



DORNOCH FIRTH PARISH MAGAZINE

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Dornoch Cathedral was the venue for the Dornoch Firth New Year Concert
More photos and full report on page 17

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Minister's Thoughts

Dear friends

CAN YOU BELIEVE we are a month and more into a brand new year already? - happy new year, if it's not too late!

Some things change with the year's turning, others stay the same. But, if we're up for it, the thrilling, perplexing, joyful, bare-knuckled-don't-let-go adventure that is following Jesus in this small corner of the world goes on - and how can we not be up for it!

Peter, one of Jesus' friends, knee-deep in that same adventure though a bit bedraggled by it sometimes, was watching one day as folk were turning away from Jesus - they didn't like the things he was saying and what it might mean for him and perhaps for their own comfort, their own safety even.

And when Jesus turned to his friends and asked, are you going to give up on me too, Peter, bold, beautiful Peter, declared, *Leader, who can we go to?* Which was to say, *We're not going with anyone but you! We only feel alive when we're listening to you! We've learnt to trust you, and we know you're God's chosen!* [Good as New translation] Peter, as was so often his gift, says it as we feel, as we mean to say it.

I don't equate Presbytery planning with Jesus' message - in Peter's day or in ours. But the congregations that have come together to form Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland have had lots of reasons to feel... unsettled, tired, fed up, doubting... Bringing congregations together into one. Looking after each other through all the stresses and strains... It's been hard. It might still be hard...

But, honestly, I continue to be impressed and, well, thankful really, at how thoughtful folk are being toward each other, how sensitive, how understanding. It's no wonder I feel so much love and admiration in my heart for those people... which is a good job really given I am now in the privileged position of having recently been called to serve as full-time minister for this parish for the next few years!

For now, I just want to say, thank you. Thank you for moments of grace and kindness and honesty and forgiveness and love. Also, I am much indebted to you for ways in which my own faith and, I hope, understanding has deepened these past few years as I've served as locum. I want to say, too, please don't give up. Hold on to what is good. Keep with each other as we look to Jesus, our Leader. Feel the aliveness that comes when we listen to him together and follow where he shows. And trust, trust in him in all things and who knows the things we'll do and see together...

Trusting with you,

Carol Anne



Maybe by John Roedel

maybe we are all here to teach each other how to love
maybe Earth is a classroom and we take turns being students and professors
maybe we need to quit grading each other so harshly
maybe the only homework assignment we have been given is solving the equation of kindness
maybe empathy is just a study abroad programme where we spend time in the hearts of strangers
maybe forgiveness is the final exam
maybe we are never meant to graduate and remain forever students of how to love and care for each other

An invitation to meet Jesus - again or for the first time

SOON, as winter recedes, I want to send an invitation to you - you who follow Jesus, you who want to meet Jesus again or for the first time, you who don't know much about Jesus but want to find out more.

The invitation is to come together to watch *The Chosen*, the first ever multi-season TV show about the life of Jesus. There are four seasons so far, with a fifth on the way. I've watched the available seasons, every episode, at least three or four times, and I find it so so compelling. I love the way the writers bring their own imaginations and questions to bear on the gospel stories and the characters we find in them. This is what the makers say about it:

The Chosen is a groundbreaking historical drama based on the life of Jesus, seen through the eyes of those who knew him. Set against the backdrop of Roman oppression in first-century Israel, the seven-season series shares an authentic and intimate look at Jesus' revolutionary life and teachings. What started as a crowd-funded project has grown to over 250 million viewers and more than 17 million social media followers.

My hope would be to offer a screening to which you can come along, maybe with friends, family, neighbours. And we'll take it from there. If you like it, we'll watch some more, and maybe study groups will come from it too. This will likely be in the Spring, hopefully in a couple of locations in the parish, but keep your ear to the ground - we'll put posters up here and there and spread the word as best we can.

Please come along,

Carol Anne

Christmas Story develops



The children helped Carol Anne tell the Christmas Story.

Christingle Making

THE AFTERNOON service in the Bonar Bridge village hall on Sunday 29th December was how to make Christingles. The Rev. Mary Stobo described the significance of each part of the process and explained that having celebrated Christ coming into the world on 25th we must, light the candle in the Christingle, and carry His light for others to see and come to know Him.

The orange represents the world; the world held lovingly in God's hands from the very beginning of time, and every day and every night until forever. It's a fragile world we live in and we need to think about ways we can help to take care of it and every person who lives upon the planet.

The red ribbon represents the love of God shown to us in Jesus. With Jesus there are no exceptions – no-one is left out, no-one forgotten or made to feel unimportant. God's love holds everyone together and we are all one big family.

The sweets and fruits represent the wonderful gifts that God has showered over all the earth. These gifts should be shared so that everyone has their fair share. Remember those people in a place where people are hungry or hurting or frightened.

The cocktail sticks with the sweeties are stuck on the four sides of the orange to remember that these gifts are meant for everyone - people in all four corners of the world are entitled to food, water and shelter.

The piece of foil is there to reflect the light of the candle which represents Jesus, the light of the world. Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. His light can brighten up all the dark places in the world and shine on the people that need hope.

We then held our Christingle in our hands. We remembered all the dark places in the world and the people that need hope remembering that God loves us very much and thinks about how we can reflect that love to others.

Rev. Mary Stobo



Parish News payment

For your digital copy, the cost for the next 6 issues up until November 2025 is £5.

To make your donation you can either use:

Bank transfer - details are Sort Code **80-06-36 Account 06002380** and include as a reference - Parish News.

By cheque or cash made payable to Dornoch Firth and take to the Cathedral with your name on the envelope and marked Parish News or pop cash into envelope.

If you have content that you would like to be included email it to <whookmackay@gmail.com>

It might be that you stopped getting a digital copy - if so, let me know.

Willie MacKay

Carols, Christmas Stories and Donkeys

On a wet Sunday afternoon on the 15th December in Gearrchoille Community Woods, Ardgay Members of Dornoch Firth Parish as well as others from surrounding communities gathered in Drovers Square in Ardgay. Despite the inclement weather, around 50 folk including several young families came along.

We set off walking to the woods along the pavement and journeying through the Christmas Story with the help of songs and visits from the Angel Gabriel, Joseph, Mary and the Innkeeper who guided us towards the final shelter and the conclusion of the nativity story.

The twinkling lights of the shelter greeted the hardy attendees with very welcome hot chocolate drinks and homemade biscuits, and by the much petted donkeys, Jimmy and Geordie.

Warm and happy feelings countered the dripping surroundings and many words of thanks and appreciative comments were made before folk slowly departed for their homes. This service in particular, tangibly highlighted the increasing feeling of “togetherness” which we feel is growing between all corners of our Dornoch Firth Parish. Thanks to all who helped with the refreshments.

Sue Boyce



Christmas Lunch

FOR SEVERAL years there has been a lunch on Christmas Day organised for local people in Bonar Bridge and Ardgay who may not have family to visit them.

Now run under the banner of the Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland, we are extremely grateful to Tain & Easter Ross, and East Sutherland Rotary Clubs who jointly funded the cost of the foodstuffs for the lunch.



A special thank you also to all the locals that gave up their time on Christmas Day to cook the food, prepare the tables and serve.

Here are some comments from those that attended the lunch.

I thought the Christmas Day meal was very high quality and absolutely delicious. It was lovely to not be alone for all of Christmas Day and I appreciate the volunteers giving up their time to provide me with a lovely meal.

It was a very good meal. The food was good. Nice to get together with people that are on their own. It was very well organised. I had a good time. Thank you to all the volunteers.

The Christmas meal was a joy to attend. Lovely food, beautifully cooked and presented, with helpful and attentive service. A real pleasure to have experienced. I'm looking forward to next year already!

I had a great time at the Christmas Day lunch. Living alone I would not have cooked anything special and probably not have seen anyone on the day. I appreciate having the chance to attend the lunch and it made the day very enjoyable for me. Thank you to all who made it so special.

It was a last minute decision for me to attend as it was arranged for me to go to my daughter's for Christmas. Unfortunately, she was unwell and my plans were changed. As I have previously been to Kerry's Christmas Day lunch I called and asked if she would take another booking. I'm so grateful as I had a wonderful time.

Christmas Food Gifts

THANK YOU to everyone who supported our Social Committee's Christmas Food Gift Bags Sale in any capacity, which enabled us to raise over £320 through the sale of 60 bags.



No-trees display

THE BIENNIAL display of No-tree Christmas Trees was held from the 7th until the 20th of December in the Cathedral. This year the display, organised by the Woman's Group, had 22 'trees' submitted from all corners of the Parish.



No-tree Girls' Brigade



No-tree Women's Group

What wonderful imaginative skills were involved as groups met the brief to create a 'Christmas tree' that involved anything except a living or artificial tree. Amongst many other things this year we had designs made from neck ties, pine cones, golf balls, knitted gift boxes and marshmallows!

All the 'trees' were greatly admired by many locals and visitors to the Cathedral.

The designers now have plenty of time to plan their next creation ready for the 2026 display.

Morag Macaskill

Dornoch Firth Parish Elders

ON SUNDAY 2nd December the Rev. Carol Anne Porter presented elders with long service certificates.

Left to Right:

*Back: Donald Simmons; Michael Brown;
Trish Geddes; Willie MacKay.*

*Front: Gladys McCulloch;
Donald Goskirk; Rev Carol Anne Porter;
Evelyn Calder; John Calder.*



History of Creich Church

PEOPLE HAVE WORSHIPPED in this building since 1913 when Mrs Margaret Carnegie of Skibo opened the new church. However the parish of Creich was ecclesiastically formed in 1225 and parts of the foundations of the Celtic church can be seen in the oldest part of Creich graveyard (just outside Bonar on the Dornoch Road) It is believed that St Devenic preached in or near that place in the 9th century.



Various interesting dates are documented. 1607 saw the first Protestant minister in the parish and after the 1706 Act declaring the Church of Scotland would continue to stand apart from the Church of England, Andrew Munro was the first Presbyterian minister to settle in Creich. Up until 1790 the church building was thatched. In or around 1800 Creich manse was built on the hillside above the old church.

The first bridge across the Kyle of Sutherland built in 1812 meant that Bonar Bridge began to grow as a village and became a focal point of the parish. So in 1913 the church was moved into the village. Many local families have skilled relatives who were involved in the construction of the building.

In 1931 the parish church was linked with the United Free Church and the manse and glebe were sold to the estate. The UFC manse in Dornoch Road became the parish manse and the building beside the McAughtries house was used as the hall. Some folk here will remember the Sunday School being there.



The oldest part of Creich graveyard

In 1972 Creich Church was linked with Rosehall and we have enjoyed a long and faithful relationship with them. One of the sadnesses of the congregation here is that Rosehall is now in a different parish from us. It is really good to see folk from Rosehall today.

In 2010 we were linked again, this time with Kincardine, Croick and Edderton and we shared our Minister. The Creich Manse was sold and the Minister's family moved into the Ardgay Manse.

As I drove here from Dornoch, where I now live, I passed the Creich graveyard and was aware that so many of us have friends and relatives buried there who have worshipped here. Their faith has given us strength.

The old graveyard immediately before the new one made me realise too that there are so many that we don't know who have also worshipped here or in the original church sited there. Our praise and worship connects us all.

Let us pray now that wherever we worship within this community and our greater parish that we may be strengthened by all that has gone on before us and that we may be determined to maintain and develop it.

Jeani Hunter - Session Clerk, Creich Church

Closing Service for Creich Church

THE FINAL SERVICE in Creich Church on Sunday 26th January was a mixture of sadness and anticipation. Worship has been held in the building since 1913 and soon it will receive a new lease of life in the hands of Duncan MacArthur, artist and sculptor. Duncan, who has bought the building, aims to integrate his work and the former church into the Bonar community.



A congregation of over 100 people filled Creich Church for the Closing Service.

The Service was led by Rev Doug MacRoberts, Moderator of Clèir Eilean ì, Highlands and Hebrides Presbytery. It was also an opportunity for many to listen to the Rev Carol Anne Porter, who will soon become the minister for Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland, having been the Locum Minister during the reconstruction of Sutherland Presbytery boundaries which created the new Dornoch Firth Parish in January 2024.

Former Session Clerk, Jeani Hunter, as well as Irene Chisholm, Valarie MacKenzie Harris and Morag Miller all took part in the Service with Organist, John Brosovsky.



Marie Duncanson (nee Ross) was married in Creich Church and her daughters Emily and Olivia were christened there.



Angus Smith piped the congregation to Bonar Village Hall for refreshments.



The after Service refreshments were more like a banquet

Guild Report – January 2025

THE GUILD met on Tuesday 19th November at 2.30pm when Gwen Muir and Lizzie Campbell welcomed everyone with a special welcome to Colin Carmichael from Scripture Union. Colin works for Scripture Union in Schools and Colleges throughout the Highland region and was pleased to tell us about the outreach work that is going on in the Highland area.

It was a very interesting afternoon and Colin was a very passionate speaker. It was really good to know that the Scripture Union Group in Dornoch Campus is thriving. We held a special baking stall to raise money and we were able to donate £130 to the Scripture Union. Many thanks to all who contributed in any way.

Invitations were extended to all in the congregation to join the Guild for a Christmas Afternoon Tea on Tuesday 3rd December. With nearly 40 attending we had a lovely afternoon with good food, good company and good entertainment.

A special thanks to Roddy who once again gave up his time to accompany the singers and provide carols for all. Thank you also to the committee and members who decorated the hall and provided the delicious Christmas spread and to all who provided the entertainment. All in all it was a most enjoyable afternoon and put us all in the Christmas spirit.

Meetings dates for your diary:

IN THE WEST CHURCH HALL

Tuesday 4th February at 7pm - hopefully, Sue Prince will be getting us moving

Tuesday 18th February at 2.30pm Gareth Dixon – Community Pharmacy

IN BONAR BRIDGE VILLAGE HALL

Tuesday 4th March at 2.30pm - A Spring Sing with Roddy Maclean.

IN THE WEST CHURCH HALL

Tuesday 18th March at 2.30pm – Programme announced soon

Wednesday 7th May at 1pm - North Highland Guilds Together Rally

All are invited to our meetings and you can be sure of a warm welcome.

Trish Geddes

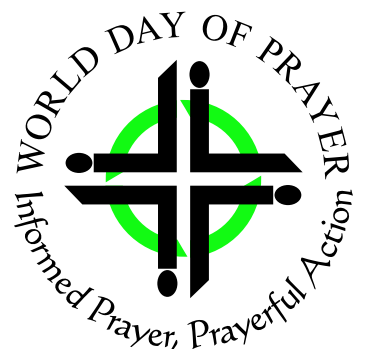


World Day of Prayer

IN THE WEST CHURCH HALL

Friday 7th March at 2pm World Day of Prayer

EVERY YEAR on (or near) the first FRIDAY in MARCH, Christians around the world of all denominations and Church Groups and all ages gather in small groups and large congregations using the same basic form of worship, written by women of a different country each year on a theme chosen by the World Day of Prayer International Committee.



Women's Group

In early December, the annual Carols for Christian Aid service had a break with tradition and, in order to maximise the benefit of a warm Cathedral, was held on a Sunday afternoon.

This radical move seemed to pay off as the Carol Service was supported by a large number, many of whom stayed on for a hot drink and some home baked shortbread.

The service itself remained truer to tradition and, as always, was uplifting and festive. There were Carols for all to sing, Scripture readings telling the Christmas story as well as other readings, some that were thought-provoking, some that made us all laugh.



Womens Group Carols for Christian Aid

There were also some stories written by the Very Reverend James Simpson as well as musical performances by the Cathedral Choir and members of our own Womens Group. As the service drew to a close, the lights were dimmed and the angelic voices of the Womens Group choir sent us on our way with the moving Benediction "Go in Peace".

Grateful thanks go to all who attended, all who contributed and performed and who helped raise a considerable sum for Christian Aid and for Mikeysline.

Caroline Gilchrist

Life Events

Funerals

Diana Skinner - 10th January

Rosemary Cattanach - 27th January

Margaret Bagott - 31st January

*Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.*

– Isaiah, a prophet

Prayers for the Parish

Always every third Thursday of the month at 10.30am

Thursday 20th March in the Hub, Bonar Bridge

Thursday 17th April in West Church Hall

Everyone welcome as we bring our Parish thanks and concerns to our Father and listen for His guidance for the way forward.

Rosie Baxter (Reid)

Parish Prayer Group

FOR THE LAST few months we have been praying for the work of the nomination committee, that their deliberations would be conducted in love and good fellowship, and that their choice would align with God's choice of minister for the future of our parish. Last week's decisive vote was an overwhelming confirmation of their choice of Carol Anne as sole nominee, and the process to install her as our permanent minister is moving ahead.

So, is our prayer job done? Not at all ... the work has just begun!!

Please join us in a parish-wide wave of prayer to support and uplift Carol Anne as she prepares for the next steps in this journey, a journey that we will seek to support in prayer for however long it continues. We pray that she will feel held in the presence of God, will walk confidently with Jesus alongside her, and that she will be emboldened by the Holy Spirit to take forward her ideas for the parish in the years ahead.

The work of the congregation as individuals, and together, is now to support her and to hold her constantly and consistently in our prayers.

Please join us:

“Lord, Thank you for answering our prayers for the nomination committee, and for providing us with a nominee minister to fill the vacancy we have had. Thank you for each individual who has stepped forward in any role to help us through this period, keeping us worshipping and serving as a faithful congregation of your people.

Now, we ask your blessing on Carol Anne as she prepares to be inducted as our permanent minister. Thank you for all she has done for us in the last three years, and be with her as she prepares for this new role. Give her confidence in your presence with her, the practical and spiritual support of the congregation, and boldness in taking forward her vision for the future.

Bind us together and help us all, with your blessing, to continue working and serving your people in this corner of Scotland for the furtherance of your kingdom.

*In gratitude and love,
Amen.”*



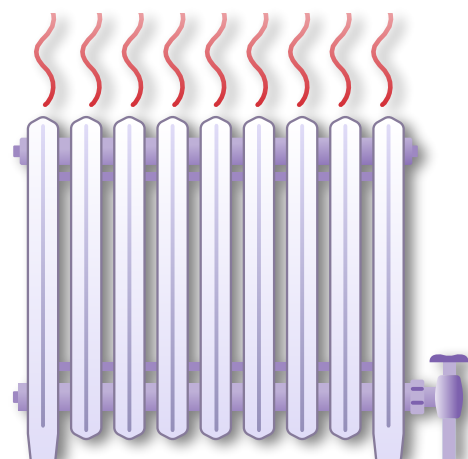
Finance Report

AFTER A TREMENDOUS response from our congregation, the public within the parish and beyond, and several very successful fund raising events, we are pleased to report that we have finished the year with a surplus. We have adjusted the 2025 fundraising target accordingly and this has been set at £40,000.

Our costs remain high and, for heat and light alone, are likely to exceed £20,000. Fabric maintenance for the Cathedral is on-going and the certainty of having to greatly improve our heating system in the very near future will be very costly.

We are so grateful to all those who have helped in any way to sustain the financial viability of the Cathedral and remain positive that this will also be the case in 2025.

Finance Team



Fundraising Group

LOOKING BACK on 2024 we had a target of £60,000 to raise. Although we fell short of achieving this, about £5,000 short, the good news is that overall the parish finances finished the year with a healthy surplus in our accounts. Thanks to all those who supported the Fundraising group in whatever way you did this. It is much appreciated.

2025 has already got going as we are into its second month. Those on the finance committee are assessing how the finances may look this year. As a result, the target for fundraising this year has been agreed at £40,000.

Already in the planning is a repeat of some of the very successful activities from last year.

Graham McCarthy started the year off providing a New Year concert, when he and many of his friends treated those gathered to a festival of music, and in doing so raised £940. Well done Graham.

Mhairi Mackay is planning an opportunity for those who wish to use their talents to raise funds for the parish. More about this later!

During the summer Graham McCarthy and Willie MacKay will be opening the tower again during the summer on occasions when the pipe band is playing and some Community Market Wednesdays. We may be able to do this more often, but it depends on the availability of volunteers to allow this to happen. If you are interested in helping speak to the “boys.” (I know they will appreciate being called that.)

After a lot of planning and hard work mainly by Pat Murray, but also Val Brown and Jeani Hunter, we are happy to announce that the Parish along with Historylinks will be providing guided tours around the Cathedral and Historylinks. Five dates have been booked when coach loads of people off the cruise ships docking at Invergordon will visit us. We need volunteers interested in helping to come forward. We especially need a well organised person to be the link to administer bookings. If you are interested, please speak to Jeani.

We are holding another Golf Event this year on Saturday 13th September being played as last year on the Struie course sponsored by Morrison Construction. It is the same day that the Military Wives choir is performing in the Cathedral, it is timed so that those who wish can attend both events. If you wish to play in the golf event email me using johnmcmurray1400@gmail.com

There is pre-golf food, a two-course carvery after the golf and a raffle and auction with some amazing items. Cost per player £75. Oh, and a great goodie bag for all players. All the prizes are sponsored by Glenmorangie Whisky except the £500 for the hole in one.

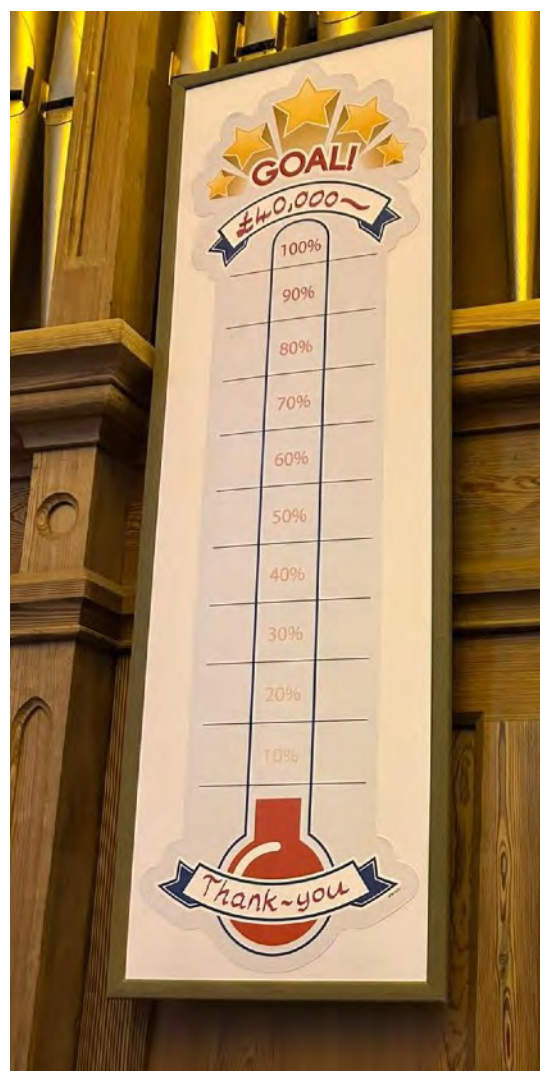
We are planning a major concert in the Cathedral for later in the year. More details to be given when this has been decided. In addition we also plan to have another concert involving *Gizzen Briggs* once a date and time has been agreed. Likely in September - you will be the first to know.

Rumour has it that ‘The Singing Waiters’ were so successful that they are thinking of going on tour. Well I am not sure that is true, but there is a possibility that they will perform again in 2025.

We are also planning to invite a major speaker to the West Church Hall in the autumn. Again, more details when this becomes available.

Thanks again for all your support. Have a great 2025.

John McMurray



Tower – evening openings

OVER the Christmas period the Cathedral Tower was open in the evening to show how beautiful Dornoch is from the Cathedral parapet. It was chilly but well worth the climb and the exercise.

A massive thank you is due to the many volunteers that manned the various stations needed on the ascent. Word soon spread that locals and tourists could access the tower on Saturday evenings from mid-May to early September when the Dornoch Pipe Band were playing and some Community Market Wednesdays.

Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland sincerely thank Dornoch & District Community Council for funding the upgrade required to open the tower where addition lighting as well as improved stair banisters were installed with support from the Dornoch Common Good Fund.

Also to Morrisons Construction who donated the wood for and built the benchwork to house pictures and displays. And finally, the Royal Dornoch Community Fund, that allowed us to convert artwork by Caroline Mackay into a St Gilbert Story display.

By raising over £4,000 this will be a very welcomed income stream which we envisage growing in popularity as we start to hold Guided Tours from Easter 2025 with volunteers already trained by Pat Murray, an experienced Cruise ship tour guide.



View from the Tower, looking East



View from the Tower, looking South

Property Report

THE MAJOR work for 2025 is the continuation of some 2024 projects, finding contractors for which has been difficult. Recently we had a lighting expert (at long last) who is taking on the task of planning for converting to LED lights. Thankfully, local electrician, David Anderson, is going to install additional power sockets so we can get our audio visual system installed once Lothian Broadband get our Fibre Broadband connected.

Moving the Service from the Cathedral to the West Church Hall on 12th January convinced me that the way forward is to install a system or systems that “heat the people” and not to focus on heating the building. The Cathedral heating was on for a total of 49 hours and still only reached 9C by 8.30am on Sunday morning.

We are hopeful that bird deterrents being fitted on the roof will reduce the number of seagulls nesting. This was done when the gutters were cleaned but certain areas of bird debris did cause some internal leaks. We have found a slater that can replace broken slates.

One big task is to make safe the clock faces as too many brackets are corroded. Our bell system is secure and was examined by a structural engineer. We are looking at various funding opportunities but we also have savings that can meet some of the costs which can only be used for major works but not for heating, lighting, etc.

Willie Mackay, Convenor

Welcome and Sales Team

WHILST THE SALES side of our efforts slows at this time of the year, we will very shortly be meeting to plan the 2025 Summer Season. As well as re-ordering more of our favourite and well-loved products, we hope to choose a few new items - to vary the look of our sales display and hopefully make life more interesting for our lovely volunteers, as well as our visitors!

Volunteer Appeal:

The summer season takes place between mid-May and mid-September. By early April, we will be starting to compile our Duty Rota for volunteers. Last year we operated a rota of 2 three hour shifts per day, Monday - Friday, each pair of volunteers taking a shift once a fortnight.

To meet this aim, we need a basic number of 20 pairs of volunteers, plus extra to provide cover when necessary. This means a total of around 44/50 volunteers - a big ask. As you all know, we value beyond price our regular volunteers who have formed a solid and reliable workforce, and we really hope that you will feel able to join us once again this year. If so - please could you let one of us know as soon as possible?

We sometimes struggled to cover all shifts last year, meaning that we desperately need some new volunteers. If you are reading this and feel you might be able to help, please, please contact one of us for further details of the duties involved.

We raise significant valuable funds towards the Cathedral upkeep, as well as providing a smiling welcome to our many tourists from all over the world, so your help is invaluable. It is also an enjoyable way of spending time with a friend or partner, or indeed a new friend.

We look forward to hearing from newcomers, and of course from our established volunteers; if any of the latter have any comments or advice on any changes you might like to see us make, please let us know.

PS: We have already cleared the use of a small heater to be placed at your feet, if required!!

In the meantime, we wish everyone a Very Happy 2025.

With our love and thanks, as ever,

Sue Boyce, 01862 810415, sueboyce4@btinternet.com

Anne Chambers, 01862 811520, chambersdornoch@btinternet.com

Lisa Dickenson, 01862 810973, ljdickenson@hotmail.com

Social Committee

THANK YOU to everyone who support all our coffee mornings. In December your generosity raised over £300 for our funds.

Please mark your calendar for the following Fridays, 21st March, 25th April, 16th May, 20th June.

Una Reid, Convenor

Natter and Nosh

WE RESTARTED on Monday 13th January and while there are a few still to return after the festive break all will be certain of a warm welcome and plenty NATTER.

Dates: ALL Mondays - arrive from 12 o'clock and food served around 12.30

February 10th & 24th • March 10th & 24th • April 7th & 28th • June 9th

You can contact Roz on 07734 108075 or Trish on 07751 015956

Trish Geddes

Smartie Tube Collection

OUR SMARTIE TUBE Collection raised the wonderful amount of £974.69 which will help the needy suffering in Gaza. Thank you for your generosity.

Mhairi Mackay

Youth Theatre Group

BOTH PERFORMANCES of *Revoltin' Cinderella* played to a packed West Church Hall. The dancing and singing, both solos and all group songs were the best of all their Christmas time productions.

The sound and lighting set up by Stephen MacKintosh transformed the hall into a mini Eden Court. The colourful programmes were gifted by Dornoch Bookshop. Most of all it was the children that deservedly received rapturous applause for providing such professional entertainment.

All made possible by the enthusiasm and direction of the production team. The photos tell much of the story. As well as the fun the children had rehearsing since school returned in summer, the show raised £827 for the Dornoch Firth Church funds.



Opening dance routine, the Rumble, with the entire cast



Dame Dastardly & the Sinister Sisters enjoying their list of chores for the servants



The Prince of Brorovia searching for his Princess



Mirror Mirror (Hollie Sangster) on the Wall & Prince Lovealot (Isla MacCulloch)

Dornoch Firth Parish New Year Concert

THE NEW YEAR concert in the Cathedral is now a firm favourite on Dornoch's winter calendar and, despite the snow and ice, a large crowd had assembled for this year's performance.

When Rogart's Georgie MacLennan emerged from the Cathedral shadows playing *Highland Cathedral* on her bagpipes, we all sensed the evening was going to be special – and the acts that followed certainly did not disappoint.

The Dornoch Firth Youth Band came next and, although half the band were missing for a range of reasons, those remaining did everyone proud.

Teenage singer Isla Swanson was next to perform. In what was her debut solo performance, she sang beautifully and demonstrated real potential.

Joining together especially for this concert were Leona Afrin on fiddle, Georgie MacLennan on button accordion and Poppy Mackay on the keyboard. A foot-tapping performance of jigs and reels followed which were really well received by everyone.



The Junior Band

Scott, sang two numbers from musicals. The first was a poignant rendition of "Empty Chairs and Empty Tables" from *Les Misérables* and the second a heart-felt version of "You'll Never Walk Alone".

A modern take on traditional music from "The Machine" followed next. Flashing bows and pulsating guitars led to a breathtaking performance enthusiastically applauded by young and old alike.

Clarsach player and singer, Jennifer Port starred as the final stage performer. The historic Cathedral proved to be the best possible setting for Scotland's oldest national instrument. The singing, playing and acoustics were perfect as Jennifer performed some well-known traditional songs and tunes as well as more recent pop classics.



Isla Swanson

The concert ended as it had begun with Georgie on the pipes. "Auld Lang Syne" saw out the old and welcomed in the new. The audience burst spontaneously into song in a spine-tingling moment as Georgie marched down the aisle towards 2025 and a new year.

The organisers would like to thank all the performers and Stephen Macintosh for the magnificent lighting and sound production. A total of £940.28 was raised for church funds.

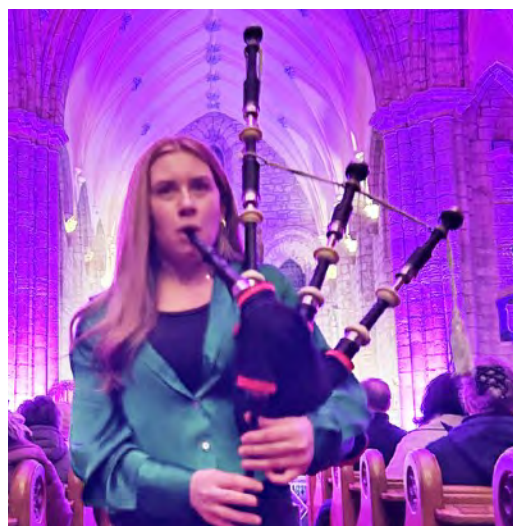


Concert Group Machine (L to R) Polly Noble; Lucy Robertson; Ruaridh Stewart; Isla Robertson; Robert Swayne; Emma Racionzer

Next, the ultra-modern teenage band, "High Street" took to the stage. Playing their own compositions, they changed the mood completely as their infectious, youthful enthusiasm and sense of fun brought a smile to everyone's face.

High Street's drummer, Polly Noble, then moved to centre-stage as she sang two self-penned songs and accompanied herself with some expert guitar playing. There was an intimacy about her performance which belied the fact that this was her debut as a soloist.

In marked contrast, well-known local singer, Simon



Piper Georgie MacLennan

The Travelling Flute

THIS IS A STORY which I hope will gladden everyone's heart.

The Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland Junior Band recently performed at the New Year concert in Dornoch Cathedral. However, before we reached that point there is a tale to be told.....

Anna is a flautist in the band and just 10 years old. Her mum messaged us on New Year's Eve to say her flute was not working and that she wouldn't be able to play in the concert. Naturally, Anna was very upset at the prospect of not now playing in Dornoch's glorious Cathedral. None of us are experts at fixing flutes, so what was to be done? Googling was suggested, but we were lost.....



The Flute

At 3:15 an idea came to mind - unlikely, a long shot, but worth a go.

I phoned up The Music Shop in Inverness. They vaguely know me there as an occasional customer and that is all.

I explained the situation and asked if they might have a flute we could borrow? If you don't ask.....!

Without any hesitation, the shop person (who I now know to be Donna) said, "Yes, we've got one left, a pink second hand one, you're welcome to use it."

"Oh thank you," I said, taken aback, "Anna will be delighted!"

The drama was not over yet! The shop closed at 4:00 pm and we couldn't get there in time!!

Our knight in shining armour proved to be Alison, a native of Dornoch, now living in Crown in Inverness. She just happened to be in Marks and Spencer's at the time! She nipped down to The Music Shop, picked up the flute and saved the day!

The pink flute did its job and made a lovely sound as Anna was able to take her full part in the concert.

The generosity and kindness shown by The Inverness Music Shop and its staff lifted all our spirits, restoring our faith in the milk of human kindness. We cannot thank or praise them highly enough.

The flute is now safely back in The Music Shop, none the worse for its adventures!

Graham McCarthy

Golspie Choral

GOLSPIE CHORAL GROUP

performed two concerts in the run up to Christmas with many members of the choir also cathedral attendees.

The first concert was in Ardgay village hall & formed part of the Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland's Christmas celebrations. It was well attended in spite of the inclement weather.



The second concert was in Fountain Road Hall, Golspie which was packed with an audience from all the surrounding villages.

Proceeds from Ardgay concert were sent to Christian Aid and from Golspie to Marie Curie Cancer Care.

For more information relating to the choir, please speak to Roddy McLean or Ann Creed.

Ann Creed - Secretary, Golspie Choral

Oversteps Care Home

WE HELD a family afternoon, with mince pies and mulled wine. It was well attended, with lots of visitors. It was a really lovely day, with lots of laughter and conversation.



Mary & Willie Skinner



Margaret Sutherland with her son Calum

It was Happy Birthday for some residents:



Happy Birthday Alice Hay



Happy Birthday Hazel Miller

Jen MacDonald, Manager

Friends of Oversteps

WE ARE HOLDING a Coffee Morning at the West Church Hall on Saturday 22nd February. We look forward to welcoming you to enjoy some fine baking and a cuppa.

Look out for posters to check the time.

Shiona Stuart

Meadows Care Home

AS WELL as outings to Dalmore Farm with a few ladies for lunch, some men managed a visit to Glenmorangie Distillery and there was loads of fun building a snowman.

Jackie MacRae, Manager



Dalmore Farm visit



Visit to Glenmorangie Distillery



Building a snowman

1st Dornoch Girls Brigade

HAPPY NEW YEAR to everyone!

We wish to thank Dornoch Firth for welcoming us into the church at our dedication service in November: we all loved the mice.....and the sweeties.

And December saw us busily creating our no tree Christmas tree with lots of bees to keep our mascot Gracie Bee company.

Badgework is moving at a fast pace now and we are preparing for the Service part of our badgework.

We have a Coffee Morning on the 1st March 2025, 10am – 12pm, in the West Church Hall to raise funds for Bear Necessities Charity. We would welcome any home baking and be delighted if you would come and support us.

Watch for the posters coming soon.

Marianne MacLeod (Leader in Charge)



1st Dornoch Brownies

LAST TERM the girls worked hard with the Blythswood Shoebox Appeal and making their No-Tree-Christmas-Tree. Thank you cards were made for Dornoch Nursery for their kind donation of juice and crisps.

This term we will be celebrating World Thinking Day on the 22nd of February and International Women's Day on the 8th March. There are activities to empower and inspire and two new badges marking these occasions.

Julie Herbertson



Filling and wrapping shoeboxes for Christmas gifts



No Tree Christmas Tree

Dates for your diary

WORSHIP TEAM - SUNDAY THROUGHOUT THE PARISH FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH:

FEBRUARY

- 2nd 11.00 am West Church Hall
9th 11.00 am West Church Hall
& 1.30 pm Bonar Bridge Hall
6th 11.00 am West Church Hall
& Live Stream to Bonar Bridge Hall
23rd 11.00 am West Church Hall
& 1.30 pm Bonar Bridge Hall

MARCH

- 2nd 11.00 am West Church Hall
9th 11.00 am West Church Hall
& 1.30 pm Ardgay Hall
16th 11.00 am Communion Service,
Dornoch Cathedral
23rd 11.00 am Dornoch Cathedral
& 1.30 pm Ardgay Hall
30th 11.00 am, Mothering Sunday,
Dornoch Cathedral

An Inter-Village Meeting will be taking place on Monday 3rd March at 10.30am at The Hub, Bonar Bridge, to discuss and reflect on worship patterns and events across the Parish over the last few months. Please join us for fellowship and friendship.

LENT MEETINGS

A six Week Series of which will take place in Dornoch and Ardgay, using a Christian Aid course.

Starting on Wednesday, 5th March at 6.00 pm in the West Church Hall or Thursday, 6th March at 10.30 in the Ardgay Hall Tea Room.

We hope that offering the option of alternative venues and times will make attending more convenient for all.

Please look for details of other special services in different locations, i.e. Lambing Service, an Easter themed event.

Sue Boyce, Worship Team Convener
(sueboyce4@btinternet.com)

MORE DATES TO NOTE

FEBRUARY

- Tues 4th Guild in West Church Hall at 7.00pm
Tues 18th Guild in West Church Hall at 2.30pm
Sat 22nd Friends of Oversteps Coffee Morning
in West Church Hall 10-12.30pm

MARCH

- Sat 1st Girls Brigade Coffee Morning
in West Church Hall 10-12.30pm
Tues 4th Guild in Bonar Bridge Village Hall
at 2.30pm

MARCH

- Fri 7th World Day of Prayer in
West Church Hall at 2.00pm
Thurs 20th Prayers for Parish in
Bonar Bridge Hub

APRIL

- Thurs 17th Prayers for Parish in
West Church Hall

MAY

- Sat 10th Highlands Strings in Cathedral 7pm
tickets on sale £10

Sunday Services in Dornoch will continue to be held in the West Church Hall until Sunday 16th March

Contacts

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Session Clerk team: Liz Manson, Jeani Hunter, Mary Stobo
Email: <sessionclerks@dornochfirthcofs.org>

Treasurer: Kim McCarthy • Email: <treasurer@dornoch-cathedral.com>