valley in which the village of Contin is set, near to the confluence of the Conon and Blackwater Rivers; and to the south west, the west and north west, the much more rugged and less populous hill and mountain country of Strathconon; Garve; Lochluichart and Achnasheen; Inchbae and Aultguish

The map below show the boundaries of Contin Parish Church of Scotland



Service arrangements in Contin Parish

In the parish there are two places of worship: Contin Church and Kinlochluichart Church. Down through the years two separate services on Sundays took place in the parish: one in Contin, commencing at 11.15 a.m., a second in Kinlochluichart, commencing at 12.30 p.m. Following the commencement of the linkage ministry with Fodderty & Strathpeffer Church of Scotland in April 2013, it was possible to continue

to have two services in our widely flung parish only by employing lay readers or retired ministers to take the service in one or other of our two parish churches on most Sundays of the year. By the spring of 2016 however it was obvious these arrangements were no longer sustainable due to falling numbers, rising costs and consequent increasing financial difficulties. Accordingly, Contín Kirk Session agreed that no longer could we afford to have a service in Contín Church **and** Kinlochluichart Church on most Sundays of the year: and that on each Sunday there should be one act of worship – not two – in our parish: **a joint parish service** taken by the linkage minister: These new arrangements took effect on May 1st 2016.

Henceforth in Contín parish all weekly acts of worship throughout the year have taken the form of **joint parish services**, commencing at 11.30 a.m. week about, in one or other of the two parish churches. At the minister's discretion a service may be take place on a Sunday afternoon once a month in Strathconon Hall.

When the joint parish services take place in Contín Church, music for praise singing is provided by a Hymnal Plus, a digitalised music maker. Likewise in Kinlochluichart Church where however occasionally an organist is available to play the organ.

Age Profile of the Congregations of Contín Parish and Attendance at Worship

The congregation of Contín Parish Church of Scotland is overwhelmingly ageing or already aged. Over the years the number of regular worshippers in our two churches has slumped: many of the faithful have died, while others have moved away but few newcomers have taken their place. Rarely, if ever, do young people, say under 35 years of age, come to worship in the joint parish services in Contín Church or Kinlochluichart Church. The absence of younger people is certainly not due to their lack in the parish for during the last decade many new and substantial houses have been built, especially in Contín. And yet, no young folk come to Church, be the place of worship Contín Church or Kinlochluichart Church. Obviously the preaching and / or the practice of the Christian message in our Parish has little or no attraction for the young folk who have made Contín their home but are utterly indifferent to the Church. On our congregational roll are the names of 80 people. Average attendance at worship in the joint weekly services however is 20 - 25 people, those who in the profession and practice of their beliefs constitute a faithful core set in a sea of indifference, if not rejection. Those who constitute the faithful core are always welcoming, warm and mutually supportive.

Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriage

Concerning the General Assembly's Ministers and Deacons in civil partnerships and same sex marriages legislation, not surprisingly, given our parish age profile and our traditional Highland heritage, we are conservative in our understanding and practice of Biblical teaching. Accordingly we subscribe to the Church of Scotland's traditional interpretation and teachings regarding marriage and sexual relations.

Finance

We are an aid-receiving congregation and over the last decade we have struggled, but failed, to make ends meet, our annual expenditure always exceeding our annual income from offerings and fund raising. We have been, and are, neither complacent nor fatalistic about our parish finances. Hence our Session's decisions of March 2016

To discontinue separate weekly services and institute joint parish services week about in the two parish churches and to cease the employment of a paid organist to lead in praise. As a result of these measures the deficit in our annual accounts for the year ending December 31, 2016 was -£1,056, compared to -£5,077 for the year ending December 31, 2015. Moreover although fund raising on the scale of twenty years ago no longer takes place due to the advancing years of the faithful core some fund raising does still go on, in particular an annual sale of work which always takes place in November. In spite of the fragile state of our finances we always give annually generous donations to Christian Aid, The Barnabas Fund, The Highland Hospice Fund and Poppyscotland.

We are fortunate in having a savings account on which to draw when required and two funds - held and administered on our behalf by the General Trustees - from which we can draw to pay for all fabric expenses.

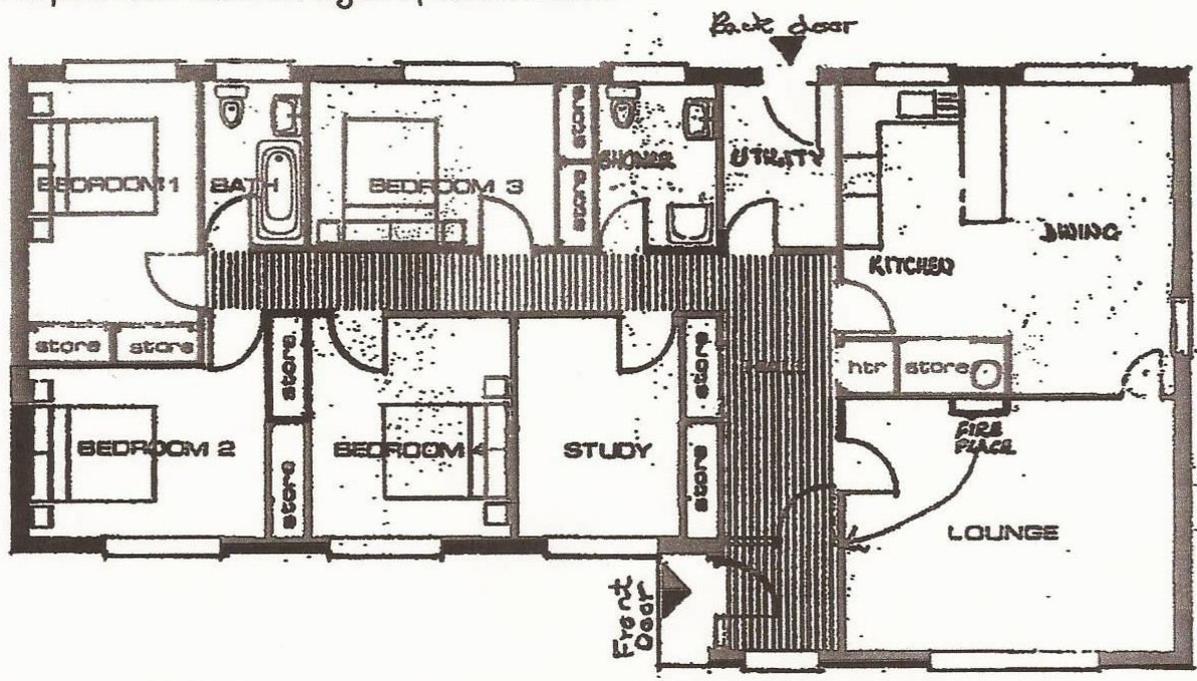
Fabric

Thanks to the aforementioned fabric funds considerable refurbishment of the fabric of both Contin Church and Kinlochluichart Church has been undertaken in the last year and a half: new electric heaters, new carpets, new pew cushions throughout each church, and total refurbishment of the vestry of Contin Church, and the repainting of all the interior of Kinlochluichart Church and much of the interior of Contin Church: it should be noted that the refurbished vestry of Kinlochluichart Church also serves as Lochluichart Community Centre.

The Manse

The linkage manse is set in the middle of the village of Contin, adjacent to the main road and facing south west. It is a spacious bungalow comprising a lounge with an open fireplace; LPG (Gas) central heating; a modern and fully fitted kitchen and dining area; four double bedrooms; a study; one toilet in which are also set a bath and a shower; a second toilet and shower room; and an integral garage.

The plan below shows the layout of Contin Manse



Insulation in the manse loft was upgraded to the very highest standard two years ago. New triple glazed windows and a new back door were fitted in June 2017.

At the front and at the rear of the manse are well established gardens. Help with maintenance and grass cutting is on-going and available throughout the year.

The two parish churches



Contin Kirke (Photo: Uisdean Menzies)



We are very proud of our two parish churches. And rightly so!

Kinlochluichart Church

What are we looking for in a minister?

Finally, we hope our new minister will cherish all areas of the linkage equally; the outlying, sparsely populated areas as well as the more populous centres and that he / she will be active, outgoing and sociable, getting to know, or making himself or herself known to the faithful core, to irregular attenders at worship, and beyond these in the wider community to the never attenders at worship. We are in short looking for a minister who will be a leader in our community, a man or woman who will consider it his or her duty to call in on people, irrespective of who they are, in their homes, care home and hospital, and to visit all the schools in our parish.

Heavy demands? Yes! Some might say unreasonable but the ministry **is** a calling