



# Learn

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## PASTORAL CARE CONFERENCE

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The Vine Conference Centre  
Dunfermline



The Church of Scotland

# 2. PASTORAL CARE IN A RURAL CONTEXT

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# Rural Context

- Small congregations, often big problems
- Members will have local knowledge of what has gone before
- Rural congregations tend to have “tribal” splits based either on family relationships or location
- You simply cannot import a pastoral care model from a large urban charge and expect it to work.



# So What is the Solution?

- Decide as a church, what the most effective model is for your parish
- It could be the tried and tested District Elder or a pastoral care team may be better
- Does one exist but simply is not church?
- Build on what is there and move slowly
- Do not abandon pastoral care as being too difficult

# Rural Context

- Elders or other visitors have to know that the countryside is full of eyes and ears.
- They need to know how and when to engage with other organisations
- No gossip!
- People are people.
- Pastoral care in the rural context can be deeply satisfying and helpful.

# Rural Context

- Get to know other organisations that can help, NFU Scotland, RSABI, Community Councils etc. Parish nursing—learn to work alongside them.
- Remember most of your parish population will not attend church or, if they do only on special occasions
- Offer contact such as “Drop Inn”

# Useful Contacts

- RSABI: help line 0300 111 4166
- NFUS: 0131 472 4010
- Samaritans: 116123
- Parish Nursing: [parishnursing.org.uk](http://parishnursing.org.uk)