



Edinburgh Churches Together

Annual Report 2019

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Issued on March 12th 2020

About Us

Edinburgh Churches Together (ECT) was formed in the early 1990s as a local response to the establishment of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). ECT is an ecumenical group of churches working in partnership across Edinburgh. The purpose of ECT is to help member churches work together so as to:

- jointly address issues of concern and interest within our city and beyond
- support each other in times of challenge and celebration
- provide a meeting point between the Christian Church and the City
- encourage local congregations to work together
- share resources, ideas, insights and best practice
- create city-scale projects/events as a witness to the presence of Christ

Membership Open to any Trinitarian Christian Church working within the area covered by the City of Edinburgh Council, members are currently made up from:

- The Church of Scotland
- Methodist Church
- Religious Society of Friends
- Roman Catholic Church
- Salvation Army
- Scottish Episcopal Church
- United Free Church
- United Reformed Church

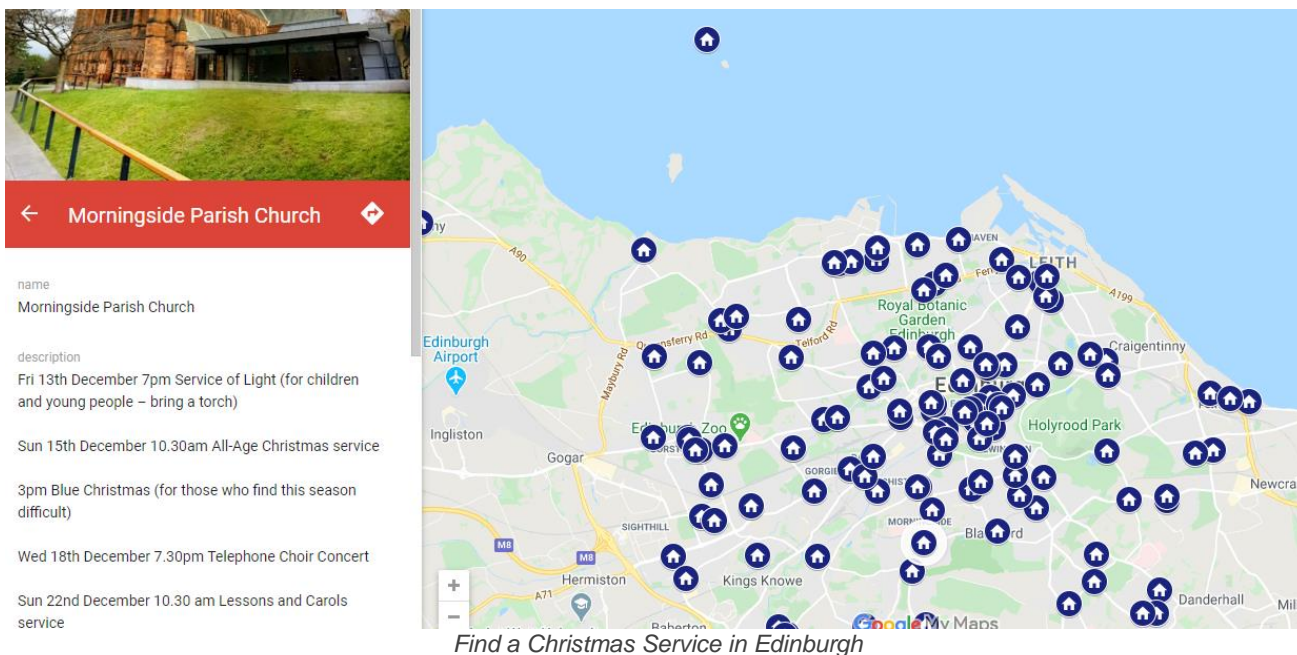
Current Representatives Each member church is invited to send one member of clergy and one lay person to meetings of the Council.

Church of Scotland	Rev Marjory McPherson, Dr David Holton
Methodist Church	Rev Helen Jenkins, Mr. Tim Martin
Religious Society of Friends	Mr. David Clarke
Roman Catholic Church	Fr William Pearsall, Mr. Paddy Ferry
Salvation Army	Major Steven Turner
Scottish Episcopal Church	Mrs. Judith Scott, <i>Vacancy</i>
United Free Church	Rev Duncan Whitty, <i>Vacancy</i>
United Reformed Church	Rev Steven Manders, Mrs. Doris Caldwell

Acting Convener:	Rev Marjory McPherson
Vice Convener:	<i>Vacancy</i>
Treasurer:	Mrs. Sandra Endicott
Communications and Admin	Imogen Gibson

Representatives In 2019 we said farewell to our Convenor, Msg Philip Kerr who moved to a new parish in Fife. Rev Marjory MacPherson stepped in to become Acting Convenor. We also bid farewell to Mr Steven Tilley who retired from the Council. We welcomed Fr William Pearsall as RC clergy representative, and Mr David Clarke and Major Steven Turner for Society of Friends and Salvation Army respectively. There is currently a vacancy for Scottish Episcopalian Church clergy representative and a lay representative for United Free Church.

Website In 2019, the list of churches within each member denomination on the website's Church Listing page was reviewed and updated. It now has a comprehensive list of all member churches numbering around 140 with, where available, a link to their individual website page. These updates have also been transferred to the interactive map on the Find a Church in Edinburgh page where visitors can click on either a location in Edinburgh or a named church for more information about daily services and/or a website link. At Easter and Christmas, each church was contacted for information on service times and these were added to the map. At Christmas we had the service times of around 120 churches on our seasonal map. The link was posted on our social media and sent to our mailing list. It was re-posted several times on Twitter and Facebook by amongst others, Edinburgh Watch, Scottish Parliamentary Churches Office and CoS Edinburgh Presbytery and Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together.



Maintaining the website is an on-going job which was mostly done by the ECT Communications Officer. However, once or twice the fixing of technical issues was outsourced. The Resource page had two additions in 2019 - Dyslexia Friendly

Churches information document and heritage building maintenance. There is now a sidebar on the home page with a link to the most recent newsletter and information about upcoming ECT-specific events e.g. service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



ECT Website Homepage

Strengthening connections with local ecumenical groups We now have the up-to-date contact details of the following local ecumenical groups:

Murrayfield Churches Together

Leith/North Edinburgh Churches Together

Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together

Corstorphine Churches Together

SEECAT (South East Edinburgh Churches Acting Together)

Old Town Churches

Churches Together in Trinity and Goldenacre

Imogen gave a presentation of ECT's activities to Edinburgh City Centre Churches Together (ECCCT). She was invited to join a workshop at Murrayfield Churches Together and, on another occasion, a lunch to raise funds for ECUDARE. ECCCT tags us in all their social media posts which results in widespread publicity for ECT. ECT also renewed its subscription with EIFA – Edinburgh Interfaith Association.

Churches as rest centres In June, an updated list of 15 churches as rest centres compiled by the Communications Officer was sent to Russell McLauchlan, Resilience Specialist for The City of Edinburgh Council. Russell is also a member

of the Voluntary Sector Resilience Group, a collection of reps from various groups in the Lothians who update the official Resilience Group. In addition, a copy was sent to Cathy Wilson, Chair of City of Edinburgh Council Care for People, and co-ordinator of the Edinburgh Rest Centre Plan. There is also a copy shared in the CEC Resilience Unit e-mailbox.

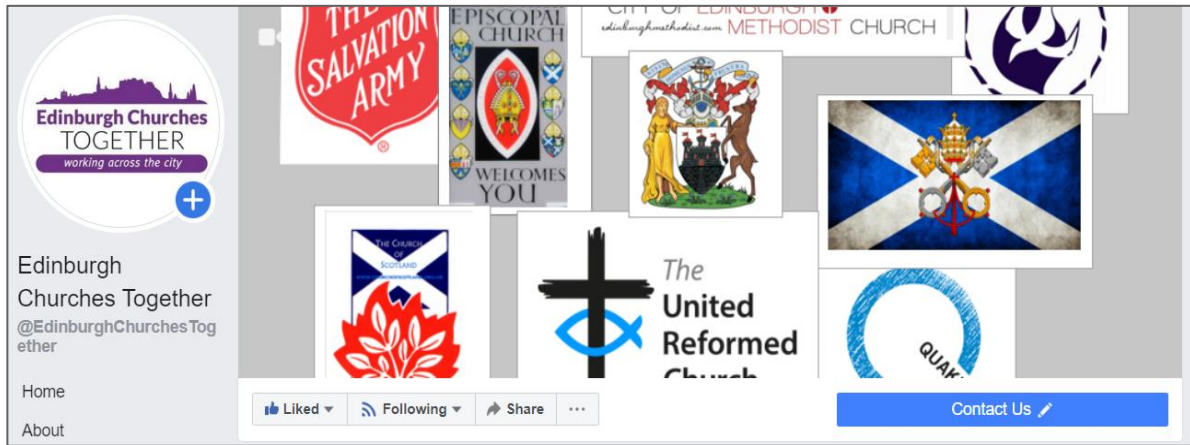
City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Parking Proposals Marjory MacPherson and Imogen Gibson attended a number of meetings regarding CEC’s proposed changes to Sunday parking restrictions in the city centre. The meetings were open to all members of local churches and faith groups who might be affected. It was agreed that as parking restrictions were inevitable, the group would lobby for timings from 1.30pm until 5.30pm instead of the proposed restrictions that started at 12 noon. As a result, many churches created questionnaires for members of the congregation to fill in so facts and figures could be used to support their case at the CEC open meeting. Congregations were also encouraged to contact CEC with their objections. In all, 650 letters of objection were sent to CEC. The introduction of Open Streets and Summertime Streets also meant that some churches had restricted access on Sundays and at other times. However, a concerted effort from city centre churches to provide feedback and highlight issues has resulted in a more empathetic approach from the organisers and better communication about road closures.

Court Listening Service Based at Edinburgh’s Sheriff Court, the Listening Service is now a registered charity and with Margaret Walker as Chair, a named secretary, treasurer and trustee. The Listening Service has an excellent new website with resource links and information on how to volunteer and has rebranded itself with a new logo, now on the home page of the ECT website. As a result of feedback, the phrase ‘multifaith court chaplaincy’ has been dropped and the strapline is now ‘non-judgemental listening for all people at Edinburgh Sheriff Court.’ ECT publicised the Listening Service and its fundraising events throughout 2019.



Listening Service Website page

Social Media Our social media profile has increased significantly over 2019: our Facebook page, @EdinburghChurchesTogether, now has 231 followers – an increase of almost 40% from 2018. Our Twitter followers have increased by over 50% to 501. Our Twitter feed, @ECTEdinburgh, is prominently displayed on the home page of the website.



ECT Facebook Page



ECT Twitter Profile page

Newsletter In 2019, a decision was taken to publish the ECT e-newsletter four times a year instead of six. This allows the newsletter to focus on ‘seasonal’ events both for the Christian calendar and for the city of Edinburgh. The newsletter will now be published in June (Summer), September (Autumn), December (Winter) and March (Spring). As our social media reflects many one-off events, the newsletter is ideal for slightly longer articles. A special feature is a regular slot to publicise workplace chaplaincy across the city. This year saw articles written by chaplains in the theatre workplace, Edinburgh Airport and most recently the Australian chaplains working in the state of Victoria amongst victims of the bush fires. The newsletter is circulated by email to an ever-expanding

mailing list as well as to every individual church in each member denomination. Each newsletter is available for three months via a link on the website and is also posted on Facebook and Twitter. The newsletter is publicised by Edinburgh Presbytery and Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO.)



Events The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WoPCU) service hosted by ECT has now become a regular and successful feature of the Edinburgh ecumenical calendar. In January 2019 we had a well-attended service at Palmerston Place Church with calls to repeat the event in 2020. Planning started in November for the 2020 event. Thanks are due especially to Paddy Ferry who helped orchestrate the 2019 event and was instrumental in planning the next one. In 2019, plans for a panel discussion on climate change were put into action and it is hoped this will take place in June 2020. ECT has also been invited by Workplace Chaplain Andy Gregg to share in the preparation of the Edinburgh's Christmas Carol Service for 2020 and discussions around this began in late 2019.

Highlighting Climate Change The newsletter continues to feature articles on churches' support of activities to help reduce carbon emissions and publicise the issue of climate change and our response. Discussions have taken place with David Coleman, Eco-congregation Minister, to have a special ECT climate change panel discussion as our annual event in 2020.

Finance and Treasurer's Report – (See Appendices)

Priorities for 2020

1. Continue to strengthen connections with other Churches Together groups with visits, adding their details to our website.
2. Plan WoPCU service for Jan 2021 and annual ECT event for June 2020
3. Support Edinburgh's Christmas carol service
4. Increase the number of churches signed up as Rest Centres
5. Maintain contact with the Listening Service and publicize its activities.
6. Continue to increase social media followers and newsletter subscriptions
7. Add Easter and Christmas services to the website map.
8. Continue to Highlight the activities many church groups are engaged in regarding climate change.
9. Consider the shape of ECT in light of changes to ACTS following on from the ACTS review.

www.edinburghchurchestogether.org.uk

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