

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY – LOCAL CHURCH REVIEW - CRAMOND KIRK

Purpose

The proposals in this paper are designed to **support and communicate the objectives** of the Local Church Review (LCR).

Objectives of this communications strategy

- increase engagement with our priority “audiences” over the next three to five years (engagement to include introducing mechanisms for audience input and feedback)
- and thus to support an increase in the number of ‘active’ congregation members over the next three-to-five years
- support an increase in Kirk Hall usage over the next three-to-five years
- wherever appropriate, reduce production costs of, and reliance on, paper-based communications by increasing use of online channels
- establish and maintain consistency of message and visual appearance of all communications products, both paper-based and online.

Timescale

In line with the lifespan of the Local Church Review, this communications strategy will continue to be developed and progressively implemented over the next three-to-five years.

Key messages

These are what we want people to hear and respond to. They should be used across all communications channels and products.

- Everyone is welcome at Cramond Kirk (“All are welcome in this place”)
- Giving of your time and talents is a key part of your Christian commitment
- Enjoying the fellowship of Kirk activities is rewarding on many levels

Further messages derived from the above, relating to individual initiatives, will be developed, and tailored to particular audiences as relevant.

Target audiences

These are the groups of people with whom we wish to communicate. The matrix below maps our disparate ‘audiences’ by (a) priority for our communication activity, and (b) their ability to influence the desired objectives.

		ABILITY TO INFLUENCE OUR OBJECTIVES		
		Strong	Medium	Low
PRIORITY FOR OUR COMMUNICATIONS	High	<p>Kirk members & adherents – regular attenders</p> <p>Kirk Session, especially new Elders</p> <p>Parents of young people in youth groups</p>	<p>Kirk members & adherents – occasional attenders</p> <p>Newly-weds</p> <p>Parents of children baptised/blessed in the Kirk (Kinderkirk)</p>	<p>Kirk members & adherents who never attend</p> <p>New residents moving into the area, incl to retirement / care homes</p>
	Medium	<p>Non-members attending WatchNight, Christmas Day Services</p> <p>Parents of children attending Annual Youth Service & school services & Easter / Christmas Clubs</p> <p>Parent & Toddler group adults</p> <p>Hall activity organisers – regular & ad hoc</p>	<p>Function organisers / wedding planners</p> <p>Relatives of those whose funeral services were conducted by one of our Ministers</p> <p>Breakfast Club attenders who are not members</p> <p>Attenders at Hall activities inc Monday Café & Almond Mains</p> <p>Potential choir members</p> <p>Potential members of Visiting Team</p> <p>Potential Christian Aid collectors</p> <p>Old Kirk & Muirhouse members; City Gates Baptist Church</p>	<p>Casual passers-by who visit / attend a service</p> <p>Visiting friends & relatives of members</p> <p>Presbytery & other Edinburgh churches</p> <p>Church of Scotland at 121 George Street</p> <p>Members & leaders of Youth Groups that meet in the Halls</p> <p>Barnton & Cramond Community Council, Cramond Association, local District Nurse Team</p>
	Low	<p>Long distance Kirk members / “diaspora”</p>	<p>Fresh Start and other local charities we support</p> <p>Turi Children’s Project</p>	<p>Festival visitors / Doors Open / ancestry interest</p> <p>“Friends of Cramond” history interest</p> <p>Attendees at functions in Hall</p> <p>Tradespeople providing Hall services</p>

Tactics

These are the tools and methods we will use.

1. **The Kirk's website** is key to the success of this communications strategy and the Local Church Review. Priority is now being given to rationalising and developing this, and providing enhanced content, including better photography, to communicate the breadth and vitality of our activities.

The website should be the prime external source of all information about the Kirk. Design of other communications products should be brought into line with the website identity, to create a similar look-and-feel.

2. At the same time, we must cater for **those with specific communications needs** for whom the website may not be the most appropriate channel, for example – those who are visually impaired or hard of hearing, people who are not digitally literate. For the foreseeable future, alternative channels will need to be maintained for these audiences.

3. Review **mailing lists** and their need. Use remaining mailing lists more effectively to drive traffic to website:

- Post list for Grapevine – around 25
- Email list for Kinderkirk parents (0-2½ years) – around 70 recipients
- Email list for Sunday Club Newsletter – around 70 children
- Mailing list for members outwith Parish
- Mailing list for other Edinburgh churches

4. Make more effective use of **rolling news screen in Hall Gathering Space** to promote Kirk activities and website. Improve readability.

5. Make more effective use of **Noticeboards** around the Kirk and in the Hall Gathering Space, to promote our activities and website. Improve consistency and regularity of updated notices.

6. Review use of **Facebook page for the Kirk Halls**. In the light of research, determine whether this is an effective channel or not. Ensure there is a link back to main website.

7. Develop the Kirk's **Twitter account**

- to drive traffic to website
- to highlight particular Kirk activities
- to promote availability of Hall spaces
- to create dialogue with existing and potential audiences
- to link up with youth organisations and cross-promote activities

8. Where appropriate (i.e. when something is genuinely newsworthy), promote Kirk activities to media (local, national or broadcast / any local bloggers / Life and Work)

Channels

Listed below are the ways we currently communicate with our audiences, along with recommendations for their potential development.

Retain in hard copy

- Order of Service sheet, including large print version on yellow paper (easier for visually impaired and people with dementia)
- Kirk Announcement sheet (also reproduced on website)
- Audio recording of Services (also on website)
- Monthly Prayer Diary (also on website)
- "Welcome to Cramond Kirk" yellow cards at pew-ends
- The Grapevine (also on website)
- Christmas Club & Easter Club promotional leaflets (handed out in local schools as well as on Sundays)
- Elders' Handbook (annual) – retain meantime, but consider potential for dedicated password-protected Elders' section on website to hold this content.

Migrate content to website

This will allow hard copies to be run off as and when needed, and will ensure they are accessible eg to Elders:

- "Welcome to Cramond Kirk" leaflet – as a pdf
- Young Cramond booklet – requires regular updating, pdf
- Visitors' leaflet (History of Cramond Kirk) – information already on website, separate pdf for use during the Edinburgh Festivals etc
- Leaflet for potential Hall users - pdf

Other

- Leaflet with hymns for school services – replace with large screen?

Potential new channels

- A newsletter tailored specifically to Kirk members – could be created online. Need to explore benefits first.
- Online blog – has some resource implications, but could be tackled through planning content and a contributors' rota
- Feedback / comments mechanism on website – again, potential resource implications, as need to ensure comments are monitored and responded to.

Evaluation of communications

What will be the determinants of success of this communications strategy, and how will "success" be measured?

Research

- conduct research with (?cross-section of) congregation / Kirk members to obtain views on effectiveness of current communications and their communications preferences
- website survey on content / ease of use
- promote regular feedback channels, eg via quarterly Grapevine articles & Eldership surveys.

Evidence

The following statistics are relevant and should be monitored over the period covered by this strategy:

- increase / decrease in membership numbers

- increase in Hall income
- reduction in costs of printing materials / booklets
- increase in website users / visits
- increase in Twitter followers
- increase in number of “engaged” members.

Next steps

- In consultation with Committee Conveners, identify need for any immediate / short-term additional products and consider how best to provide these
- Develop the proposed key messages and consult on their resonance
- Consider whether new or enhanced channels / tools are required; consider resource implications of creating and maintaining these
- Identify printed materials or other channels that can be “stopped” or mothballed
- Ensure continuing alignment of emerging communications strategy with the objectives of the Local Church Review.

Resource & cost implications

Resource: Implementing this strategy will require more dedicated resource, in terms of the number of people involved in leading communications work. For example, updating the website (currently done by the Kirk Secretary and the Convener of the Technology Committee) could and should be a more widely shared responsibility. It is proposed to draw on more of the specialist communications expertise that exists amongst Session members, to ensure impetus and sustainability for this strategy.

Costs: Website developments – re-design and re-structure is being outsourced – c£500 (content migration and new content creation to be done in-house at no cost). Against the possibility that research with congregation / committee conveners throws up the need for further communications products in hard copy, or re-prints of existing products, contingency £500.

Total: £1,000

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June 2016