

Parish Profile

Contin Linked with Fodderty and Strathpeffer

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read this, the profile of our parishes of Contin linked with Fodderty and Strathpeffer. We are two parishes forming part of the Presbytery of Ross, located within the ancient county of Ross-shire, now part of the modern Highland Region.

The Communities

Contin Parish is one of the largest parishes in Scotland and comprises the Contin and Kinlochluichart churches. There is a church at Strathconon but regular services are no longer held there. In the east of the parish lies 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. To the south west, the west and north west, lies the much more rugged and less populous hill and mountain country of Strathconon, Garve, Lochluichart and Achnasheen, Inchbae and Aultguish, which many regards as one of the most beautiful areas of Scotland.



Contin village is about 20 miles from Inverness or 8 miles from Dingwall and lies on the popular [North Coast 500 tourist route](#) as does Lochluichart.

Contin village has a busy shop and at time of writing, the ground had just been broken for the new community hall. There are successful hotels in Contin, Achnasheen and Aultguish. Kinlochluichart church was built by Thomas Telford in 1825 and is a grade II listed building. The church lies about a mile west of Lochluichart village. It is currently being refurbished with good disabled access and toilet facilities, which also provide a comfortable meeting space which can be accessed by the local community. There are good community council internet links between Contin and Garve district council. Kinlochluichart church roof will require some repair which should be completed by next spring. It is planned to restart the Garve sale of work which is a well-attended event and very popular with local people and takes place in November.

Fodderty and Strathpeffer Parish is centred in the attractive spa village of Strathpeffer, once the most northerly spa in Europe. Several large hotels remain from these times, and cater for many

tourists annually. Fodderty is the name of the community of houses and farms some half mile distant, which formed the main parish in pre-Victorian times; its easterly boundary extending to Dochcarty on the outskirts of Dingwall.

Strathpeffer has an excellent primary school, built in 2000, which also accommodates children from the surrounding area. The school uses the church for Easter and Christmas services. It is hoped that our new minister will continue to develop a close relationship with the school. The secondary school for the area, Dingwall Academy, also has a good reputation, both academically and socially.

Strathpeffer has a busy village square with shops; and the old Victorian Railway Station which is still in existence, now houses a museum, education centre, café, etc. The village also has various clubs, including golf, shinty, cricket (all 3 over 100 years in existence), bowling and rowing, and has its own pipe band which traditionally marches from the square to the grounds at Castle Leod for the annual Highland Gathering.

A new building programme by Highland Council is in the process of preparing for the erection of 40 new houses, bringing new families into the village.

The Strathpeffer Residents Association has had plans drawn up for a play park/community area beyond the primary school playing field.

Communication links to the rest of the UK are good. The nearest railway station is in Dingwall, with the mainline hub in Inverness. Contin parish itself is served by no less than four railway stations. The Inverness airport is forty-five minutes' drive away offering connections to the UK and beyond.

Many challenging mountain biking trails are easily accessible from the village. The very popular, [Strathpuffer 24](#) hour cycling challenge takes place annually on trails through the parishes. There are also numerous walking routes around the area.

There are excellent medical services, with an established practice in new buildings in Strathpeffer, a cottage hospital in Dingwall, and Raigmore Hospital in Inverness. Employment is mainly agriculture, tourism, the public sector and the service industry. Housing is a mixture of privately owned, housing authority and Highland Council.

Our Buildings

Fodderty and Strathpeffer church sits in an imposing position about halfway between the village centre and the school and health centre. This solid church, which was designed and built towards the end of the last century in the Victorian Gothic Revival style, has a planned maintenance programme which keeps it in excellent order. In 2011, £10,000 was raised to have a new lighting system installed. The church has a digital organ, electric piano and a baby grand piano which are used by the two organists. An audio system with T loop is in place, and it is hoped to install an audio/visual system in the future. The church hall, adjoining the sanctuary, has recently been decorated, including the fitting of new carpets and curtains. Also, a new cooker and hot water boiler have recently been installed in the kitchen. The hall is well used by various groups such as Sunday Club, Youth Café,

Prayer Group, Ladies Fellowship, and in the preparation of Soup Lunches, BBQs, Sunday morning brunches and on various other occasions. <http://www.strathpefferchurchofscotland.org>

Contin Parish has two places of worship. Contin Church is perhaps a rarity in that it is located on its own island which is accessed by a road bridge. The church may have been founded by St Maelrubha in the 7th century, although it was considerably updated in around 1832. The church continues to be well maintained throughout and is in a good condition. There is an organ and a T loop system. Considerable refurbishment of the fabric of both Contin Church and Kinlochluichart Church has been undertaken in recent years: new electric heaters, new carpets, new pew cushions throughout each church, the 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.

Kinlochluichart has an organ and usually has the services of an organist. Both churches have the use of a digital hymnal. It should be noted that the refurbished vestry of Kinlochluichart Church also serves as Lochluichart Community Centre.

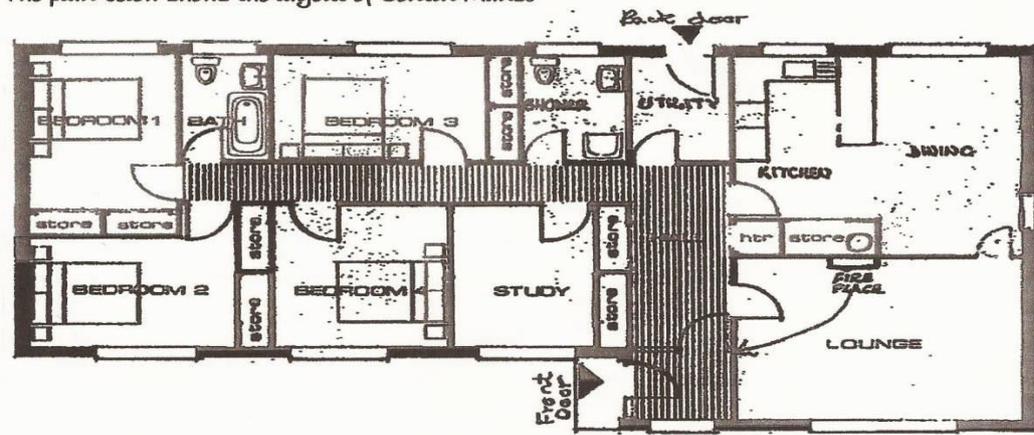
The Manse

The linkage manse is set in the middle of the village of Contin, adjacent to the main road and facing south west, 3 miles from Strathpeffer and approximately 12 miles from Kinlochluichart. 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.

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 ongoing and available throughout the year.

The plan below shows the layout of Contin Manse



The Vacancy

This vacancy came about due to the retirement of our Minister in 2016. Since then we have been led in worship by our Ordained Local Minister or by our Interim Moderator

In accordance with the provisions of the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act 2015, both Sessions have stated that they are unwilling to depart from the traditional doctrine and practice of the Church.

Service Arrangements and the Linkage

The formal linkage took place in 2011 and at the time it was agreed that a service would take place at all three churches every Sunday. However, since then, the pattern of worship has changed so that there is a weekly service at Strathpeffer followed by a service at either Contin or Kinlochluichart.

Joint services take place throughout the year along with joint celebrations of communion. World Day of Prayer and Remembrance services are shared with the Episcopal Church in Strathpeffer.

The Life of the Church



We have an active Women's Fellowship Group, involving ladies from all three churches in the linkage, who meet together on the first Tuesday of each month in Strathpeffer church hall. The women of the group take a stall at the yearly Great Feil Maree in Dingwall and raise a substantial amount for charity. The Group also participates in The World Day of Prayer, and actively supports Christian Aid week with a plant sale/coffee morning every year.

The Prayer Group meets regularly in Strathpeffer Church Hall.

The Sunday Club, with dedicated leaders, meets every Sunday morning during term time in Fodderty and Strathpeffer Church, initially joining the service before leaving to go to the church hall. The Club very often leads the worship in services throughout the year, notably on Mother's Day, Prize Giving and at Christmas; these are normally joint linkage services, and on these special occasions, the Club frequently organises BBQs or Sunday brunches, to be enjoyed by all three churches. Last year, to encourage non-church going children to come to church, the Club hosted a Summer Club, which led to a vital outreach within our local community; and for the last two years, the Club Leaders have taken children to attend the General Assembly activities in Edinburgh.



The Youth Cafe meets on Sunday evenings for pupils in S1 to S6, when topics affecting them and society around them, are discussed.



We also have a volunteer, dedicated Pastoral Care Worker.

Our Vision

We are looking for a Minister who will come and live out their calling with us in the beautiful area in which we live. We are entrusting ourselves to God's care, because we do not know what He has in store for any of us. 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. We seek someone who will be known as a visible presence within our communities

Our churches reflect the rural communities in which we live, with its richness and diversity. Some people find that they can reach out to God through a more traditional approach; others have more progressive leanings; many worshippers can relate to both. We seek a minister who will relate to all the members of the congregation and who is at home with both traditional and contemporary praise.

We do hope, however, that whoever comes to us will be someone who will relate to a wide range of people: a teacher and leader whose thinking is rooted in the scripture but earthed in the realities of life, someone who will support us in developing our faith and the expression of this. We are calling someone of strong faith, big heart and integrity, and hopefully a good sense of humour. We hope that as a congregation, we have these qualities too.

We are not perfect, and we do not expect this of you!

Statistics

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Members	93	92	92	90	87	88
Adherents	79	79	77	75	75	73
Baptisms	2	4	0	0	1	0
Marriages	4	6	1	0	1	0
Funerals	4	8	3	2	2	0

Finances

Both congregations are in a sound financial position, covering their expenses while at the same time supporting other charities and good causes throughout the year.