

Strathnairn and Strathearn Parish Profile 2025



Website:
www.strathsnairnanddearn.co.uk

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Will you help us grow and develop?

1. Introduction

The Parish came into being in August 2023, and our previous minister successfully led us through the union, before being called to his home parish.

There are many exciting opportunities with new housing estates and builds throughout the Parish.

We are now more than ready to move our Parish forward, and are looking for someone who will:

- Join us in welcoming all to worship God together
- Pray with us as we continue to grow in faith through the Holy Spirit in embracing and engaging with the community
- Continue to grow our ministry with Messy Church and reach out to children in the schools

In preparing for our new minister, the Kirk Session voted to accept applications from, amongst others, ministers in civil partnerships.



2. Brief History of Strathnairn and Strathdearn Parish

Prior to August 2023, the minister of the Parish of Cawdor and Croy, linked with Dalcross was also the interim moderator of Daviot and Dunlichty, linked with Moy, Dalarossie and Tomatin.



Each of these churches had a long, interesting, and rich historical past - most stretching back to medieval times. They have been rooted in Christ in their communities, and through the centuries and witnessed significant events - hard times and good.

(Please have a look at the Strathnairn and Strathdearn website to read detailed histories of each church.)

Following reorganisation and the closure of five of these longstanding churches, the Parish is slowly overcoming the difficulties change brings. Understandably, some folk have been through a type of bereavement process, a number have left, and community groupings have changed. It has been tough for us all.

Those remaining are adjusting to the physical changes in locations and routines, and the will to focus on the future is strong. Now, as one congregation, we realise we need to reach out to the communities across the whole Parish.

We have been pruned by the gardener and are now ready to blossom!

Recently, we held a Mission Statement Workshop, where we began to formulate our vision. The entire congregation have been involved, and when the statement is developed, we plan to revisit it regularly to keep our focus relevant.


Our updated Communion Roll, attested by the Kirk session on 31st December 2024, stands at 226 members and 68 adherents. There are only a handful of younger members throughout the parish, most members are retired.



Currently regular services take place at two locations, with an average of thirty in attendance at each. The Parish also live-streams weekly services. A handful of viewers watch this 'live,' but many more watch the service during the week.



If there is a fifth Sunday in a month, then a single service is held at our Daviot Church.

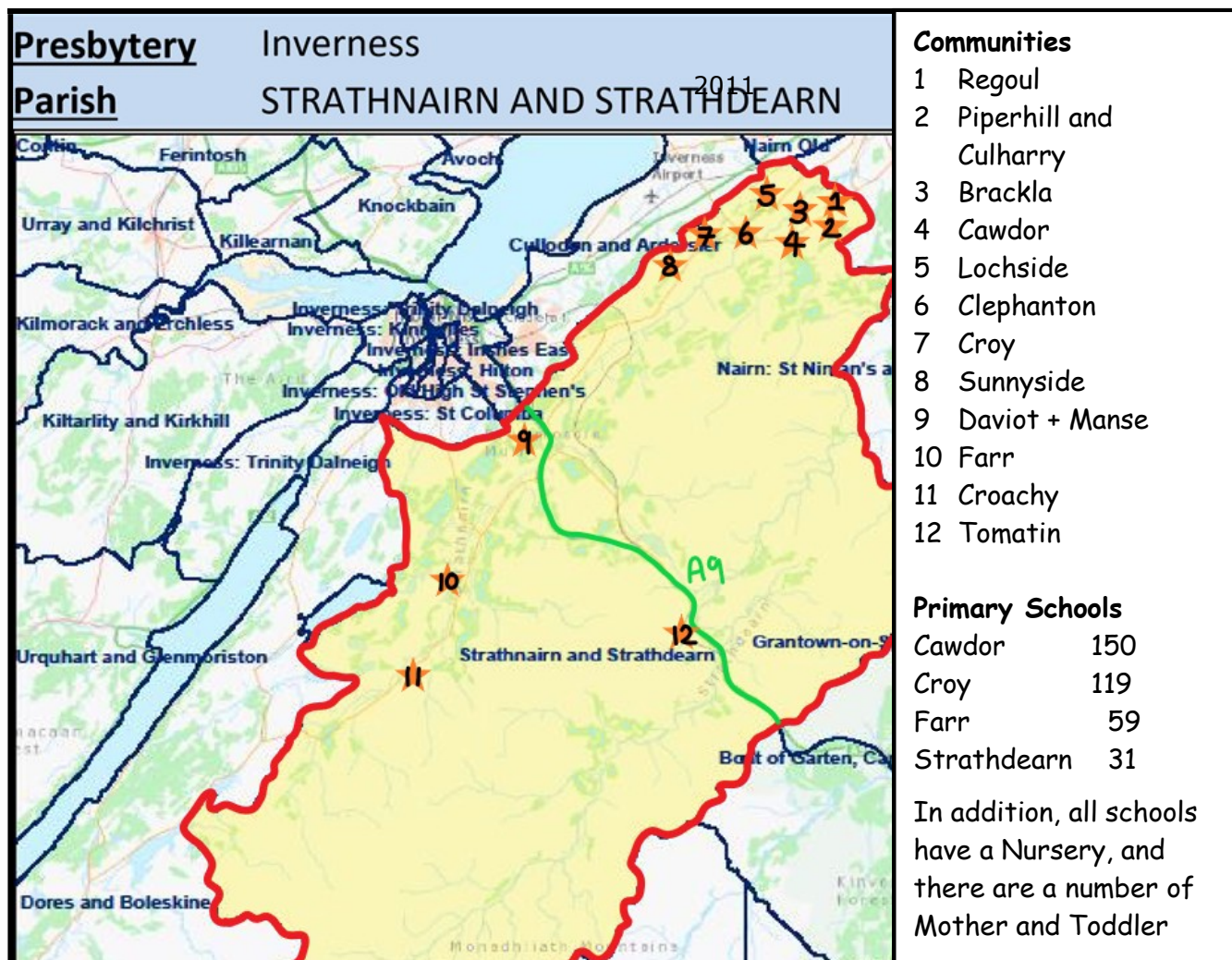


The Kirk Session is made up of Elders from all parts of the Parish and reflects a range of skills that are put to good use. Currently our Interim Moderator guides meetings along with the Session Clerk, who is very experienced and a Reader.

3. Our Parish

The Area

The Parish of Strathnairn and Stratthdearn has been named after the two main river valleys that drain into the Moray Firth to the northeast of the parish. To the north of the Parish lies the city of Inverness and to the east, the seaside town of Nairn.



The whole Parish is easily accessible via the two main trunk roads - the A9 and the A96. Currently part of the A9 from Tomatin to Moy is being dualled. It is expected this will be complete in 2028.

There are good bus, rail, and flight links nearby with connections to the rest of the country and abroad.

Raigmore Hospital is a short distance from our Parish and is the main critical care and health provider for the north of Scotland. There are numerous doctors and dental surgeries within easy travelling distance.



The Parish supports many sporting and cultural activities for all ages, with numerous clubs and associations in the area. Throughout the parish are found vibrant community centres, including the Stratthdearn Hub in Tomatin, and the Cawdor Hub. Please see websites for the array of clubs and associations.

Communities and Employment

From the 2022 census figures there are approximately four and a half thousand people living in the Parish. Most live in small villages and settlements, mainly in the northeast area.

Inverness and the southern border of the Moray Firth towards Nairn, are rapidly expanding, with many building sites and a new town being built at Tornagrain. As a result, many people within our Parish will travel to work in the city and along the A96 corridor area. Some parishioners will travel south to work in Aviemore - one of the main towns of the Cairngorm National Park.

Historically, communities in Nairnshire look towards Nairn for schools, health, police, local council, leisure, and shopping, whereas in the rest of the parish Inverness is the focus. Unfortunately, some of the Cawdor congregation have moved to Nairn Churches as a result.

The Parish, which is broadly rural, has a wealth of employment including a mix of traditional and modern industries underlie the area.

- Agriculture is a significant aspect of the economy of the parish with a focus on sheep and beef cattle mainly in the southern part of the area, and more arable to the eastern part.



- There are two long established distilleries within the Parish - Tomatin and



Brackla - who are major employers in the area.

- There is a strong tourism industry across the Parish, including visitor centres, historic and environmentally important sites, holiday accommodation, restaurants, and cafes.
- Renewable energy generation mainly in the form of wind farms are in the area, providing employment and contributing to community investment funds.
- There are many estates across the whole Parish who employ a number of locals, some providing housing for their workers.
- Public and service industries underly the area with educational, health and infrastructure input.

Education



There are four primary schools in the Parish - Cawdor, Croy, Farr and Strathdearn at Tomatin, and all have a nursery class attached. In addition, Cawdor and Tomatin have After School Clubs. (See school websites.)

Before our Minister was called to his new charge, there was religious and secular input to all these schools.



Secondary pupils from Strathdearn transfer to Milburn Academy in Inverness. Those from Farr transfer to Inverness Royal Academy. Croy pupils move to Culloden Academy and Cawdor transfer to Nairn Academy.

We are aware that for some of these secondary schools there were shared chaplaincies with other churches in the school catchment areas.



Inverness now houses the main campus for the University of the Highlands and Islands, providing courses from SVQ to post-graduate level.

4. Worship

Currently we gather on Sundays for worship at two locations - [The Strathdearn Hub](#) and at [Croy Church](#). One service starting at 10am, and the other at 12 noon. This pattern alternates each month.

When there is a fifth Sunday in a month, a united service is held at [Daviot Church](#) at 11am. Many times, this is elder led.

The liturgical format follows the same structure in each place; however, some contemporary aspects have been incorporated. For example, the giving of the right hand of fellowship where the congregation moves around and greets each other.



The priority for the Parish is [unity in faith](#). We are working towards an ethos of 'one' parish - all in this together. This follows on from the union and reorganisation, and as discussed earlier is making steady progress.

A second issue would be ensuring parishioners can [access the service](#). Distances are great for some, and not everyone drives.

The sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated four times in a year.

Several services take place during Easter week across the parish, and on Christmas Eve.

Remembrance Sunday is recognised in all areas of the Parish at War Memorials.



While the weekly service format is standardised, members of the congregation do take part and support worship. This may take the form of carrying the Bible into and out of the Church, or doing the reading, offering, front door meeting and greeting.

During the vacancy, many services have been undertaken by our Session Clerk (Reader), a congregational Deacon, the Interim Moderator and a

long-standing retired minister. Elders and members of the congregation have also stepped in to carry out the service.

Each week a printed Order of Service is prepared and handed out as the congregation enter. A monthly prayer diary is also issued, as is an information sheet of what's on.



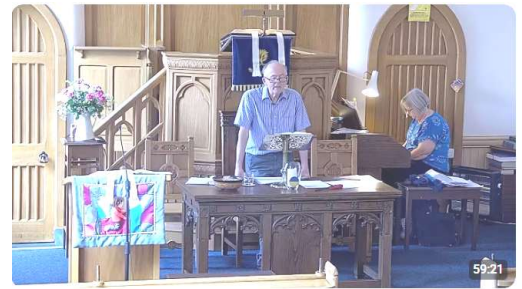
There are regular organists at The Strathtearn Hub, and at Croy. They are an integral part of the congregation and take part in wider activities.

The Croy service is live-streamed each week and can be watched online by going to [U-tube](#) and searching '[Strathnairn and Strathtearn Parish Service](#).'



Our noticeboards will need to be updated when we have a new Minister.

After each service tea and coffee are offered along with a welcome chat.



Other Forms of Worship and Service

The Parish has a **Bible Study** group who meet weekly at Daviot. Members take it in turn to prepare and deliver the passage for focus each week. Another group is hoping to establish weekly meetings in Cawdor.

A **prayer group** meets each Thursday at the Strathtearn Hub and is well attended.

There are nine members of the congregation who are attending the **Cairn Learning Course** and beginning to feed this back into the congregation. The current focus is on discipleship and mission and the group meet regularly to work towards their goals.

Gaelic services are held at Daviot every month.

A number of congregational members would like to run an **Alpha Course**. This could be a route in to encouraging the wider community into the church.

5. Pastoral Care

We have a **Pastoral Care Team** working within the parish.

Funerals do not take place in the Strathtearn Hub, but in other churches, Inverness Crematorium and funeral homes.

The Church of Scotland residential home **Whinnieknowe**, in Nairn was visited by our minister who took services and supported parish members resident in the home.

Church of Scotland **Cameron House** in Inverness is visited twice a year by Guild members.

6. Christian Education

Messy Church has been provided over the past ten years.

Prior to taking up his new charge, our Minister did engage with the **Primary Schools**, taking assemblies and being present at school and community functions.

Often focus on 'moral' assemblies and role modelling encourages interest in the church, and this paid off at Cawdor when children in one family asked their parents to take them to church.

In the absence of a minister during this vacancy, other churches have developed a rota to support primaries.

On an annual basis the local **Scout group** attends a service on Thinking Day.



7. Ecumenical Context

Cleir Eilean i covers the Highlands and Hebrides, a coming together of nine Presbyteries on 1st January 2024.

Within our Parish there is a **Scottish Episcopal Church** at Croachy, a small settlement towards the top end of Strathnairn. There are services there each Sunday, though the priest lives in Nairn.

There is a service at the **War Memorial** at Daviot, followed by warming drinks and eats in the church at Daviot. There are additional services at Cawdor, Croy and at Tomatin.

The monthly **Gaelic services** have brought together preachers and worshippers from the Free Church as well as the Church of Scotland.

8. Stewardship and Finance

The church properties and finances are in a healthy condition and the accounts are available on request.

9. Fabric

Manse

The Parish has recently bought a manse, which is adjacent to Daviot church. It is a modern family home almost equidistant from the parish's two worship centres.

The house has five bedrooms (two ensuite), a large kitchen, utility room, living room, conservatory, and dining room. There is a large lounge on the upper floor, and a sauna in the family bathroom. It benefits from an integral double garage and has solar panels for water heating. The garden is largely laid out to grass.



Croy Church



We have recently installed a kitchen and storage area at the back of the church, as well as a seating area for teas and meetings etc. There is internet, streaming and printing facilities.



Potential plans are to remove the pews and replace them with individual seats which will allow for multiple use of the space.

Unfortunately, it is not disability compliant.

Daviot Church



Currently Daviot Church is used for mission and outreach.

It has good access and parking facilities and is in good condition.



Cawdor Church

The church and its hall (The Mound) were closed in 2023 and regular Sunday services are no longer held there.

However, it is hoped the church will still be available for occasional services, weddings, funerals, meetings and community events once sold.



The Strathdearn Hub



The Strathdearn Hub in Tomatin is a community centre used regularly by a wide range of users. Our services are held there every Sunday, alternating between 10am and 12 noon each month.

We pay rental costs for any services and events there.

There are good IT facilities and connectivity.

The building is fully disability compliant.



10. Communication/ Contacts

We are working on an update to our website which will be up and running shortly, as will a Strathnairn and Strathdearn Facebook page.

Useful links are:

- Church of Scotland Census data <https://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/church-finder/data/statistics/parish-profiles/372164.pdf>
- Website: www.strathsnairnanddearn.co.uk
- Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/share/1Aonm2acTy/?mibextid=wwXIfr>
- Live stream: Go to www.youtube.com > watch then type in Strathnairn and Strathdearn Church Service (date)
- Contacts:
 - Interim Moderator, Rev Dewald Louw DLouw@churchofscotland.org.uk
 - Vacancy Clerk, Mrs Fiona Lewthwaite fionacl@hotmail.co.uk

11. Appendix

Parish Details	
Number of people in parish	4351
Number of households in parish	1772

Since Parish Union	Croy Church	Cawdor Church	Daviot Church
Weddings	0	2	1
Funerals	2	18	0

Information about the Parishes from the 2022 census

Population breakdown by age		
Preshool	235	6%
Primary school	361	9%
High school	238	6%
Student age	358	9%
Young adult	951	23%
Mature adult	1369	33%
Elderly	565	14%
Very elderly	62	1%

Household size		
1	437	24.7%
2	711	40.1%
3	243	13.1%
4	247	13.9%
5	91	5.1%
6	36	2.0%
7	7	0.4%
8+	4	0.2%

Ethnicity		
White	4307	99%
White Scottish	3308	76%
Mixed	20	0.5%
Asian	15	0.3%
African	2	0.0%
Caribbean	2	0.0%
Other	14	0.3%

Religious Affiliation within Parish		
Church of Scotland	1002	23.1%
Roman Catholic	227	5.2%
Other Christian	449	10.4%
Buddhist	11	0.3%
Hindu	1	0.0%
Muslim	9	0.2%
Pagan	14	0.3%
Other religion	13	0.3%
No religion	2321	53.6%
Religion not stated	284	6.6%

Languages Used		
English Fluent	4163	95.7%
English limited	22	0.5%
No spoken English	8	0.2%

Country of Birth		
Born in UK	4080	93.8%
Of which born in Scotland	3241	74.5%