

Congregational Action Plan

A Plain Language Guide to Completing the Template

Presbytery of Clyde · 2027 to 2031

Welcome

This guide explains how to complete the Congregational Action Plan template in plain language. It walks you through the form page by page.

The Action Plan sets out how your congregation will live out its mission over the next five years. It sits underneath the Presbytery Mission Plan and must be read alongside it.

This guide assumes:

- You have discussed the Action Plan at Kirk Session level.
- You have held some discussion or conference with both your congregation and Kirk Session into discerning your vision and Action Plan
- The people filling in the form have been asked to reflect what the Kirk Session has agreed.
- You have a copy of the blank template open as you read this guide.

Before you start

- Read the Presbytery Mission Plan that affects your charge. Your Action Plan must line up with it.
- Look at what is already happening in the life of the congregation. Some of your answers may build on work already underway.
- Be realistic. The plan covers five years, so you do not need to do everything in year one.

A few things to remember

- The Action Plan is a high-level document. Use bullet points, not long prose.
- It is fine to continue and develop existing work in some areas. For most areas, though, you will be planning something new or shifting direction.
- Boxes in the Word version of the template expand as you type. Do not worry about running out of space.
- Be honest about what you can resource. Two new sections on every page ask you to think about how you will resource the work and what challenges you can see. Use them.
- This is a working document. You will review and update it every year.

Page One: Your Congregation and Mission Plan Relationship

Page one is your front cover. It does two things: it names your congregation and it records how you stand in relation to the Presbytery Mission Plan.

Congregation name

Write your full congregational name as it appears in official records.

Relationship to the approved Presbytery Mission Plan

This is a simple table with three questions. Each one needs a yes or a no, plus a short comment if it helps to explain your answer.

Question 1: Have you united, if applicable?

Answer yes or no. If your charge was not asked to unite under the Mission Plan, write “not applicable” in the comments box.

Example: “Not applicable. No union was specified for this charge in the Mission Plan.”

Question 2: Have you received your full ministry allocation?

Answer yes or no. The Presbytery is looking for a factual answer about whether the ministry posts in your Mission Plan are in place.

If the answer is no, use the comments box to say why.

Examples of helpful comments: “We have not yet been given Permission to Call following adjustment.” · “The Kirk Session has not yet started recruiting the MDS worker named in the Mission Plan.” · “We have a vacancy and an Interim Moderator is in place.”

Question 3: Have you sold all buildings as outlined in the plan?

Answer yes or no. The Mission Plan categorises every building as either:

- Category A: to be kept beyond the five years of the plan.
- Category B: to be sold, let or otherwise disposed of by a set date within five years.
- Category B*: a decision is to be made at a later, specified date.

If buildings have been disposed of, answer yes. If buildings are categorised B or B* and the disposal date has not yet been reached, that is fine. Note it in the comments.

Example: “Church hall (Category B) is scheduled for disposal by June 2029. Process not yet started.”

What this page is for?

It gives the Kirk Session and the Presbytery a snapshot of where your congregation is on the journey set out by the Mission Plan.

Page Two: Worship and Teaching

Page two is the first of the mission area pages. It uses the same structure as pages three to six, so the instructions here apply to those pages too. Read this section carefully.

Desired Outcome

In one or two sentences, say what you want to see happen in this area of church life by the end of the five years.

Keep it specific enough to measure, but broad enough to allow for change.

Example: “We want our Sunday worship to grow in depth and reach, with regular all-age services and more lay involvement in leading worship.”

How will this be achieved?

This is the main table on the page. It breaks the work down by year.

Year 1, Year 2, Years 3 to 5

Use bullet points. Keep them short. Say what you plan to do in each phase.

Each bullet should describe an action, not a wish.

Example bullets (Year 1): “Train three new worship leaders.” · “Introduce a monthly all-age communion service.” · “Review the music group rota.”

What we might look for as signs of progress

Describe what success looks like in real terms. How will you know it is working?

Think about things you can see, count, or hear from your congregation and community.

Example: “Average attendance at all-age services. Number of trained worship leaders. Feedback from new families.”

Governance

Note any governance steps needed. This might include Kirk Session approvals, new committee structures, safeguarding checks, or policy reviews.

Other Areas Impacting this Outcome

To the right of the main table is a column listing four cross-cutting areas: Finance, Communication, Property, HR/Staffing.

Tick the boxes for any areas that affect or are affected by this outcome.

Most outcomes will touch more than one area. Be honest about which ones.

Status

Use the simple traffic light status:

- Not Started
- In Progress
- Complete

This tells the Presbytery where you are on the journey. It is updated each year at review.

Finance, Communications, Property, HR/Staffing boxes

Below the main table is a row of four boxes, one for each cross-cutting area.

Use bullet points to say how this outcome affects each area. Not every outcome will hit every box.

Example: If a new worship initiative needs a sound desk upgrade, note it under Property. If it needs a paid musician, note it under HR/Staffing. If it needs a new section on your website, note it under Communications.

You will gather these bullet points together on page seven, so the more clearly you record them here, the easier that will be.

We will resource this area of mission by...

Try to be specific.

Say where the money, the people, the time and the materials will come from.

Example: “From the existing worship budget, plus a small allocation from reserves for training costs. Volunteers will be drawn from the existing music team and from a new appeal to the congregation.”

We have identified the following possible challenges...

This is the honesty box. Use it. Be honest about what you can resource.

Name the real difficulties: a shortage of volunteers, a limited budget, a vacant ministry post, an ageing congregation, or anything else that could get in the way.

Naming a challenge is not the same as giving up. It helps the Presbytery understand what support you might need.

Example: “We have only two musicians and one is planning to step back next year. The music budget covers sheet music but no fees. The building has no projection facilities, which limits all-age worship options.”

Pages Three to Six: Other Mission Areas

These four pages follow exactly the same structure as page two. Use the same approach.

Page Three: Pastoral Care and Fellowship

Cover the work of caring for the congregation and building community within it. Think about visiting, prayer, befriending, small groups, bereavement support, and welcoming new people.

Page Four: Youth and Children

Cover work with under-18s, both inside and outside the congregation. Think about Sunday groups, school chaplaincy, youth groups, intergenerational worship, and links with parents.

Page Five: Local Mission and Community Outreach

Cover the congregation's engagement with the parish and wider community. Think about community projects, partnerships with schools or local groups, food banks, social action, and outreach events.

Page Six: Wider Mission

Cover ecumenical work, interfaith relationships, and links with the World Church. Not every congregation will have active work in all three. If a section does not apply, say so.

Reminder for all four pages: Use the same approach as page two. Desired Outcome at the top. Year-by-year actions. Signs of progress. Cross-cutting impacts. Resourcing. Challenges.

Page Seven: Uniting the Sections

Page seven is where you pull together the cross-cutting bullet points from pages two to six. It has four rows: Finance, Communications, Property, HR/Staffing.

How to complete each row

Desired Outcome

Summarise what the bullet points from earlier pages add up to in this area.

Example for Finance: “Our five-year mission work needs an additional £12,000 across the period, drawn from a stewardship campaign in Year 1 and a small reserves drawdown in Year 3.”

How will this be achieved?

List the practical steps. Keep them brief.

Status

Use the same traffic light: Not Started, In Progress, Complete.

Resourcing and challenges (whole-page)

At the bottom of page seven, you have two more honesty boxes. These are about the four areas combined.

Use them to say:

- How you will resource the cross-cutting work as a whole.
- What challenges you see across Finance, Communications, Property and HR/Staffing taken together.

Example: “Our biggest single challenge is property. The hall needs £40,000 of work in the next three years and we do not yet have a funding plan. This affects every area of mission because the hall is where most of our community work happens.”

If you need a new project in these areas

Page seven is for gathering and summarising what is already on earlier pages. If you want to plan a brand new project in Finance, Communications, Property or HR/Staffing, use page eight.

Page Eight: Specific Outcomes for Finance, Communications, Property or Staffing

Page eight follows the same structure as page two. Use it for a new desired outcome in one of the four cross-cutting areas.

When you might use this page

- A stewardship campaign that is not directly tied to a mission outcome above.
- A new church website or rebrand.
- A major property project such as a fabric appeal or hall refurbishment.
- Recruitment of a new staff member, such as a part-time administrator.

How to complete the page

Delete the headings that do not apply. Keep the one that does.

Then complete it the same way you completed page two:

- Desired Outcome.
- Year-by-year actions.
- Signs of progress and governance.
- Cross-cutting impacts and status.
- How you will resource it.
- Challenges you can see.

If you have more than one

Copy and paste page eight to create a new page for each separate desired outcome.

Final Tips

Keep it honest

The Presbytery is not looking for a perfect plan. It is looking for a real one. A plan that names the difficulties is more useful than one that does not.

Keep it short

Bullet points beat paragraphs. The Action Plan is a working tool, not an essay.

Keep it shared

The Kirk Session owns this plan. Make sure the people writing it reflect what the Session has agreed, and bring drafts back to the Session for sign-off.

Keep reviewing it

You will update this plan every year. Use the status column to track progress. Add new bullets where things have moved on. Be willing to change direction if you need to.

Ask for help

If a section is hard to complete, talk to the Presbytery before you submit. The Presbytery Clerk and the Congregational Support team would rather have a conversation early than receive a stuck plan.