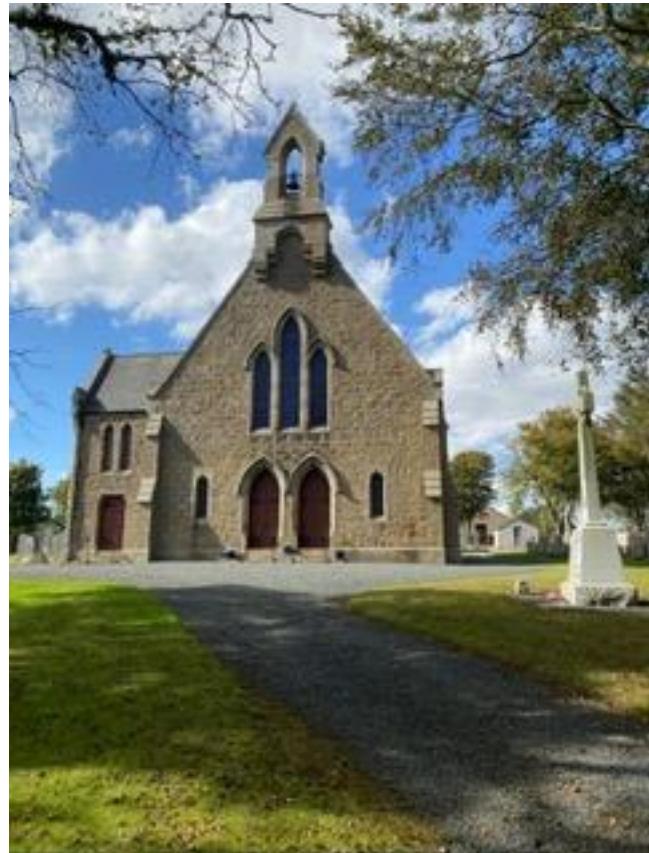


Belhelvie Parish Church



Parish Profile

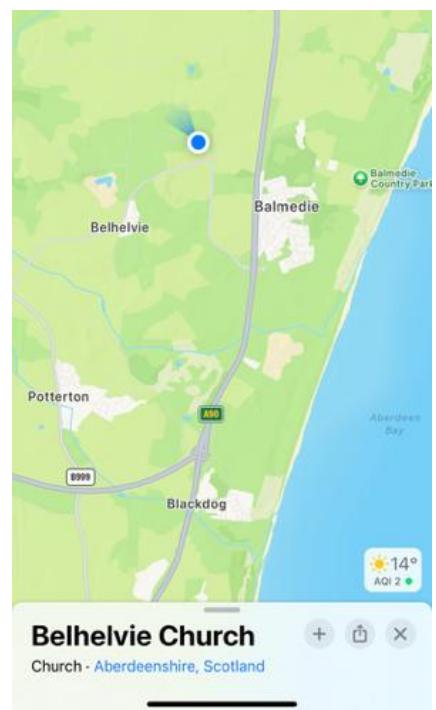


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1. Introduction.

Belhelvie Parish Church of Scotland invite applicants to lead us forward into an exciting new time of significant change both for us as a community of faith and for the Church of Scotland.

We regard ourselves as an open and welcoming church that come together joyfully and faithfully to worship. We offer fellowship, fun and hospitality and are keen to develop outreach within our community and are open to new ideas.

We are looking for someone who can continue to lead us in our teaching of the Lord's word and encourage us to develop a thoughtful, prayerful and worshipful life and become Disciples of Christ. Helping us to grow in faith individually and as a church.

Our congregation wants to become a people with deeps roots in the practices of our faith: prayer, reflection on the Scriptures, fellowship, community, and pastoral care. We have a regular worshipping community of around 50-70 people and have actively pursued opportunities for others to come to our church and to find a home among us both spiritually and socially.

Belhelvie Church Mission Statement is:

Belhelvie Parish Church seeks to be:

*an open and welcoming church
a joyful and worshipping church
a thinking and teaching church
a caring and helping church
a committed and dedicated church
a growing and expanding church
and above all
a loving church*

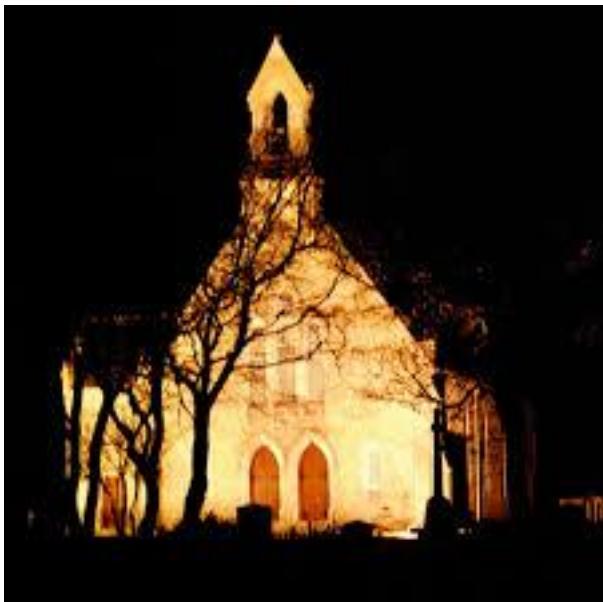
The vacancy arose when the Rev Dr Paul McKeown resigned as minster at Belhelvie Church after 20 years of dedicated and inspiring service, which we greatly appreciated. He has moved to hospital chaplaincy within the NHS.

Belhelvie Parish Church originally organised for ministers to undertake Sunday worship and have since welcomed a locum who will lead worship and undertake pastoral work until such time as a full-time minister is in role.

By decision of the Presbytery of the North East And the Northern Isles, Belhelvie Church has been granted permission to call a minister on a Basis of Reviewable Charge in terms of Act X1 2025.

2. History of the Charge

The present Belhelvie Church – formerly known as North Church – was built in 1878 of Gothic design and has seating for up to 500 worshippers. During the winter months the Church is floodlit, which allows it to be seen glowing invitingly from a distance.



A shining light in
the darkness

Of historical interest is an anvil displayed in the vestibule. It was used by a former minister of Belhelvie – Rev Alexander J Forsyth (1768-1843) – for his invention of the percussion lock for firearms in the early 1800s, a major innovation at the time.



Within the grounds of the Church complex is the modern Forsyth Hall which has recently had an Annexe added, allowing for a very versatile setup for church and community groups. Additionally, Belhelvie Church has a manse building which is a modern, family home set in its own walled gardens, enabling privacy for its residents.

3. Community Profile

We aim to be a growing and expanding church

The parish of Belhelvie is situated in a mainly rural setting in the north east of Scotland. It consists of five settlements, Balmedie, Belhelvie, Blackdog, Potterton and Whitecairns and covers an area of approximately 20 square miles.

The socio-economic profile is mixed, but there are no recognised areas of social deprivation in the parish. Generally, the area is considered as aspirational and the housing is sought after. Housing Development is active, with each of the villages having some form of development undertaken or planned.



Balmedie also has a Leisure Centre that incorporates the Beachside coffee shop, a chemist, two grocery stores and a post office among other small businesses.



Sadly as is the general trend there has been a steady decline in numbers attending church over the past 30 years. However, there is enormous potential for outreach in the future within the new developments.

Primary health care provision is provided nearby at the Bridge of Don. First responders operate in the local area. Hospital referrals are normally to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. ARI is a national trauma centre and accepts patients from all over the North East of Scotland and from the Northern Isles. There are dental practices in Bridge of Don, Ellon and Kingseat.

There are a relatively large number of mutually supportive community-based groups supporting and undertaking projects in the five villages. These include - Belhelvie Community Trust; Better Balmedie; Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs; Potterton Volunteers; The Sand Bothy in Balmedie Country Park and the Blackdog Community Group.

As can still be found in smaller places in the North East, a real sense of community exists and local events are generally well supported

The location of the parish means it is increasingly well connected with excellent access to nature, beaches, hills, golf courses, fishing, and facilities within nearby towns and the city of Aberdeen. Otherwise, road travel further afield to the highlands / west coast can be undertaken in only a few hours and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) makes travel to the south (the central belt and beyond) increasingly more straightforward. Additionally, the city of Aberdeen is well served by train travel, international flights, ferry service and national bus routes.

On our doorstep is the Balmedie Country Park a popular place for local people and visitors. In 2021 it was given a "Visit Scotland's Beach Award" for excellence.



4. Fellowship involving the wider community

We aim to be an open and welcoming church

There are a number of groups and activities run within our church, which actively engage with or seek to engage with the wider community. Groups include:

The Guild

A dedicated group made up of mostly women and a few men who meet monthly from March –Oct and express their faith in action and fellowship. They provide a light soup lunch after Sunday service once a month during the winter. This raises funds for Guild Projects.



The Men's Group

Participates in breakfasts, walks, a men's choir, more breakfasts!

The Social Committee

This group organises fantastic social events in our halls including Burns night, concerts, quizzes, and a stall for Balmedie Gala as well as our own Christmas Fair.



Coffee Haven

Provides a monthly opportunity to all in the community to gather for fellowship (and a coffee and a fine piece).

Golden Girls

Our very own Golden Girls have organised social afternoons out and lunches for members and non-members, which have been well attended.



In addition to organised groups, there has been summer holiday clubs, for Primary aged children, which have lapsed lately but would be good to reinstate.

The community and local school were invited to create a gingerbread house. The houses were then put then together to create a small village. Everyone was invited back to see them lit up and join in carols and refreshments.



The Forsyth hall and the new Annexe provide a large number of versatile spaces which both community groups and church groups enjoy equally, bringing in folk who may not have been around the church before. The Forsyth Hall and Annexe at present are used for Brownies, Pilates, Yoga, Keep Fit, Soundbath Golden Zumba as well as concerts and private parties. This provides an income for the upkeep of the space.

5. Worship Life.

We aim to be a joyful worshiping church

A warm welcome at the front door of the church is assured for those attending Sunday morning worship from 11:00 to 12:00. Thereafter, the Welcome Team serve teas, coffees and “a fine piece” in the Forsyth Hall, which is an important and cherished addition to our time of fellowship together.

Traditionally a relatively formal worship style has been followed at Belhelvie Church. However having had a number of ministers visiting our church during 2025, the congregation has become increasingly open to a more contemporary style of service, which have always been delivered in thoughtful and reflective ways.

Bible readings and prayers of intercession are normally read by a member of the congregation on a rota basis, while Welcome Team Members /Elders greet people at the door and collect weekly offerings during the service.

A recently upgraded, modern Audio Visual system complete with fixed and clip-on microphones allows for effective communication of services on forward and rear facing screens, while Sunday services are also recorded and uploaded to YouTube (@belhelviechurch3545). The church also has a loop system for the hard of hearing. A small team of trained volunteers manage our technology.

Printed Orders of Service providing full details of each service and intimations for the week ahead are drafted and printed by a dedicated church member.

Music is provided by our resident organist on an electric organ or on the piano. A small choir lead the singing with hymns mainly selected from CH4. This is occasionally supplemented by a men’s choir.

The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated 6 times per year in our church.

All age worship (café style) is held once per month in the Church Hall where families and their children join the congregation for a service catering for young and old alike. This has been a very successful initiative.

In the last 5 years there have been 6 Baptisms and 4 Blessings , a small number of weddings and funerals generally in the range of 10-20 annually.

A small prayer group meets once a week in the evening, in the Annexe, to pray for our members, those in the community, the wider church and overseas issues.

Our church roll stands at approximately 263 members with an additional 28/30 adherents

Special Services at Belhelvie Church include, but are not limited to:

- Guild dedication service
- World Day of Prayer
- Memorial Service, where we remember those who have been bereaved
- Easter outdoor service, which has been held in various parts of our parish and enjoyed by young and old alike
- Thinking Day / Founders Day services for all ages of the Guide and Scout organisations
- Elders undertake an annual service and efforts are taken to ensure all can be involved.
- Harvest Thanks Giving is an important service given our rural setting and allows us to thank God for the year's harvest and to share with those in need
- Remembrance service, which allows us to come together as a community and honour the fallen and pray for peace and reconciliation
- Christingle service
- Christmas Carol Service with the Bon-accord Brass Band
- Community Carol service at the Leisure Centre in Balmedie
- Watch Night service where once again the community worship together to usher in Christmas Day and herald the arrival of our Lord Jesus
- Christmas morning service
- Joint service of praise with Ellon Parish Church



6. Church Business Life

We aim to be a committed and dedicated church

There are a number of busy committees which work hard in the background and which are fundamental to the smooth running of Belhelvie Church. The Kirk Session operates under the Unitary Constitution.

Kirk Session (KS):

- 22 Elders (14 ladies and 8 men) are currently in post, which include:
 - Session Clerk
 - Treasurer
 - Roll Keeper
 - Safeguarding Officer
 - Presbytery Elder
- 6 planned KS meetings take place each year with extraordinary meetings held through the year as required.
- Priority –
 - The spiritual and practical welfare of our congregation
 - To pursue strengthened links with other KSs in our Parish grouping.

Finance:

- Our Treasurer (Finance Convenor) manages Belhelvie Church finances with the assistance of an accountant within the congregation.
- A statement of accounts is generated each year and independently examined before being submitted to the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
- The statement of accounts is presented to the kirk session for approval before being presented to the congregation at the Stated Annual Meeting.

Property:

- This property committee is lead by a Property Convener.
- The role of this committee has grown considerably over the years, with the addition of the Manse, the Forsyth Hall and then the Annexe to the hall being added to Belhelvie Church's property portfolio.
- The Development Team managed a large project (close to £1,000,000) to improve the church buildings which are now maintained by the property committee:
 - Addition of storage to the Forsyth Hall
 - Building an additional car park
 - Improvements to the church sanctuary
 - Building of the Annexe to the Forsyth Hall
 - Tarmac the Forsyth Hall car park

Hall committee:

- The Halls' Committee are responsible for developing business ideas and advertising Belhelvie Church's modern and versatile hall spaces.
- The Halls' Convener undertakes the day-to-day running of the halls and management of hall bookings with help from members of the Hall Committee and the Property Committee.

7. Pastoral Care

We aim to be a caring and helping church and a welcoming and friendly congregation to all within our parish.

The Parish covers a large geographical area with a diverse community of urban and rural areas. Ours is a relatively prosperous parish but there are always people who struggle, often unseen. We see Pastoral care as an essential part of our ministry for those within our church and community.

Our Parish is divided into 22 Elder districts. Elders visit all homes in their district on a quarterly basis delivering the church magazine. (They are the eyes and ears of the church.) The Elders inform the minister of any issues arising within the community and any need for support or a ministerial visit.

We also have a Pastoral Care Team who oversees a monthly "Coffee Haven" in the church hall, which welcomes over 50 people, mainly elderly, from the community. Proceeds from donations for tea and coffee go to fund various overseas and local charities. The Team, although small in numbers at present, are always looking at ways they can help. Visitations have stopped since COVID but get well cards and cards for special occasions are still sent out to our members



Our "Food Angels" provide 2/3 main meals, if wished, for those recuperating after a stay in hospital and for new mums as they come to terms with life with a new, often demanding, addition to their family.



A “mainly music” team meet weekly during term times with mums/carers with pre-school children. Their aim is to show faith in action in a practical way offering support and prayer when needed. Creating a joy-filled community of belonging where Jesus can be revealed.

Twice per month a brief service is held at the Church of Scotland Balmedie House, a Crossreach care home for elderly, in the village of Balmedie with a dedicated team leading this worship.

8. Christian Education

We aim to be a thinking and teaching church

A recognised priority within our church will be to encourage and develop relationships with the young people in our parish. There has been some tentative discussion at Kirk Session about the possibility of engaging a youth worker to assist with this, however this has not been progressed to date and would be looked at within the context of the Parish Grouping

We have a small Sunday school run by volunteers. They meet in the church on the first Sunday of the month and retire to the adjacent Forsyth Hall after the children’s address. They gather again at the all age worship on the third Sunday of each month.

There is a successful and well-attended “House Group” open to all those interested in finding out more about the Bible. Through discussion and fellowship, Bible passages are reviewed and themes of faith in action are investigated taking us deeper in our faith.

Over the years, we have run “Alpha” or similar courses for those who wish to explore their faith.

General Educational facilities are excellent:

The Parish is well served from an educational point of view. We have one Primary school within the parish, which is well regarded in the local community and with which the church has strong links. The previous minister undertook the role of school chaplain and was warmly welcomed into classes to talk with the children and attend end of term assemblies. Chaplaincy has been part of the work of our previous minister and this would be actively encouraged.



Pupils in the parish are zoned to Bridge of Don Academy for secondary school education. The Academy is nondenominational and achieves good results in Scottish Qualification Authority exams. Pupils can also choose to attend Ellon Academy.

The city itself has numerous private schools, which have excellent academic achievements.

Further Education

Aberdeen is a university city offering excellent opportunities at the University of Aberdeen (the 5th oldest University in the UK), Robert Gordon's University, the North East Scotland College has Campuses in the city and shire and Scotland's Rural College has a campus in Aberdeen.

9. Ecumenical Context

Belhelvie Parish Church is in a Parish grouping with nearby Ellon Parish. We have undertaken joint services and share services over the Easter period. We hope to continue this in the future building a larger community of faith and fellowship.

Other denominations within the parish are The Balmedie Congregational Church and The Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, however we do not have close links to either.

10. World Church

We have always been thoughtful of the world around us. We have had strong connections with Malawi in the past, and supported our Missionary Partners with fund raising, prayer and regular communication. We have been active in fundraising for Christian Aid and other worldwide organisations through our “Right Christmas” Appeals.

Our Guild hosts the Annual World Day of Prayer and invites churches in our parish grouping and surrounding area to join us.

We promote “Fair Trade” with a monthly sales table and encourage respect for the environment through our Eco Group. Belhelvie Church was part of the Faith Action for Nature pilot scheme run in conjunction with our local RSPB Scotland reserve at Loch of Strathbeg. A small group worked on the flowerbeds between the manse and the Annexe car park. Regular articles were included in the church newsletter and local children helped make bird seed/fat cakes to encourage wildlife. Recently our Eco group has lapsed but we are keen to engage with this area of church life in the future.

Above all we aim to be a loving church

11. Stewardship and Finance

Belhelvie Church is financially in good health. The yearly financial reports are compiled according to the stricter accrued (SORP compliant) methodology, which provides a view of the actual financial receipts and expenditure for that year. Our yearly accounts are available for inspection via the OSCR website or can be requested from the treasurer.

We have historically operated at a surplus, meeting all our Giving to Grow financial contributions. Over the previous 10 years we have invested close to 1 million pounds on improving the church facilities and building an annexe to our existing hall. The Forsyth Hall is very well utilised by a number of church and community groups and also operates at a surplus.

12. Staffing

Many roles are carried out on a voluntary basis by church members or by elders/committees. We do employ an organist and contract a church and hall cleaner.

13. Church, Manse, Forsyth Hall /Annexe and Glebe



Drawing showing the Church, Forsyth Hall & Manse (not the Annexe)

a. Church:

Belhelvie North Church sits in the centre of the parish and dates from 1876. It was designed by William and John Smith in the Gothic style and erected by mason Stewart of Peterhead in largely pink and grey granite.



It comprises a rectangular sanctuary and main entrance foyer block along with an attached stair-hall in the south east corner of the building giving access to the gallery above, along with a session house and toilet extension to the rear with boiler room below.

Its dominant feature is the large gable bellcote to the south gable wall rising above lancet windows to the gallery and double entrance doors below.

The east wall has six simple lancet windows with clear diamond glazing and the west wall five.

A very considerable amount of work has been undertaken over the course of the last few years, including the alterations within the Sanctuary, the upgrading of the heating installation, including the replacement of the gas boilers, secondary glazing to the Sanctuary windows and the provision of external LED floodlighting.



b. Manse:



The Manse was constructed in 1994-1995 and is a very well maintained family home set in its own walled gardens enabling privacy for its residents. It is a modern bungalow with lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, office, master bedroom with en-suite facilities (up graded in 2018) 3 further bedrooms, bathroom, toilet and with an integral double garage.

The Manse occupies a large well-maintained site in open countryside with extensive views and is located in close proximity to the Church and the Forsyth Hall/Annexe.



c. Halls:

The **Forsyth Hall** was erected in the year 2000 with grant assistance from the Lottery Community Fund.



It was extended in 2016-17 to provide two stores accessed from the Hall. There is parking adjacent to the Forsyth Hall/Annexe with additional parking provided across the road.

The Annexe is a newly constructed two-storey building connected to the original Forsyth Hall.



Access to the Annexe is via French doors, with a ramp, which provides adequate disabled access.

The ground floor entrance vestibule is a shared common space with access to male, female and disabled WCs; a large Hall; two meeting rooms; store room; and a catering standard kitchen. Access to the first floor is via an accessible lift or stairs off the main entrance.

The first floor comprises two large meeting rooms with carpet tile coverings.

Artificial lighting is via LED pendant fitments with Velux windows providing a good level of natural daylight.

Heating throughout is provided by a gas central heating system serving wall-mounted radiators.

d. Glebe:

The Glebe consists of approximately 10 acres of land currently let out for agricultural use.

14. Web links for further information

Belhelvie Parish Church Website :

<https://www.belhelviechurch.com>

Youtube Channel :

<http://www.youtube.com/@belhelviechurch3545>

Facebook :

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Belhelvie-Church-100064351824827/>

Church of Scotland Census data on the charge (through *find your local church*, on the Church of Scotland website Contact Us pages –

https://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/church-finder/profile?property_id=19493

We welcome applications and ask that you submit your CV, together with a covering letter and the names of 2 referees, to the Clerk of the nominating Committee

Clerk:

Anne Shirran

Email: anne.shirran@btinternet.com

Tel: 07740 379351

Informal enquires may be made to the Interim Moderator

Mr Robert Esson

Email: robertesson@btinternet.com

Tel: 01779 813049