

**Church of Scotland General Trustees**  
***'Well equipped spaces in the right places'***  
**Supporting the Local Church through new ways of dealing with land and buildings**

Many thanks for reading this document which contains all the background information you will need to answer the Survey Monkey questionnaire [WEB LINK: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/COSBuildingsPlan> ] – the questionnaire, and data analysis is being run by **BEFS** for the Church of Scotland General Trustees.

 **The Church of Scotland**  
General Trustees

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BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
FORUM SCOTLAND

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**Before you begin ...**

On behalf of the Church of Scotland General Trustees, BEFS looks forward to receiving considered responses from a wide range of individuals and welcomes all responses.

However, the questionnaire has been initiated by the Church of Scotland primarily for those directly involved with the management and maintenance of their churches, and would be most suited to being answered by those with direct connections to fabric committees, kirk sessions, presbyteries and forward planning groups within those.

Please download the full document [Click on this link, which will open in a new window: <https://www.befs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CoSGT-BEFS-Survey.pdf>] - which discusses the possibilities for the Church of Scotland land and buildings for the future.

To enable well- informed responses you will need to have access to this document as you make your way through the survey.

This survey will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.

This survey and the related information handling abides by the Privacy Notices of both [BEFS](#) and the [Church of Scotland](#).

Please fill in and submit answers only through Survey Monkey – if you do not have online access yourself please complete this with a friend who does. Unfortunately we cannot accept paper responses for analysis.

Each section of this paper has a number of related questions where we will gather your views on what has been discussed or suggested. We start by gathering some information through Survey Monkey which helps us to understand what perspective you are answering the questions from.

We also gather some geographic data and Church data. This helps us to understand the differing needs and views of different areas and congregations. It also helps us to find any similarities which may be helpful for future planning for the Church.

This document will show examples of the screens you will see throughout the survey, as well as providing information from the Church of Scotland to help inform your thinking.

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**\* 1. Before you begin it is important for us to understand the context for your responses.**

Are you responding (please pick one):

- On behalf of a Presbytery
- On behalf of a Kirk Session
- As a member of a Presbytery
- As a member of a Kirk Session or congregation
- Other (please specify)

**2. Gender of respondent?**

- Female
- Male
- prefer not to respond

**3. Age group of respondent?**

- 16-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 75+
- prefer not to say

**\* 4. We will gather no personal data during this questionnaire, but there are some Church and geographic details which will help to provide a more detailed analysis of the information we receive.**

Please provide (where known and relevant to your answers):

Name of Presbytery

Name of Congregation

Please provide 6 digit CoS number (Congregation Number) if known

Please enter the first part of the post-code (eg EH2)

Do you consider the above to be Urban, Rural or Semi-Rural? Please state: 'Urban' or 'Rural' or 'Semi-Rural'

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Please read each section before answering the questions in the survey.

## **SECTION 1:**

### **Introduction & Background**

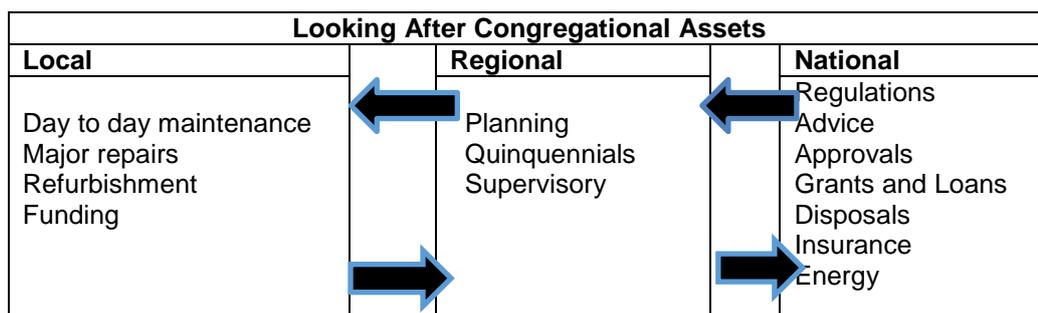
1. The General Assembly of 2018 'encouraged the General Trustees to develop an Asset Plan for the Church of Scotland's estate with a view to recommendations being made to the Assembly in 2020'. This Consultation Paper is designed to seek views within the Church and beyond to enable the Plan to be presented to the Assembly next year. The paper considers the congregational estate of both land and buildings. It starts with an analysis of the current position and puts forward proposals for change.
2. From the outset it is important to be clear what is meant by a 'Plan', or equally important, what a 'Plan' will not be. It will not be a detailed plan for each building in the Church's ownership. It will be about direction, principles, policies and processes. It will be a framework for action by Presbyteries, local congregations and the General Trustees. Further information on the General Trustees is given in Appendix X on the website.
3. The 2018 Assembly asked the Council of Assembly for a *Radical Action Plan*. The 2019 Assembly approved a *Radical Action Plan*, this document, survey, and the resultant report are part of the process that was approved to continue that work. The Church is in the process of change. And its buildings are integral to that plan. No organisation with the buildings and land on the scale owned and used by the Church can afford not to have a plan that sets a direction for its physical assets and provides the tools to enable that plan to be delivered. Like the Radical Action Plan, this Plan is designed to liberate the local church to be as effective as possible.
4. The Church has 1,250 congregations in 43 Presbyteries in Scotland and 1 in England. The Church owns around
  - 3,000 churches and halls
  - 800 manses
  - 500 Glebes amounting to 12,458 acres

These basic figures do not disclose the dynamic nature of the estate. In the last ten years, 11 new churches have been built involving an investment of £14m; 26 existing churches have undergone major (more than £400,000) refurbishment/repair, with an overall investment of £21m ; and 153 church buildings have been sold. Over the same period, the number of communicant members has reduced by about 29% (2008 – 471,894; 2017 – 336,831).

#### **Well-equipped spaces in the right places?**

5. The overall vision of the Plan is of a church estate that has 'well equipped spaces in the right places'. In preparing this consultation paper, the General Trustees have already informally consulted with Fabric Conveners, Presbyteries and others. Many of the proposals have been 'trailed' at seminars in 2017 and 2018 where over 1000 congregational representatives were present. The General Trustees have visited over 200 congregations over the last few years, supporting them and listening to the issues that affect them. Conversations have taken place with Presbyteries from Glasgow to Uist – from the largest to the smallest. So much of what is being proposed will not come as a surprise to many people.

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6. The General Trustees' assessment is that many good things are happening – there are many 'well equipped spaces in the right places' – but there are some fundamental concerns that need to be addressed. The current way of managing and developing the congregational estate no longer meets the needs of much of the Church. The Church operates with one traditional model: congregations have day-to-day responsibility for repairing and improving the church buildings and manses which they operate and for financing their operation. Many congregations (probably the majority) are increasingly finding this model difficult to manage and/or a distraction from their principal tasks of worship and mission. Outdated or deteriorating buildings, the effects of climate change, and increased responsibilities in respect of buildings many of which are open to the public all add to the burden.
7. Although glebeland can bring financial benefits to congregations, local involvement can be burdensome. To explain the position a simple typology of congregations has developed from discussions with Presbyteries. It is not a scientific exercise but does reflect the current situation for many people. There are four kinds of congregations:
- (a) Those with both financial resources and skills to look after and develop their land and buildings
  - (b) Those with the skills but not the resources
  - (c) Those with the resources but not the skills
  - (d) Those with neither skills nor resources
- The anecdotal evidence is that about 20% of congregations fall into category (a), with more than 50% in category (d) - and it is growing. Change is needed.
8. Many Presbyteries are also finding it difficult to exercise their responsibilities in relation to planning of buildings and supervision. Overall, the evidence points to the need for a reduction in the number of buildings, a continuing improvement in the quality of the church's congregational buildings and changes in the management model reflecting the skills available to congregations and Presbyteries (a more detailed analysis can be found in Appendix X)
9. It is not all 'doom and gloom'. Exciting things are happening, and the opportunity is there to build on the good things. Many congregations are already meeting the challenges and are looking at the need to adapt, change or rationalise their buildings or even physically move to enable them to focus on worship, discipleship and mission. They are already working on achieving 'well equipped spaces in the right places' and this Plan builds on their experiences. For them, change involves developing new forms of management and development. Change is not going to be cost free, either emotionally or financially. It may mean major change to, or giving up, long cherished spaces. Similarly, there are Presbyteries such as St Andrews, Aberdeen and Shetland undertaking major overviews of the entire presbytery estate. The work so far indicates that a greater level of

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professionalism will be required at every level - at Presbytery and local level as well as nationally. Some of the key changes will be in the support that Presbyteries are given to deal with property issues, taking a greater level of involvement in the buildings within their bounds, so that congregations can focus even more on worship and mission.

10. While there are good things happening, this is far from universal. As one person has said "in my Presbytery, and probably most others, all buildings are classified as A, essential, and every congregation wants tenaciously to hold onto their beloved buildings. We have been taught to worship our buildings and our Ministers, and to keep buildings open at all costs is an action of devotion". There is much work to be done to change this kind of attitude. It holds the Church back from fulfilling its potential to follow Jesus. And as the command "Follow me" means now, the need to make our places fit for purpose, both in terms of 'well equipped' and 'in the right place' is urgent. The Church has a limited time and opportunity to improve and rationalise its estate.

*Many thanks for reading the introduction to this survey giving some background information and setting the scene of, 'where we are now'. With that in mind, please answer the Section 1 survey question through Survey Monkey.*



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**SECTION 1 - Introduction & Background**

This section sets the scene for 'where the Church is now' - having read this section, we will ask if this section reflects your understanding.

**5. Do you recognise the analysis of the Church of Scotland's current situation?**

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

Do you have any other comments in relation to this question?

## SECTION 2:

### So where does the church go from here?

*Please now examine the second section of the document, which covers a number of areas for future development.*

#### So where does the Church go from here?

11. Out of these discussions the General Trustees are proposing the following **principles** to underpin all the proposals:
- (a) **Buildings and glebeland are simply a means by which the mission of the Church can be achieved.** The traditional model which the church currently operates - that of providing space for Church presence through a dedicated building - is not appropriate in every case. A range of models is more appropriate. There are alternative ways of the Church having a 'space' or presence in the community which do not involve ownership of buildings.
  - (b) **Presbyteries have the key role to play in encouraging, supporting and supervising congregations and strategic planning,** including identifying buildings to be retained or made redundant. Presbyteries need to be strengthened to undertake those roles.
  - (c) **The principal contact between the congregation and the General Trustees should continue to be through the Presbytery.**
  - (d) **While the congregation should continue to have the principal role of managing property assets at a local level, it is recognised that not all congregations are able to fulfil all of the tasks.** There should be a variety of supports which would enable individual congregations to take the initiative about the future of their buildings.
  - (e) **While the Church values the land and buildings that it has inherited, these have to be suitable to achieve the Church's primary purpose of worship and mission,** recognising the tension between buildings as missional assets as well as items of cultural, architectural and historical importance. The Church's charitable purpose is not the conservation of buildings.
  - (f) **Working together between congregations and between Presbyteries should be encouraged.** Collaboration or partnership with organisations outwith the Church should be developed where these could provide ways in which local congregations can be supported so that they can focus on worship and mission.
  - (g) **The Church should by default operate with an ecumenical mindset and should be open to sharing buildings with other Christian denominations where practicable.**

*The Principles have been expressed in the table below which should be completed via Survey Monkey.*

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**SECTION 2 - So where does the Church go from here?**

Please now examine the second section of the document, this covers a number of areas for potential proposals for the future.

**6. Out of the ongoing discussions the General Trustees are proposing the following principles to underpin all the proposals.**

**The Principles have been expressed in the table below, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each principle.**

**If you do not think the Principle is priority, please select 'Not a priority'.**

	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Not a priority
<p><b>(a) Buildings and glebeland are simply a means by which the mission of the Church can be achieved.</b></p> <p>The traditional model which the church currently operates - that of providing space for Church presence through a dedicated building - is not appropriate in every case. A range of models is more appropriate. There are alternative ways of the Church having a 'space' or presence in the community which do not involve ownership of buildings.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				

<p><b>(b) Presbyteries have the key role to play in encouraging, supporting and supervising congregations and strategic planning, including identifying buildings to be retained or made redundant. Presbyteries need to be strengthened to undertake those roles.</b></p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p><b>(c) The principal contact between the congregation and the General Trustees should continue to be through the Presbytery.</b></p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p><b>d) While the congregation should continue to have the principal role of managing property assets at a local level, it is recognised that not all congregations are able to fulfil all of the tasks.</b></p> <p>There should be a variety of supports which would enable individual congregations to take the initiative about the future of their buildings.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				

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<p>e) <b>While the Church values the land and buildings that it has inherited, these have to be suitable to achieve the Church's primary purpose of worship and mission</b>, recognising the tension between buildings as missional assets as well as items of cultural, architectural and historical importance. The Church's charitable purpose is not the conservation of buildings.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>f) <b>Working together between congregations and between Presbyteries should be encouraged.</b> Collaboration or partnership with organisations outwith the Church should be developed where these could provide ways in which local congregations can be supported so that they can focus on worship and mission.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>g) <b>The Church should by default operate with an ecumenical mindset and should be open to sharing buildings with other Christian denominations where practicable.</b></p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Are there any Principles you would wish to add?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; width: 100%;"></div>	

**What is meant by 'well equipped spaces in the right places'?**

12. In looking to define 'well equipped', the following questions have been raised across the Church. The crucial question is 'well equipped for what?' Form should follow function. What does the building say to others about what it means to be a Christian congregation? How open and welcoming is it to the parish and community it serves? How do the Church's sanctuaries and halls, most of which are open to the public to a greater or lesser extent, compare to other public buildings? Does the state of decoration tell of people who are proud to share their congregational 'home' with other people? Is it too expensive for its missional needs? Is it good Christian stewardship to have a small congregation rattling around in a huge building? Is it sufficient that the church (or sanctuary with a church complex) is only used for a short time each week as a worship space? What is the purpose of the building? Is it needed?

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13. And what is meant by 'in the right places'? Is the location of the building where it is best needed? How does it relate to the wider community? Should congregations be encouraged to ask the question - 'what kind of Christian witness could we give if we didn't have this building? And what does this currently say about the kind of Christian witness given? How close to other Church of Scotland or other Christian denominations buildings is it? Can the locality sensibly support as many churches over the next 10-15 years?
14. But this is not simply about existing buildings. Scotland's population is both growing and moving. New residential areas are being created. Regeneration sees communities changing. So new churches are still being built. And the potential for planting new Christian communities is still there. How well does the Church plan where its building resources should be for the next 20 years? How many buildings are needed in a particular village, town or city? Where should they be? How far should there be criteria about where the Church should invest over the next 10 years, and on the other hand setting out where the Church should disinvest? What criteria could Presbyteries (who have the overall planning responsibility) use in determining both where investment should take place and where longer-term investment is not to take place? And how should investment be funded, given the limited resources available? Could a glebe offer a location for a new church or manse or offer general or social housing development with a new worship and outreach facility as part of the deal?
15. Many people have suggested that the Church would benefit from having a definition of what is a 'well-equipped space'. The proposal is that the General Assembly should adopt a minimum standard that would apply to all church buildings in the same way that there is a minimum standard for manses. And in a similar way, in special circumstances, derogations from the standard would be possible when approved by the Presbytery. This minimum standard could include:
  - (a) Access for all through the main entrance door
  - (b) Flexible spaces - that can be used throughout the week
  - (c) A welcoming space
  - (d) Regular use for worship (weekly or fortnightly?)
  - (e) All health and safety requirements met
  - (f) Modern toilet facilities that take account of the numbers of people using the building (e.g. if building to be used for conferences, more facilities might be required)
  - (g) Facilities for hospitality – a kitchen that meets catering standards
  - (h) Realistic and affordable maintenance costs and management
  - (i) A minimum amount of time during the week that the building is used (e.g. more than one hour per week?)
  - (j) A minimum energy efficiency standard

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7. Paragraphs 12 -15 of the document help to define, 'well equipped spaces in the right places'.

Many people have suggested that the Church would benefit from having a definition of what is a 'well-equipped space'. The proposal is that the General Assembly should adopt a minimum standard that would apply to all CHURCHES and HALLS in the same way that there is a minimum standard for manses.

Do you agree that a definition of a minimum standard would be helpful?

- Strongly agree
- Mildly agree
- Mildly disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. This minimum standard could include any of the below aspects. Please let us know which you would like to see included.

	Include	Do not include	No Comment
(a) Access for all through the main entrance door	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) Flexible spaces - that can be used throughout the week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) A welcoming space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) Regular use for worship (weekly or fortnightly?)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) All health and safety requirements met	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) Modern toilet facilities that take account of the numbers of people using the building (e.g. if building to be used for conferences, more facilities might be required)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(g) Facilities for hospitality – a kitchen that meets catering standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(h) Realistic and affordable maintenance costs and management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(i) A minimum amount of time during the week that the building is used (e.g. more than one hour per week?)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- |                                          |                       |                       |                       |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| (j) A minimum energy efficiency standard | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

Do you have any additional short comment on the criteria?

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16. Similarly, Presbyteries have indicated that guidance on 'in the right place' would be helpful for the buildings part of Presbytery Planning. The General Trustees' suggestion is that the General Assembly should set guidelines for Presbyteries and congregations. These could be in the form of a set of questions looking at a timescale of 10-15 years ahead, including:
- (a) Where should the Church invest in the future? What are the top priorities for investment? And where should the Church be operating only on a 'care and maintenance' or 'palliative care' basis?
  - (b) Where are the growth points within the Presbytery? The answer would involve consultation and potentially joint planning with local authorities' planning committees, other denominations, statutory bodies like NHS, and the wider community.
  - (c) If there is a glebe, does it provide an opportunity for a new-build manse or church or outreach centre?
  - (d) What is the prognosis for existing church buildings in terms of need within a 15-year period (eg congregational age profile)? How 'well equipped' are these buildings? What are the likely maintenance demands for each building (drawn from regular surveys)?
  - (e) How well located are the buildings within a community?
  - (f) Are there buildings that could be operated in partnership with other bodies (particularly other Christian denominations) so that the costs could be shared?
  - (g) How many church buildings should the Church of Scotland maintain in towns? What would be the justification for more than one in most communities? Would this include theology, age, worship style?

9. Please read the guidelines for 'in the right place' as set out in paragraph 16 of the document.

Do you agree with the general view of Presbyteries that there should be guidance to define "in the right place"?

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

Do you have any additional comment on the guidelines in relation to, 'in the right place'?

## SECTION 3:

### Key Areas to help the Church develop 'well equipped spaces in the right places'.



#### How can the Church develop 'well equipped spaces in the right places'?

17. To deliver 'well equipped spaces in the right places', the General Trustees believe that there are three key areas that require attention, all of which involve the General Trustees playing a proactive and supportive role. The General Trustees suggest that these should not be viewed as being in order of importance but are inter-connected:

- Supporting Presbyteries
- Unburdening Congregations
- Sharing the load

18. A word of caution. For each of these areas, the proposals that follow are 'in principle'. If welcomed and then agreed by the General Assembly in 2020, there will need to be further, more detailed work on resourcing, funding, and processes. Some changes could be delivered without the need for Assembly approval, while for others to be fully effective would depend on decisions being made out-with the control of existing Presbyteries, congregations or the General Trustees, such as the size or shape of Presbyteries.

#### Key area: 3A Supporting Presbyteries

19. Presbyteries are the key to ensuring that the Church's estate is both 'well equipped' and 'in the right place'. Presbyteries have three current roles in relation to buildings and land: obtaining information on buildings within their bounds (particularly regular building surveys), planning, and supervision/approval. There is no proposal to change these, but to define more clearly what these roles could entail, how they could be carried out, how they might be supported by the General Trustees, and how they might be financed.

#### Better information

20. The General Trustees recognise that Presbyteries and congregations hold a vast amount of useful information relating to their buildings. The General Trustees have commissioned an IT systems developer to design a bespoke and fit for purpose web-based database that will support Presbyteries and congregations in the administration of their buildings

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and glebes. The database will allow each congregation to upload and manage relevant information and documents such as inspection and survey reports, condition schedules, health and safety information, grant and loan applications, energy procurement information and leases and plans of glebeland. Presbyteries will be able to see all the information relating to the buildings and land within their bounds. There are many benefits to using a web-based platform to support the management of congregational buildings including improved communication between Presbytery, congregations and the national office, streamlined applications to the General Trustees for financial and resource assistance, more efficient and effective annual Presbytery Inspection of Congregational Records process, and the ability to improve the governance arrangements within congregational boards. The General Trustees are committed to working collaboratively with all Presbyteries and congregations in the development and implementation of the web-based platform and full training and support will be provided as part of this major improvement project.

**Better Awareness of Glebes and Planning**

21. It is important to remember that glebeland can play a critical role in Presbytery and congregational planning. Some glebes have development potential either for general or affordable housing. This can range from small scale individual house plots to larger scale housing land. When sold, this capital can provide a significant improvement to a congregation's financial position and a larger income to help with parish ministry costs. Housing development can also be a benefit, particularly to rural communities, attracting new populations to support local businesses, services and young families to reinvigorate local schools.
22. Even if sale for development is not an option, glebeland can be used as part of a congregation's mission and outreach including peace gardens and walks or for community benefit such as playparks, sports facilities and car parking. New churches, halls and manses have been built on glebe land thereby reducing project costs.

**Building Surveys**

23. One of the key components of the database is the condition of the estate. This information is collected through five-yearly building surveys (currently known as Quinquennials) which should provide the base information about the condition of buildings. The current arrangement has the Presbytery responsible for commissioning and paying for the surveys using a standard format of a professional survey at least every ten years, with an intermediate one which can be conducted by the Presbytery Property Committee itself. A copy of the survey is provided to the congregation's Fabric Convener and the congregation then produces a maintenance plan to ensure that the identified 'urgent' and 'essential' items are carried out. Presbytery representatives are expected to meet or correspond with the congregation to ensure that a plan of works has been prepared and work carried out.
24. There are a number of issues with the current approach in respect of buildings:
  - (a) Not all Presbyteries have up-to-date surveys - smaller Presbyteries have difficulty in funding a proper programme, while others find it difficult to organise a regular programme. In 2018, of the 28 Presbyteries that submitted the required Diligence Report (out of 44), 6 reported they were behind schedule – 21%.
  - (b) There is a lack of consistency in the quality of the surveys, their costs and in the follow up.
  - (c) Many congregations do not produce a maintenance plan nor carry out the 'urgent' or 'essential' repairs.

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- (d) Because of these issues, there is no reliable overall information about the condition of the estate in Presbyteries or held by the General Trustees.
25. A regular inspection, reporting and maintenance system is needed, and most Presbyteries agree that the current one should be reviewed or replaced. Producing a new system is the easy part. Making it work is more difficult. Clearly the Presbytery has a key role. Consistency matters, for which there are two options - both of which continue to include a role for the Presbytery:
- (a) A revision of the current arrangements whereby the Presbytery continues to be responsible for commissioning the surveys but using professional surveys for both and ensuring that there is follow up to the survey, but with both a standard format, process and tendering arrangements agreed between Presbyteries and the General Trustees.
  - (b) That the General Trustees take responsibility for commissioning surveys, with the Presbytery responsible for follow up with the congregations.

10. Do you recognise this analysis of Presbyteries in relation to buildings and land?

No	Somewhat	Yes
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11. Paragraph 25 suggests two options:

(a) A revision of the current arrangements whereby the Presbytery continues to be responsible for commissioning the 5-yearly surveys but using professional surveys for both and ensuring that there is follow up to the survey, but with both a standard format, process and tendering arrangements agreed between Presbyteries and the General Trustees.

(b) That the General Trustees take responsibility for commissioning 5-yearly surveys, with the Presbytery responsible for follow up with the congregations.

Which of these do you prefer?

Choice A - revision where Presbytery continues to be responsible for commissioning surveys.

Choice B - General Trustees take responsibility for commissioning surveys.

NEITHER

Please give more information on why you gave the answer above.

If you answered NEITHER please let us know what solutions you feel may address this issue.

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**Presbytery Planning**

26. Current Presbytery Plans centre round the allocation of ministry 'people resources' with buildings being identified in one of four categories (often just in one simple column with no explanation for why the building is in that category):

*A that the building is expected to remain in use beyond the lifetime of the plan*

*B that the building is expected to be closed during the lifetime of the plan, under an adjustment contained therein or otherwise*

*C that the building is expected to be disposed of as soon as possible under an adjustment contained in the plan or otherwise*

*D that the Presbytery is unable to make a determination in relation to a building*

27. At 31 December 2018, Presbytery Plans reveal that Presbyteries have identified 86% as category A, 4% as B, 2% as C and 8% as D.

28. Presbyteries have been encouraged to deal with 'D' buildings - most of which end up in 'A'. Historically, most congregations want to have their building designated 'A'. The inclusion of a building in one of the other categories does not always come as a result of agreement with the congregation. However, there are indications that Presbyteries and congregations themselves are facing up to the need for change and recognising that many buildings do not meet the needs of the future and should be closed. The congregation of the Howe of Fife in the Presbytery of St Andrews voted in June 2018 to dispose of all four buildings in the parish and agreed to investigate ways of having a meeting space. The Presbytery of Shetland, in reviewing the Presbytery Plan (which will see the Presbytery merged with the Presbytery of Aberdeen) developed a priority list of buildings to be kept and a list of buildings that should be disposed of. The General Trustees have been working with these and other Presbyteries in developing their plans and are keen to support more Presbyteries in the development of their Plans.

29. In supporting Presbyteries with planning, the General Trustees would urge the use of buildings and land information from Local Church Reviews (LCR) as a fundamental input into the preparation of the Presbytery Plan. LCR gives congregations the opportunity to set their mission plan and priorities for the next five years. The Act I 2011 requires the Presbytery visiting teams to carry out a due diligence function in conducting the review, satisfying itself that the congregation has complied with the provisions of the Act regarding the maintenance of manses, and that the congregation has implemented the findings of the most recent property surveys. The visiting team should be provided with information regarding the congregation's buildings, their usage, state of repair, suitability and any projects being carried out or proposed, along with detailed financial information. If all this information is used, along with the results of property surveys and the adoption of more objective criteria for 'well equipped space' and 'right place', Presbyteries should have a better and more objective basis for future planning and determining which of the four categories is appropriate for each building. And it should enable congregations themselves to plan their own future with more objective criteria.

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12. Please read the paragraphs on Presbytery Planning (26 -29) before answering the following question.

Do you agree that the data on buildings and land in the Local Church Reviews (LCR) is capable of being used in the Presbytery Planning process?

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

Please expand on your answer if necessary.

### **Managing future investment**

30. To ensure that their buildings are 'well equipped' for future mission, many congregations will wish to carry out a major refurbishment project or even build a new church building. Often the decision as to which building should be upgraded and when the work should be done has been made locally and the congregation has been enthused to undertake the work without Presbytery support in principle and without the General Trustees being consulted. With the limited resources available to the Church, there should be a more planned approach to refurbishment and the provision of new buildings. The General Trustees would urge that Presbytery Plans should produce priorities for investment, identifying a Presbytery wide programme of major capital investment for churches and halls within the Presbytery bounds. This should be based on each Presbytery's overall mission plan.
31. While looking at investment priorities within their bounds, Presbyteries would also be able to help congregations look realistically at fundraising (both capital and future revenue) for any capital project. The average cost of a new building is currently over £2million; the cost of major refurbishment can be about £1million. Raising funds for capital projects is becoming more difficult. The Heritage Lottery Fund that was specifically designed for places of worship has gone and congregations now have to compete with everyone else under the National Lottery Heritage Fund scheme. Grants from the General Trustees average £10,000 for non-Priority Area projects. And raising the capital funds might be the easiest part of the project; many projects can fail on unrealistic revenue expectations. Business plans are now an essential part of any capital project and the General Trustees are developing advice and support for congregations on the preparation of business plans.

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13. Please read the paragraphs on Managing future investment (30 - 31) before answering the following question.

Do you agree that Presbyteries should take a Presbytery-wide view of future buildings investment?

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

Please expand on your answer if necessary, detailing any resources Presbyteries would need to do this effectively.

### **Support and resourcing**

32. The General Trustees are keen to support Presbyteries in their planning role. For some time, the General Trustees have regularly met with Glasgow Presbytery to discuss future planning and investment priorities as well as fabric maintenance issues. A similar initiative is now being undertaken with Edinburgh Presbytery. The five Presbyteries on both sides of the Tay have been looking at how the General Trustees could support them with planning. St Andrews has been working on a 'cluster' based approach to planning, with two General Trustees acting as sounding boards, helping the Presbytery and its congregations to think through which buildings to keep and invest in and those which should not be kept. These have benefited from building up a relationship between specific General Trustees and the Presbyteries with the General Trustees getting to understand the particular local issues and concerns – essential for partnership working. The General Trustees would be willing to develop this approach with other Presbyteries, effectively allocating a Trustee or two to an individual or groups of Presbyteries. Could the General Trustees have a role in developing support for planning?
33. In carrying out their surveying, planning and support/approval roles for local congregations, many Presbyteries need to be much better resourced than they are at present. Relying on voluntary Fabric Conveners and Committees will not necessarily provide the level of expertise that is required for the future. Not all Presbyteries can assume that their Fabric Committee members will have the professional expertise that will enable it to do its job properly. Two Presbyteries (Glasgow and Hamilton) have part-time paid professional advice. These 'Buildings Officers' are able to give advice on a range of issues, commission regular surveys, assist with the buildings part of Presbytery Planning and support local Fabric Conveners. The General Trustees would urge Presbyteries (or groups of Presbyteries) to consider similar paid professionally-qualified Buildings Officers.

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14. Please read the paragraphs on Support and resourcing (32 - 33) before answering the following question.

Provided the financial arrangements can be made, do you agree that Presbyteries or groups of Presbyteries should employ professional Building Officers?

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

Please expand on your answer, if necessary.

## **Key area: 3B Unburdening Congregations**

34. To help congregations focus on worship, discipleship and mission, there are some key areas where the Presbytery and the General Trustees can help reduce the building administration burden on congregations who do not have the skills to undertake all of the responsibilities themselves.

### **Day to Day Fabric Management**

35. Fabric Conveners are becoming more difficult to find - particularly those with qualifications or experience in estate or property management. The buildings they are asked to manage are becoming more challenging. Many Fabric Conveners report that they find specifying the work that needs to be done, procuring architects, surveyors and contractors and supervising work, onerous. The Church's buildings need a more professional approach. Other (non-Church) organisations faced with an estate of the scale and complexity of the Church of Scotland have developed a more rationalised approach to management and maintenance. Having already proposed a more professional approach to regular surveys as the basis of understanding the condition and suitability of the estate, the General Trustees are considering ways in which management and maintenance of the Church's estate could be rationalised and thus enable congregations to focus on worship and mission. There is not one simple solution; the proposal is that a variety of options should be developed:
- (a) Presbyteries could provide procurement support to local Fabric Conveners, with the General Trustees producing a procurement manual and support similar to the guidance and support provided for Health and Safety. There should be induction programmes for Fabric Conveners and regular sharing of information.
  - (b) A group of congregations could share a Fabric team, whose role would be to share regular inspections, information about contractors and plan a works programme (eg annual roof work) and get the benefit of some form of 'bulk purchasing' and longer-term contracts.
  - (c) The Kirk Session could appoint an agent to undertake the role of the Fabric Convener, including regular inspections, arranging for both planned and reactive maintenance.
  - (d) A longer term (and more centralised possibility) is that congregations (on a voluntary basis) could agree with the Presbytery and the General Trustees that responsibility for the day-to day management of their buildings be handed over to

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the General Trustees (along with any fabric reserves whether locally or centrally-administered) and with the congregation occupying the buildings on the basis of a service charge. If this were to prove a popular proposal, there would be resource and timing issues for the General Trustees, and any implementation would require a planned change-over.

**Section 3: Key Areas**  
**3B Unburdening Congregations**

Please read section 3B in the document before considering the following questions.

**15. There are a number of options suggested in relation to day-to-day fabric management. Please use the options below to let us know which of these you feel would be relevant and helpful.**

Very Relevant and Helpful                      Somewhat Relevant and Helpful                      Not Relevant and Helpful

(a) Presbyteries could provide procurement support to local Fabric Conveners, with the General Trustees producing a procurement manual and support similar to the guidance and support provided for Health and Safety. There should be induction programmes for Fabric Conveners and regular sharing of information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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(b) A group of congregations could share a Fabric team, whose role would be to share regular inspections, information about contractors and plan a works programme (eg annual roof work) and get the benefit of some form of 'bulk purchasing' and longer-term contracts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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(c) The Kirk Session could appoint an agent to undertake the role of the Fabric Convener, including regular inspections, arranging for both planned and reactive maintenance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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(d) A longer term (and more centralised possibility) is that congregations (on a voluntary basis) could agree with the Presbytery and the General Trustees that responsibility for the day-to day management of their buildings be handed over to the General Trustees (along with any fabric reserves whether locally or centrally-administered) and with the congregation occupying the buildings on the basis of a service charge. If this were to prove a popular proposal, there would be resource and timing issues for the General Trustees, and any implementation would require a planned change-over.

Is there any other option you feel should be explored?

### **Procuring and delivering Major Projects**

36. In the past, the Church of Scotland centrally-managed programmes such as the Church Extension and New Charge Development with the buildings provided for the congregation. In recent years the task of procuring and delivering major projects – both new buildings and refurbishment - has relied on congregational volunteers. Recently, the General Trustees have procured a replacement church building working very closely with the congregation to ensure the building meets its anticipated needs, but this is unusual. Large building projects are a fundamental challenge for any congregation, often involving complex issues and negotiations which require development skills. This is a particular challenge for those which do not have members of the congregation with the experience or skills of managing a building project. Ministers, in particular, who aspire to modernising the sanctuary, to equip the halls for developing mission and community use, rarely have the skills, far less the time, to run a building project of any scale. The most successful projects have been where someone who has the skills has acted on behalf of the Kirk Session as 'client project manager' as would be the case in any large project carried out in the public or private sector.
37. Project Management involves acting as client in the building contract with responsibilities that include health and safety, coordinating a number of participants in the development programme process, drawing up briefs, appointing and supervising a design team, processing applications, working within an agreed budget and fundraising. While some Presbyteries and the General Trustees are able to give advice on procurement, there have been a number of cases where the congregation has looked for more than advice.

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Both new build and major refurbishment can prove to be more complex and disruptive. In some recent cases, the General Trustees have provided a 'mentor' to walk alongside the congregation, helping a member of the congregation with at least the initial stages of the project - including the design team appointments. The General Trustees do not have enough people or time to look after all the projects, or to act as mentor. Expecting the architect to take on the role of 'client project manager' blurs the roles and is not sustainable in the long term. If relationships are not properly established at the beginning (eg proper contracts, role definition and clarity) then this can lead to difficulties later in the project. And all of this can be a distraction from mission. To help congregations, the General Trustees are proposing to create a panel of external professional Project Managers to support congregations and help with procurement.

16. In relation to Procuring and delivering Major Projects (paragraphs 36 and 37) - Do you think that a panel of external, professional project managers would be useful?

- Strongly agree
- Mildly agree
- Mildly disagree
- Strongly disagree

### **Redundant Buildings**

38. When the Presbytery decides that a building is no longer required, the current arrangement leaves the congregation with the responsibility for looking after the building until it is disposed of or sold. The General Trustees' involvement in the disposal process is to approve the principle of the sale and the sale price and arrange for the marketing and legal work to be carried out by the Law Department. Where the title is subject to the control of the General Assembly, the General Trustees give authority to sell and the application of the sale proceeds, the terms of the sale being decided by the financial board of the congregation. In both cases, the proceeds of sale are credited to the congregation after deduction of the levy, if applicable, and the legal and marketing fees.
39. However, in many cases - particularly in parish adjustment where a building is identified by the Presbytery as redundant - looking after the building until it is sold can be a distraction from mission. One solution could be that the General Trustees take over day-to-day responsibility for the building from a date to be agreed between the congregation, the Presbytery and the General Trustees, and manage it through the closure programme, and disposal. This would be a voluntary arrangement, and the timing could vary from case to case, depending on when the congregation wants to hand over responsibility. There could be a time limit (say six months) from the decision that the building was 'redundant' and if the building has not been disposed of under the existing arrangements, then the General Trustees could be invited to step in. The cost to the General Trustees for managing the process could be a charge against the net income from the sale. If not already the owners, title would have to be transferred to the General Trustees.

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17. In relation to Redundant Buildings (paragraphs 38-39) please consider the detail in 39 (shown below):

*However, in many cases - particularly in parish adjustment where a building is identified by the Presbytery as redundant - looking after the building until it is sold can be a distraction from mission. One solution could be that the General Trustees take over day-to-day responsibility for the building from a date to be agreed between the congregation, the Presbytery and the General Trustees, and manage it through the closure programme, and disposal. This would be a voluntary arrangement, and the timing could vary from case to case, depending on when the congregation wants to hand over responsibility. There could be a time limit (say six months) from the decision that the building was 'redundant' and if the building has not been disposed of under the existing arrangements, then the General Trustees could be invited to step in. The cost to the General Trustees for managing the process could be a charge against the net income from the sale. If not already the owners, title would have to be transferred to the General Trustees.*

Do you agree that the possibility suggested in this paragraph would be helpful?

- Very helpful  
 Somewhat helpful  
 Not so helpful  
 Not at all helpful

18. Do you agree with the suggestion (in the paragraph above) as to how an arrangement might be financed?

- Strongly agree  
 Mildly agree  
 Mildly disagree  
 Strongly disagree

Please add any additional comments you may have for potential financing arrangements.

## **Manses**

40. Manses can be a major source of friction between Minister and Kirk Session. Despite the manse regulations, some Ministers report that Sessions do not take seriously their responsibility to maintain and upgrade the manse, while some Kirk Sessions complain that Ministers do not allow them to carry out the annual inspection. The reasons given are often that Ministers (or their partners/spouses) are concerned about members of the congregation 'snooping' around their home, and on the other hand that Sessions can be frustrated by finding major problems in the manse only after the Minister has left.
41. The General Trustees have been working with the Ministries Council looking at ways in which the housing of Ministers can be better undertaken by the Church. At this point in time, there are no proposals to abandon the arrangement whereby a manse is provided as part of the stipend of the minister. The Session should continue to be responsible for housing their Minister. But new ways of supporting the accommodation for Ministers may be required, which would 'unburden' the Kirk Session. Two proposals are:
- (a) That the Kirk Session appoints an agent to look after the manse, including regular inspections, arranging for work to be carried out and reporting to the Session. The Minister would be asked to confirm his or her agreement to this and to allowing the agent regular access for inspection and work to be carried out. This arrangement

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currently operates for Glasgow Gorbals and is similar to the way many private sector organisations look after their rented houses.

- (b) That the General Trustees take on the day-to-day management and upgrading of manses where the Kirk Session, Minister, Presbytery and General Trustees agree that this would enable the congregation to focus on worship and mission. If not already in General Trustees' ownership, title to the manse would need to be transferred. The Kirk Session would pay a service charge, and the Minister would occupy the manse on a 'written agreement' setting out responsibilities on both sides. Again, if this proved popular, the planning and resourcing would take some time.

19. In relation to Manses (40 - 41) - please read the following two proposals.

*(a) That the Kirk Session appoints an agent to look after the manse, including regular inspections, arranging for work to be carried out and reporting to the Session. The Minister would be asked to confirm his or her agreement to this and to allowing the agent regular access for inspection and work to be carried out. This arrangement currently operates for Glasgow Gorbals and is similar to the way many private sector organisations look after their rented houses.*

*(b) That the General Trustees take on the day-to-day management and upgrading of manses where the Kirk Session, Minister, Presbytery and General Trustees agree that this would enable the congregation to focus on worship and mission. If not already in General Trustees' ownership, title to the manse would need to be transferred. The Kirk Session would pay a service charge, and the Minister would occupy the manse on a 'written agreement' setting out responsibilities on both sides. Again, if this proved popular, the planning and resourcing would take some time.*

Please let us know how helpful either of these options may be.

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful
Option A - Kirk Session appoints an agent to look after a manse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Option B - General Trustees take on day-to-day management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

If you consider neither answer to be helpful do you have an alternative suggestion?

## Key area: 3C Sharing the load

42. While these are ways in which Presbyteries and the General Trustees could help congregations focus on worship, mission, and discipleship, there are other ways in which congregations could be helped to 'share the load' - within the church, between denominations and with external parties. Following the 2018 General Assembly deliverance, the General Trustees have set up a Working Group 'with representatives from both the Church and wider society with experience of planning and funding innovative building arrangements to help congregations be both missional and sustainable'. Ideas from this Group are developing, including a clearer understanding of the legal and fiduciary parameters within which the General Trustees and the Church must operate.

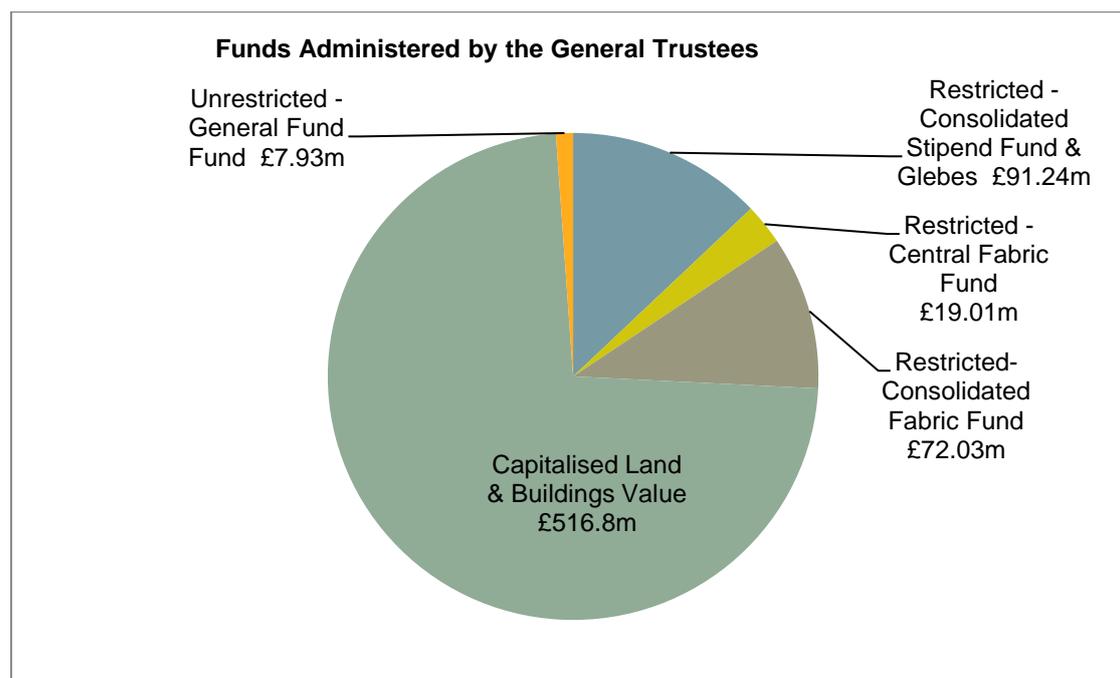
### Sharing financial resources within the Church

43. The possibilities of groups of congregations 'sharing the load' in respect of day-to-day maintenance has already been mentioned. Rationalisation of the estate should - in the longer term - result in reduced costs for the estate as a whole, but not necessarily for

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individual buildings. The current model, whereby each local congregation is expected to be responsible for both capital and revenue expenditure, and where the Presbyteries have minimum resources to carry out their roles as they should, is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term. The resources available to the General Trustees are significantly less than is widely perceived. The attached diagram shows that the vast majority of funds looked after by the General Trustees belong to individual congregations (See Appendix X for an explanation of the various accounts and more details of the financial position). New ways will have to be found of financing the management, maintenance and development of the estate, including payment-in-kind, advice and support.



44. The amount of funds for buildings or fabric collectively held within the Church of Scotland is not easy to calculate. Centrally-held funds which are looked after by the General Trustees are known, as is the amount in the Church of Scotland Investors Trust for fabric. There is no central record of the amounts held locally by congregations in their Fabric account, nor how much of that is locally controlled and restricted for a specific building, organ or type of fabric investment. So, the publicly known figures are likely to be an underestimate of the resources available for the estate as a whole. To help forward planning, there needs to be transparency about resources.
45. Acts Chapter 4 recounts that the early Christian church pooled its resources to ensure that each received what it needed. As the Church of Scotland's estate develops to have more 'well equipped spaces in the right places', with a greater level of professional input, and with a higher level of Presbytery oversight, the question is 'how could the resources held within the church overall best be deployed? Could there be a fair distribution of resources that reflects the need for resources in relation to worship and mission? Could this involve those with more resources helping those with less, by sharing their resources?' A legitimate concern of many congregational trustees is that giving away funds of which they are trustees which are needed to meet building costs or M&M contributions is a breach of that trusteeship. However, but the General Assembly has already approved the voluntary donation of resources from one congregation to another within the same Presbytery and the legal advice is that transferring of resources in this way between charities with the same purpose is currently acceptable to general trust law

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where the Board and/or Session, the Presbytery and the General Trustees have approved. Are congregations storing up resources simply for that 'rainy day' when they could be used elsewhere in the Church like the man in the parable who stored up extra food in his barn (Luke 12, 16-21)?

46. Is it possible to have such a transparent and robust system of strategic missional planning by Presbyteries whereby they can identify where resources are being retained beyond any reasonable congregational need and direct these resources to where they are going to be most effective? This is not simply about buildings - this an issue for the Church as a whole and needs to be looked at in the widest possible context.

**Section 3: Key Areas**  
3C Sharing the load

Please read section 3C on Sharing the load before answering the following questions.

20. Having read paragraphs 42 - 46 please answer the following questions.

**Do you agree that there should be more sharing of resources between congregations?**

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

Are there any circumstances when greater sharing cannot be done, or would be inappropriate? Please expand on your answer where necessary?

21. Do you agree that Presbyteries should have more ability to direct the sharing of resources so long as they have a clear, agreed mission strategy?

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

If you have any suggestions for other ways in which the repair, improvement and provision of buildings might be financed (particularly for those congregations which do not have reserves but are delivering effective mission and outreach in their communities) please list them here?

### **Ecumenical Sharing**

47. While sharing resources within the Church could unlock some funds that can be used to promote mission in areas of need, such sharing is unlikely to meet all of the fabric needs or ensure the future sustainability of all church buildings. While the lack of finance or skills may not be the best reason for ecumenical working, the Church of Scotland is not the only denomination which has challenges with its buildings. And given that the need is for 'well equipped spaces' rather than sole use of a building, the possibilities of sharing space with another denomination are to be encouraged. This could particularly apply to new plantings of congregations. And maybe not only with the established denominations but with the independent denominations. Already a number of Church of Scotland congregations

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share their sanctuary with smaller denominations – often those from other countries. The Church is therefore sharing a safe space for those who seek refuge and come to live in our country.

22. Ecumenical Sharing - Do you agree that there should be more sharing of spaces with other denominations?

Strongly agree

Mildly agree

Mildly disagree

Strongly disagree

Can you give any example where sharing of space already takes place?

### **Sharing with the public, private and voluntary sectors**

48. Many congregations already share their space with others through letting halls or more permanent arrangements with groups such as Foodbanks, mothers and toddlers, and Scouts, so are used to other organisations being part of life in their building. Church buildings, while owned and looked after by the church are (with a few exceptions) community facilities, and landmarks. Some buildings have potential for developing closer working or more formal partnership with public, private and third sector organisations. Other organisations are already willing to work and share spaces with the Church. In Glasgow Drumchapel, discussions are underway with the NHS about the local doctors moving in and creating what would be a 'wellbeing centre' – providing spaces for physical, mental and spiritual well-being. The Mission and Discipleship Council Rural Working Group and the General Trustees are part of discussions on the provision of Rural Hubs, commissioned by the Scottish Futures Trust, where a number of services can share one building (e.g. police, post offices, housing management). Church of Scotland buildings could become the Hub (some Churches already house the post office), or congregations could move to a Rural Hub (which follows the use some congregations already make of schools, community or village halls). Partnership brings opportunities. However, working together also means not only sharing the use and funding of the church's 'well equipped spaces', but also sharing responsibility, power and control. There may need to be new forms of management in which other stakeholders have a say in the use of the buildings in return for financial support to ensure long term sustainability.

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23. Public, Private, and Voluntary sector Sharing - Do you agree that there should be more sharing of spaces with the public, private, and voluntary sector?

	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree
Public sector sharing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private sector sharing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Voluntary (also known as Third Sector or Charitable sector) sector sharing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can you give any example where this type of sharing of space already takes place?

### Listed Buildings

49. Many of the Church's buildings are costly to maintain because they are of national or local historical importance, and a disproportionate share of the income of some congregations is going to support the buildings rather than mission. Listed buildings bring additional responsibilities to congregations. Until the database is complete the total number of listed buildings (and the listing category) in the ownership of the Church will not be known. The estimate is around 1700 - the largest collection of listed buildings of any one organisation in Scotland. The Church owns the majority of medieval churches, has a large portfolio of important 17th, 18th and 19th century churches - many of which are prominent features in towns and cities - and a number of significant modern listed churches. These churches tend to be listed (of special architectural or historic interest), category A (outstanding examples of a particular period, style or building type) or B (major examples of a particular period, style or building type). There are also a number of buildings which are representative examples and graded C. Many buildings (and not just listed buildings) are in Conservation Areas and subject to enhanced planning supervision.
50. Taking these buildings into the care of Scottish Ministers (such as Glasgow Cathedral) or the Local Authority (as St Magnus Cathedral in Orkney) is very unlikely. A recent report for the Church of England (the Taylor Report) recognises that Government funding has been necessary to ensure the sustainability of English major churches and cathedrals. But the Church of England has a different relationship to the Government and therefore can access resources not available to the Church of Scotland. The General Trustees are working closely with Historic Environment Scotland and other Heritage bodies as part of the national 'Our Place in Time' Strategy to develop strategies for listed buildings, including 'de-listing', sharing skills, and working together to find technical and financial solutions. These are not yet at the stage where there are particular proposals for consultation; there is a small Working Group representing a number of congregations with listed buildings and the outcome of that Group will be shared.

### Conclusion and next steps

51. The General Trustees recognise that there is a major task facing the Church of Scotland to ensure that congregations have 'well equipped spaces in the right places'. However, the General Trustees are encouraged by the positive developments that are already happening and would like to see the Church building on these. This Plan, taking into account the comments during the consultation process and if adopted by the General

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Assembly in 2020, will have to be implemented on a planned basis but with urgency, There is not a lot of time to determine and implement changes in ways that the estate is managed and developed.. It will have to be resourced and those resources will have to be looked at alongside other priorities identified within the Church. But carrying out a Plan, even over a period of time, should result in a slimmed down estate, of better quality, in the right place and managed on a more professional basis. And most importantly, provide spaces from which congregations can focus on worship and mission.



The Church of Scotland  
General Trustees



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BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
FORUM SCOTLAND

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Conclusions and next steps

BEFS, on behalf of the Church of Scotland General Trustees, would like to thank you for the time you have taken to consider the document in full, and to respond to the questions posed.

The data provided will be used by BEFS to provide a publicly available report and analysis to the Church of Scotland General Trustees.

Should you wish to contact BEFS in regard to any responses submitted please contact us by email at: [research@befsc.org.uk](mailto:research@befsc.org.uk)

If you wish to discuss any of the issues raised within this document please contact the Church of Scotland General Trustees at: [gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk)

24. If you have any short additional comments relevant to the questions asked in this consultation please leave them here:

*Many thanks for taking the time to go through this document, and to answer the survey questions online – if you are reading through and have yet to respond, the online survey can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/COSBuildingsPlan>*