



Presbytery Plan; progress in the right direction

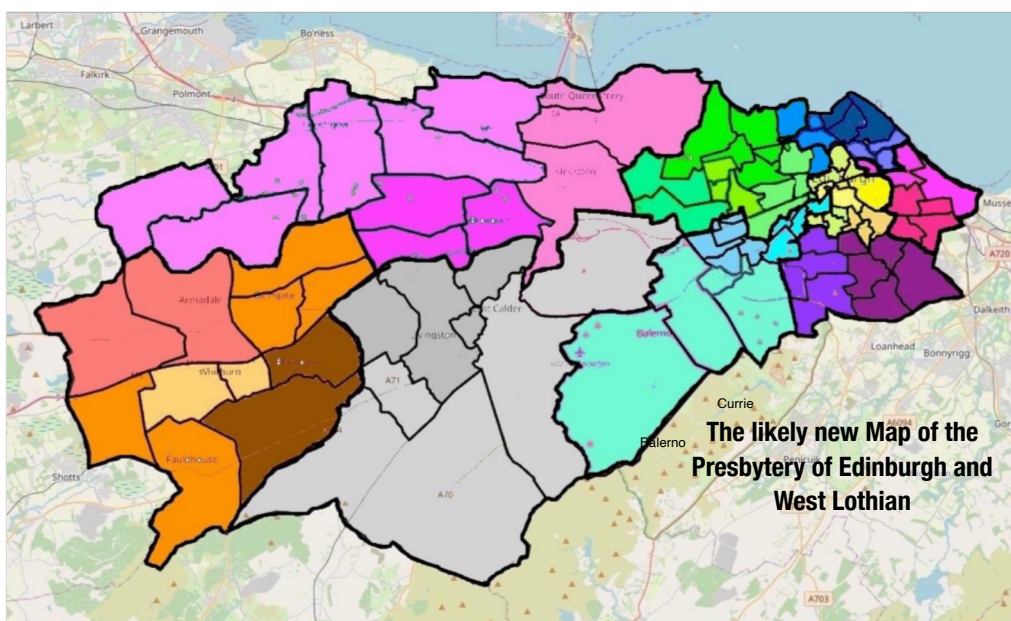
Early indications suggest that so far as Balerno Parish Church is concerned the revised Presbytery Plan promised for October will be close to the recommendations forwarded in October 2021.

The laborious and seemingly unending task of preparation of the new Presbytery Plan is grinding on with a revised draft Plan entitled a Working Document having been discussed by the Presbytery at its 13th September meeting. That document does seem to be in line with the agreement, forwarded to the Presbytery in October 2021, between Balerno Currie and Juniper Green as the members of the original Water of Leith Cluster Group.

Under the likely revised scheme both Balerno and Currie would be allocated into the South West Mission District. The initial proposal for a Border Mission District stretching from Queensferry to Balerno on a north south axis is no more, and in its place come proposals for Mission Districts which cross the former boundary between Edinburgh and West Lothian. Thus for example, Ratho, formerly destined for the Border Mission District is now to be brigaded with Polbeth linked with West Calder, and Kirknewton and East Calder, to form Mission District South which, incidentally, would be the largest District in terms of geographical area within the new Presbytery.

By brigading Currie/Balerno with Juniper Green/Colinton within a new Parish Grouping the Presbytery would seem clearly to accept the proposition advanced by the former Water of Leith Cluster Group that the Water of Leith corridor is a logical area for development of greater co-operation between Churches, for joint enterprises and for a different approach to mission.

If the Presbytery Plan were to move forward in the form proposed in the Working Document however there will be a lot of work to be done in establishing the new Water of Leith Parish Grouping. Part of that work will involve the preparation of mission aims and a mission narrative. The situation for that Parish Grouping in terms of proposed resources remains to be clarified. The terms of Presbytery's draft mission narrative for the four churches will have to be considered by each of those separately and also collectively. An opportunity for all four churches to look together at the implications of the proposed arrangement at a joint meeting in August facilitated by Presbytery had to be abandoned because of reservations on the part of one of



The likely new Map of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian

the churches. However the Presbytery's timetable for implementation of its Plan probably means that serious conversations would be expected to begin no later than this autumn. Currie and Balerno are already in discussion on issues of a linkage between them. Those talks are necessary in order to meet Presbytery's strictures that the four churches within the proposed Parish Grouping would be served by only two full time Ministers in future.

At the same time the Presbytery have also said in the Working Document that all four congregations are well-resourced and Presbytery encourages them 'to identify resources (not just financial) which could be used to support those less resourced congregations in the mission district.' It continues that 'They should also be encouraged to fund a local post that would build on existing community involvement.' The Presbytery clearly and not unreasonably envisages co-ordination and co-operation across the Parish Grouping. Certainly also a lot will depend on a realistic assessment of what would be considered by each of those parishes, individually and collectively, as to what might be possible.

What is possible will depend on what resources are available and the state of the new parishes when they are formed.

The passing of an era

Only a very small minority of the population of the United Kingdom are likely to remember the accession of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952, and an even smaller number of those would remember watching her coronation in June 1953 live on television. For many people she will have been the only monarch they will have known in these islands.

History has a habit of simply absorbing people and events; but some stand out for decades, centuries and millenia, and the late Queen Elizabeth II will be one such. She was a constant throughout the second half of the 20thC and the first two decades of the 21st, and throughout that time she was a unique source of stability not only for us all in this country, but also in the Commonwealth, and beyond. Britain has changed immeasurably since 1952 and not simply as Empire became Commonwealth, but the nature of our society changed out of all recognition, as the world itself became a smaller place while we began to understand just how finite it might be.

The death of the Queen on 8th September at Balmoral caught us unaware but not by surprise. Only two days before she had appointed her 15th Prime Minister, smiling and engaging with the moment. Of course we knew that she had gradually been withdrawing from engagements, and at the age of 96 that was hardly an unreasonable adjustment in a lifetime of service.

Death brings sadness in its wake, and there was rightly a profound and quiet sadness at the news. But mixed with that sadness was a huge feeling of gratitude for a life of such service and value.

Her passing at Balmoral was, all would agree, what she had wanted, and Scotland responded as we all knew it would, not simply with absolute dignity and respect, but with a huge outpouring of love.

We wish our new King, Charles III, well as he embarks on a new chapter of his life at an age at which many people are looking forward to winding down their commitments. We are witnessing the closing of one era, and the opening of another.



VALLEY FRIENDS

Did you know loneliness is thought to be as bad for our health as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day?

'Valley Friends' is a befriending project run by St Mungo's Church as a service to the community of Balerno, Currie and Juniper Green. We know that loneliness can have a serious impact on the health of older people in particular, something that was brought home to us during the Covid pandemic when we could all see the effects of social isolation. Apparently, our district has the highest recorded number of elderly residents in Edinburgh and Valley Friends seeks to address these effects. They are recruiting volunteers (over 18) from the community who can offer a regular visit to an older person for a cuppa and a chat – training and support will be provided and you will need PVG clearance.

For further information contact the Project Lead, Helen Yewdall – helen.yewdall@stmungos.org

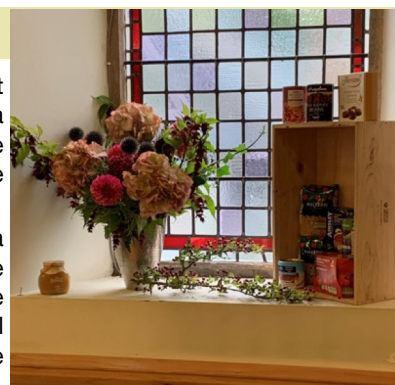
IT'S HARVEST TIME AGAIN

Sunday October 2nd is the date for this year's harvest service. Once again we hope to not only make the church a colourful reminder of nature round about us but have the opportunity of sharing food with those who may be struggling at present.

Collecting for the local food banks sadly has to be a continuous process for the many families in need but we hope that you will make a special effort at harvest. We again request goods that have a good shelf life and appeal to all ages. Staples such as pasta and tinned goods are always welcome but a few luxuries are fun too!

If any of you have fresh produce that you wish to share this will be used by The Mill kitchen and enjoyed by the community. The church will be being decorated on the morning of Saturday 1st so please either bring donations then or they can be left in The Mill in the preceding week.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Some of the 5000 participants in Kiltwalk 2022 - see p3 for more details



Over the past months we may at times have been less than complimentary about the efforts of Edinburgh and West Lothian Presbytery to craft a new Plan. There were, however, quite serious mistakes with the first draft in December last year. We do not know where the idea of a Border Mission District running almost straight down the middle of the new Presbytery actually came from; or why it was thought a good idea. It was never going to work, and the work involved in trying to correct the mistake of developing it took time and energy which would have been much better applied to development of plans and relationships that we now have to do in double quick time.

To their credit the Presbytery team did listen however and we would now hope that their decision in effect to form an entity of the existing parishes of the Upper Water of Leith Valley will be a basis for co-operation and strengthening across our communities. Whether it will depend on how prepared we are.

We have to work out our view of the future so that we can discuss options with our neighbours. There is no sign of work in this area at present. Once we have done that then we can start meaningful discussions.

There are bound to be difficulties ahead as we and our new partners turn our attention to how we can best work together and how and where to best focus our efforts. A plan for the Upper Water of Leith Valley will have to be crafted but not in the old way; this can't be just any old plan, a tick box exercise, to be filed away and forgotten about until the time comes to review it. Plans made now will have to be realistic; and right from the off they will have to be deliverable. And the first step on that path involves knowing what Balerno wants; only when we know that can we discuss meaningfully with Currie what is realistic and deliverable.

Any plan has to have the active support of congregations and communities from the start. If we want the Church to be relevant, which in part at least is the aim of the Radical Action Plan, then the Church has to be prepared to look in the mirror, to listen, and to respond to what it hears and to what is needed.

Golf Outing - perhaps next year

Sadly this year's Church golf outing, to Harburn, had to be cancelled since there were only six entries.

The annual outing had been running for well over twenty years until Covid intervened, and over that time it had visited several courses across the Lothians including Baberton, Kingsknowe, Castle Park near Gifford, Winterfield at Dunbar, and Biggar as well as Harburn. Normally a course is visited at least two years running, so that at least at the second attempt players know where they were supposed to be going next, and with luck where the bunkers are.

A big thank you to Brian Conway and everyone else involved in organising the event, and we're sure this fixture will return again soon.

The Richard Dennis Trophy is there to be won!



Kilt Walk 2022



As many as five thousand walkers took part in Kiltwalk 2022 and that included Team Balerno from Balerno Parish Church. Kiltwalk organisers estimated that some 500 charities stood to benefit to the total tune of £2M. The six walkers from Team Balerno were all stepping out in aid of Fresh Start, and while we won't know for a bit exactly how much

they raised - and there's still time for you to make, or increase, your donation they know that what they raise will be increased by 50% by the Hunter Foundation.



There was a menu of three options for our intrepid hikers, trekkers and strollers; first the 21.3-mile Mighty Stride, then the 13-mile



Big Stroll, and finally the four-mile Wee Wander.



David Booth, along with the Thumb (see p6 for explanation)

successfully completed the 21.3, miles in 7 hours, while Gavin Johnston conquered the 13 mile, leaving Alan and Maureen Woodburn, Bill Black and Joyce Lahmert to deal with the 4 mile up-hill yomp from Silverknowes to Murrayfield, which as you can see from the photographs they not only completed *but* were still smiling at the end.

The eagle-eyed will have noted that neither David Booth nor nor indeed 'the Thumb' appear in the gallery above. This is simply because the Treasurer was marching on his own and, no doubt because of the Thumb, he was unable to take selfies. But plainly, he finished the course. And here's the bling to prove it.

**Congratulations
to everyone
involved !**



**AND THE TOTAL
RAISED BY TEAM BALERNO
WAS**

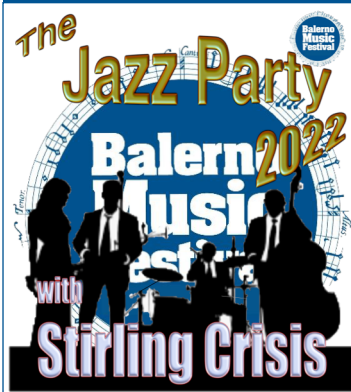
£1558

to which the HUNTER
Foundation added £779
for a Grand Total of

£2337

**Well Done
Team Balerno !!!**

A mini Music Festival to be enjoyed!



Sunday 2 October
7.30pm
St Joseph's Centre
Tickets £10 from <https://www.balernochurch.org.uk/>
or direct from eventbrite



To misquote Mark Twain 'reports of our demise were slightly exaggerated'. Although not the usual packed programme that is normally associated with the Balerno Music Festival there are a couple of events being held this October to entertain us.

On Sunday October 2nd at 7.30pm, the much-loved Jazz Party takes place in St Joseph's Hall. This features Stirling Crisis, a group of medical friends who were gathered together by the late Roger Cull in Stirling. Stirling Crisis are well known to their Balerno audience for their jazz, music that the audience recognises and greatly enjoys. The ticket price of £15 includes wine & nibbles - a small price to pay for such a fun evening.

The following week on the evening of Saturday 8th

October Balerno Parish Church is the venue for a night with Castle Brass. This will be their first visit to the Music Festival despite being an ensemble of musicians from Edinburgh and the Lothians. The evening will feature a varied programme of classic and contemporary pieces for brass instruments, many of which will be familiar to the audience. Tickets for this are £10 for adults or £5 for children.

To purchase tickets for either event (or both) please go to <https://www.balernochurch.org.uk>. Tickets will also be on sale in St Joseph's at approximately 11.00 am after Sunday services.

If you would like to help ensure that there is a Balerno Music Festival next year and beyond please email hello@balernomusicfestival.org.uk, they will be delighted to hear from you and will be able to answer any questions you may have.



September 17th

Dear Editor,

I have been following with interest the discussions on your Radical Action Plan and am now very much confused. It sounds almost like the church is starting with the answer and working backwards and there doesn't appear to have been much contact with the area churches to assess what would be the most feasible solution. Is it not the case that the members of the church give their money to support the operation of the church? - I would have thought that their opinions would have counted for more that they appear to have done so far, although I now understand that having built the churches at their own cost, they do not own them? . I worked for many years in the finance industry but don't see that as a particularly sellable product.

What about the other nearby churches - will they have any connection to the church at Balerno? - and what happens if members do not wish to join with others, will they have to close?

Please tell them not to close Balerno church, as we may then lose our village café and the halls where many of us hold our meetings . My neighbour's children attend the afternoon after-school club each day and to lose that would be very hard for the many parents who would need to take time off work.

Also please can we have the Music Festival again this year? - it is so wonderful to be able to hear such music performed without having to go into Edinburgh.

Hochachtungsvoll,

Neuschreiber A.



Harmeny announced on 26 September that **Balerno Childrens Gala** have stepped in to take the helm for the **Balerno Christmas Tree Festival**, and that the event will go ahead on 10 December 2022.

So it's time to get going with decoration making!

Further details to follow!



Tuning up for Christmas!



Most people will be aware by now that it has unfortunately not proved possible to arrange a Balerno Christmas Tree Festival this year.

The Festival was started by Balerno Parish Church in 2010 and the Church continued to manage it for the first eight years of its life before Harmeny School took over the organisation of the annual event in 2017. The aim at that time was to try to rotate the organisational burden around local organisations but unfortunately that has not been possible at this time.

Harmeny School had been the Festival organisers for the past three years including the very difficult period of Covid restrictions when the Festival was successfully transferred to be an out-door event, in both 2020 and 2021. We are all extremely grateful to Harmeny School for their work over the last four years in producing what

has been a very popular and successful annual event, and we know that they are still continuing the search for an organiser. We and Harmeny hope that it may be possible to 'get the show on the road' again in 2023.

There will, however, still be lights and Christmas Trees in Main Street again this year courtesy of the Community Council, and there will also be the 'traditional' Concert for Christmas with the Broxburn and Livingston Brass Band on Saturday 3rd December, with tickets going on sale in November - watch out for adverts!

Despite dwindling numbers of people attending churches of all denominations, for many communities, including to a large extent Balerno, the church is still considered to be a hub, a place where people can congregate.

But for some people, churches can be a daunting place, possibly as a remembered sombre place from their childhood, or somewhere that didn't really speak to them. We probably wouldn't want to think that was true of Balerno, and with the Mill Cafe as our shop window it's less likely to be so. But how we best communicate that the church is open and welcoming to all may still be a problem.

Take our notice boards for example; outside the Ogston Hall and outside the Church itself. What is on them at present? If you weren't already involved with the Church do you think you would have your eye drawn immediately to either of the Boards? Now, look again, if you're no longer as young as you might want to be, do you think your eye would be drawn immediately to either?

Unless our notice boards are eye-catching it's unlikely that anyone will look no matter how inspiring, relevant or important the content.

And if that's true for Notice Boards outside the Church how much more true is it for notice boards inside. The Mill Gallery exhibition is changed every couple of months, maximum. Why? Because when you see the same thing day after day you stop seeing it. Pictures become wallpaper, and if that's true of pictures then how much more true of notices with lots of text.



well it is eye-catching, I suppose... in a way; and it may be an honest effort to communicate, but do you think it'll actually work?

So what's to be done?

- Well we have two notice boards, outside the Ogston and outside the Church. Do we know how we're going to use it? By all means advertise jobs; but that's unlikely to be a 365 requirement.
- If it is an advert then again some may be for jobs and some for events. Text on its own probably doesn't attract attention. Ads have to be eye-catching; we want them to be seen and noticed;
- then again, we have to make sure an ad or a notice isn't up so long it becomes stale - how many times do you pass a notice board to see an ad for an event last year? Although of course we don't want empty spaces on a board because that suggests nothing is going on, so
- on the basis that things are going then tell people by putting things on the Notice Board but make sure it looks planned and designed as well as looked after, and remember
- Advertising space is scarce. We have a community asset. If we're not using it then some other community body might well



COME & JOIN US!

Whether you fancy a pancake, scone, cake, bacon roll or a bowl of soup (they are all delicious and there is more on the menu too) The Mill is the place to be. A great place to meet friends and have a cuppa while you chat. Now that Covid related restrictions are past business has picked up and the Mill is now as busy and popular as it has ever been.

The Mill is run by volunteers supported by 4 dedicated paid staff and the success of having more customers means we are sometimes short of staff. We'd be delighted if you would like to join our team of volunteers. Sometimes the Mill is busy first thing, sometimes mid-morning, sometimes at lunch and sometimes all three. There is a wide range of ways that you can help whether its clearing table, washing the dishes, making soup, taking orders, washing aprons and tea towels, making coffee etc. there is something for everyone.

- To those of you who make this happen a big THANK YOU.
- To anyone who thinks this might be something they could do Lynsey will be delighted to hear from you Themillatstjosephs@gmail.com.

You may have read in the September edition of the Blether that a Scotmid grant helped The Mill acquire a Kitchen Aid mixer, it is being very well used and much appreciated. If anyone has spare attachments for a Kitchen Aid mixer The Mill will happily give them a home and make the mixer even more useful.

Martin Petty

19th September 2022

NO PRESSURE!

It was quite something to be a part of an event which will be remembered for a long time. The commentators were quite right when they spoke about the amount of detail which went into the planning, but they have no idea! To be at the centre of the world's attention for a few hours was worth waiting for. While everyone looked, almost everyone didn't know that I was there, but without me the whole event could have ended in disaster. That old gun carriage weighs over 2 tons and so it won't move smoothly without a lot of effort. 138 nameless ratings were involved in the carriage's journey through London to Westminster Abbey and then on to Green Park. Anonymous they may have been, but they were seen while I was hidden. They were ordinary people performing an extraordinary task which could only be done together. They just needed my help to make the whole parade shoogly-proof.

It would have been most embarrassing for everyone if, as the gun carriage moved off, the effort of the naval ratings had somehow combined with the angle of the street to result in the coffin rolling off the back of the catafalque and onto the road.

That is why two scarlet-tunicked guardsmen secured me on the catafalque behind the coffin before it moved off. Nobody really noticed a piece of wood which is only about two feet long but all those people in uniform were relying on me to almost literally keep their show on the road by holding the coffin in place.

Thanks to the ratings training, this was not a high pressure job, but I will be quite glad if I don't have to do it again for a few years.

Donner und Blitzen!

Recently the UK suffered horrendous storms and flooding, with all the television weather presenters declaring that 36000 lightning strikes had been recorded over a period of twelve hours. Now, I know what you're going to say, "How do they know?" You may well ask, and pictures flash through the mind of some isolated weatherman in his little office with his binoculars counting them as they occur. There certainly were some spectacular flashes in the sky as our picture illustrates.

The Met Office describes a thunderstorm as 'a series of sudden electrical discharges resulting from atmospheric conditions'.

So what do we know about thunderstorms? Firstly, you begin to hear thunder at a range of about 12 miles. Usually if thunder precedes lightning, then a storm is on its way – if the opposite is the case then the storm is passing away. Oh, and if you still believe the old wives tale that lightning never strikes twice in the same place, forget it – I suggest you don't hang around to find out.

What do we know about lightning? -well, a lightning bolt travels at 60000 miles per second, is around 2.5 miles long and has a temperature akin to the surface of our sun. It is said that such heat would power a 100 watt light bulb for three months and if it comes into contact with sand, its heat can create glass.

As long as you don't suffer from 'keraunophobia' (the fear of lightning) or 'brontophobia' (the fear of thunder) why not do a bit of storm spotting? – there are around 100000 of them each year somewhere on earth and at any one moment there are 1800 of them active. And if the lightning does catch up with you, you apparently have a greater chance of survival if you're wearing wet clothes. What a comforting thought!



THE FOODBANK AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, WESTER HAILES,

From a letter from Rev Dr Rita Welsh, Foodbank Coordinator

The Foodbank is wholly funded by donations from the congregation of Holy Trinity Church and by generous financial and food donations from local Churches in the west of Edinburgh, as well as individuals, Trusts and local supermarkets. In 2021 they distributed a total of 2486 basic food parcels to a mix of individuals, couples and families from the area. During the year the needs of 292 individual clients were met, thus touching the lives of 824 adults and children.

Unfortunately, changes in benefits, cost of living and fuel price increases are resulting in more people needing to access the foodbank—an average of approaching 60 clients are served each week at present. As well as food poverty, many are experiencing fuel poverty with no electricity or gas to heat their homes or cook the food offered to them. In exceptional emergencies, power cards can be topped up. Volunteers also advise and direct people to suitable help, addressing some of the issues which led to the crisis. This may be informing them of the Warm Home scheme through energy providers, the work of Christians against Poverty (for debt issues), counselling services or local services that can be useful.

Moving forward - working with the Holy Trinity Bridge Café manager and cook, clients will be offered a choice of café-prepared frozen take-away meals each week. Also, working in collaboration with other groups and agencies in the area is planned, expanding links with local schools through providing supplies for distribution to children coming to school with no breakfast or snacks.

This is the Foodbank which receives our much-appreciated donations of groceries etc from Balerno Parish Church. Many of you will be aware of the boxes just inside the door of the Mill, which we empty regularly. But there is always a desperate need, as Rita said in her letter. I'd like to make a suggestion, if I may – even if you don't manage to visit the Mill regularly, perhaps you could consider bringing just one small item every week when you come to Church? We could have a bag at the door for donations – and if everyone brought just one thing, say a packet of biscuits or a jar of jam, this could increase our giving enormously.

Contributed by a volunteer

The Continuing Tale of The Treasurer's Thumb

For all those who have enquired solicitously about 'THE THUMB', both it and its owner are progressing well as can be seen from this snap as t h u m b , accompanied by owner, prepared to relax with coffee and bacon roll at the Mill. The Thumb's owner has t h a n k e d everyone for their kind enquiries and said 'Put that camera away!'



Both thumb and owner were also slated to appear for the entire 21.3 miles of the 19th September Kilt Walk. Talking to the Blether, the thumb made clear that it could be sponsored separately (and retrospectively) for the Mighty Stride, thereby raising more money for an excellent cause. The thumb further clarified that for obvious reasons it would intend both to keep company with the Treasurer on the walk and also to cover the same distance, but that it would leave the wearing of the Kilt, and the consumption of Guinness following completion of the walk, to the Treasurer. The thumb also confirmed that it wasn't feeling sore, including about the circumstances giving rise to its having to wear a splint, and it also thanked well wishers for their interest and concern.

Further bulletins on the progress of the thumb, and its owner, will be issued in due course.

hearsay

You're looking puzzled?

Aye, I'm sure I saw pawprints on the floor there?

You probably did, it's been raining.

But there isn't a dog in the church, surely?

I think you'll find there is, actually...

A DOG? IN CHURCH???!?

Yes! She's an Assistance Dog.

Oh, a Guide Dog. I see. Haha, see what I did there...? Um. Sorry?

I can see you couldn't resist that. There's a low bar on your sense of humour... Anyway, no she's not a 'guide dog' as such, but she's not a pet. She's a highly trained dog working with her owner, who might have a disability – maybe epilepsy – and might need to be warned of a seizure coming on. So don't go giving her a pat as you go past.

OK. I'll remember. But maybe we could have a bowl of water outside for her?

That would be nice.

More information at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/.../assistance-dogs>

In Scotland (and probably further afield) there has long been a tradition among farmers of bringing their sheepdogs to church, and the story goes that this was enshrined in Church Law ... and never repealed, so technically still stands today ... if anyone can provide any proof of this, I'll be delighted to hear from you! Editor



Do you have a minute Lord?

I was waiting for a bus the other day and I noticed the Edinburgh Coat of Arms which is displayed on the side of Lothian buses. I probably see it every day, but for some reason I noted what it says. It's a familiar heraldic graphic with a shield and three towered castle in the centre embellished by a helmet, anchor, doe and a maiden. The coat of arms was granted to the city in 1732 along with the motto *Nisi Dominus Frustra* which can be read above the artwork. Those of the older generation who learned Latin at school will know that the motto is a reference to Psalm 127 which reads, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain".

The words just seem to have been incorporated into the graphic and no-one really reads them any more – and if they do, they probably don't really know what they mean! If we're to be honest, the words were probably only understandable to a small proportion of the population in the 18th Century as not many people had the opportunity to learn Latin, but the people who were making the decisions for the city would have a clear understanding of their significance.

I find it frustrating to think that we have a Christian motto for our city which most people probably don't understand. It might be better communication to replace the motto with something that people do understand but I don't have much confidence in the ability of politicians to produce a meaningful alternative as we seem to live in a world where too many words have become a decoration and their true meaning has become negotiable.

The Groan Column

In this column you will find the jokes that provoke a groan rather than a laugh, jokes that will encourage you to ask for your money back. And you can add to the file by writing in with your own groan joke. The Blether may even publish an anthology in due course.

But here is October's entry;

I came to the hospital because I accidentally swallowed invisible ink. I'm still waiting to be seen.

Courtesy of the Irish Times, April 5 2021

Yes; we know. It is pretty bad. But there are worse to come. Next month.

Woof! Woof!.... Woof!

Greetings to all my regular followers – and you'll be pleased to hear that the matter of biscuit after meals has been resolved and industrial doggie-action averted. To be honest, Billy et al really didn't have the heart for it but as long as you don't tell our owners, we won't – we'll keep that in reserve.

So then, we're in the middle of the holiday season and our owners are still discussing taking the trip of a lifetime, and the more they discuss it, the more likely they are to take it. But have you noticed that we canines are always the last thing they think about? They suddenly remember that they need to book holiday accommodation for us too. This of course either cheers us immensely or fills us with dread as most of us have suffered from inferior establishments into whose care we are unceremoniously dumped, with nothing more than a 'be a good boy, mummy and daddy will be home soon'.

I could regale you with tales of the unexpected, the unacceptable and the downright awful, where concern for us is about the last thing on peoples minds. Let's face it, a Kennel owner's priority is to bank the cheque – no one comes around to ask if we're settled in.

Walkies

or 'is there anything else we can get you?' (Like a duvet cover to stave off the intense cold of the night and a cosy bed to be tucked up in). Many of these places are cold, damp and suffer from interminable barking when a chap is trying to rest. And the food – you wouldn't give it to a cat, never mind we superior canines, and it's never a patch on what we have at home.

Now, pal Billy tells me about this up-market place his owners took him to – his own patio, his own door, every possible convenience AND -this is the worst part of all – he gets a Bonio biscuit AFTER EVERY MEAL! – now most of us don't get that at home. It's a more expensive establishment of course and gets booked up very quickly, so we last-minute booking chaps have no chance. I wish my owners were as wealthy as his – surely we're all entitled to live in the lap of luxury once in our lives.

Anyway, good luck to Billy – perhaps I could persuade his owners to let me go with him next year? More likely I shall have to make do with what's left as usual. Hello cold floor with no bed – it's me again.

Woof... rrrrrrrrrrrrr!! rrrrrrrrr!!.....



from the pews to the mews

Dear congregation

The summer seems to be over, and nature is preparing itself for the long winter. But still we have many good days which we can be thankful for.

I am preparing myself for a new year full of church activities. I am so fortunate to have loyal people (who is giving so much of their time) who is part of TEAM BALERNO.

But with all the activities it is vital that we remember who we are. We are called as a fellowship by God to be a living witness of HIS Holy Name. We can only stay focused on HIM if we as a fellowship come together and pray. Prayer is talking to God, thanking him for all his blessings and acknowledging his presence in our lives and fellowship. A fellowship that does not pray is not a church of Jesus Christ. The Psalmist once wrote:

“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.” (Psalm 127:1) If we do not ask God to help us in this coming year, all will be in vain.

My vision for the congregation is that we as followers of Christ will not shy away from our duties as missionaries to go and proclaim to everyone that there is only one Saviour namely Jesus Christ. My wish is that we shall carry the faith, hope and love of Christ everywhere we go in a non-threatening way, not only with our words but through our actions.

With all my blessings,

André Groenewald



Diary dates

October

2 -	10.00am	Harvest Festival Service
	7.30pm	Balerno Music Festival - Jazz Party
8 -	7.30pm	Balerno Music Festival - Castle Brass
9 -	10.00am	Morning Service
16 -	10.00am	Morning Service
23 -	10.00am	Morning Service
30 -	10.00am	Morning Service

November

6 -	10.00am & 3.00pm	
		Communion Services
13 -	10.00am	Remembrance Service
20 -	10.00am	Morning Service
27 -	10.00am	Morning Service - 1st Sunday in Advent
December		
3 -	7.30pm	Concert for Christmas with Broxburn and Livingston Brass Band
4 -	10.00am	Morning Service - 2nd Sunday in Advent
11 -	10.00am	Morning Service - 3rd Sunday in Advent
18 -	10.00am	Morning Service - 4th Sunday in Advent

Fresh Start - Autumn Collection

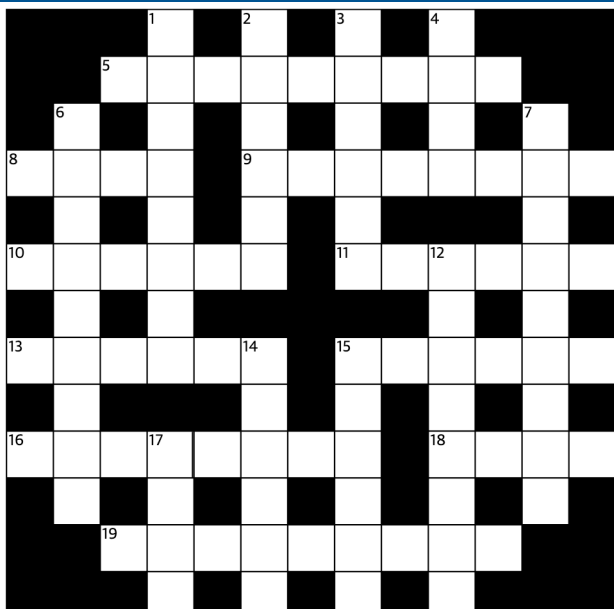
There will be a collection of household goods for Fresh Start on Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd October, 10.00 - 12 noon and Sunday 23rd October, 9.30 - 12 noon. This will take place in the Rear Hall of Balerno Parish Church (situated behind the Church).

Donations (in good, clean condition) of crockery, cutlery, pots and pans, bedding, curtains, towels and small electrical items, would be gratefully received, both by Fresh Start and by the homeless people who are trying to make a fresh start. If you have no household items, please consider donating household cleaning items/toiletries. We cannot take furniture, television, duvets, pillows, cushions, kitchen knives or stemmed glasses.

Your donations will be sorted and packed by local volunteers and taken to the Fresh Start premises, ready for distribution to homeless people who have just been allocated somewhere to live.

For further information please contact Sandra Lyall 449 4375

Crossword Corner



DOWN

- 1 Microbes (8)
 - 2 Ancient burial mound (6)
 - 3 Contusion (6)
 - 4 Record (4)
 - 6 It triggers a big bang (9)
 - 7 On the dot (9)
 - 12 Persistently irritating (8)
 - 14 Dormant (6)
 - 15 Leader of a religious community for women (6)
 - 17 Generous — sort (4)
- ### ACROSS
- 5 Tactless — to admiral (anag) (9)
 - 8 Accomplishment (4)
 - 9 It gets discounted fares for train travellers (8)
 - 10 Take out a loan (6)
 - 11 Castrated male (6)
 - 13 Tropical fruit (6)
 - 15 Grand — time of the year (6)
 - 16 Literary gathering (4,4)
 - 18 Slump (4)
 - 19 Non-stop (9)

NOVEMBER BLETHER

If you want to receive the Bletther in hard copy just let us know by dropping a note in the collection box in the Mill.

Answers to September Crossword



Please send letters to the Bletther Editor by e-mail to bpc-editor@balernochurch.org.uk or post to the Church Office at 2 Main Street, Balerno