

DORNOCH FIRTH PARISH MAGAZINE

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THE PRINCESS ROYAL MEETING CAROL ANNE



OUR DORNOCH FIRTH JUNIOR BAND PERFORMED 'THE SKYE BOAT SONG'

Photos: © John Wright

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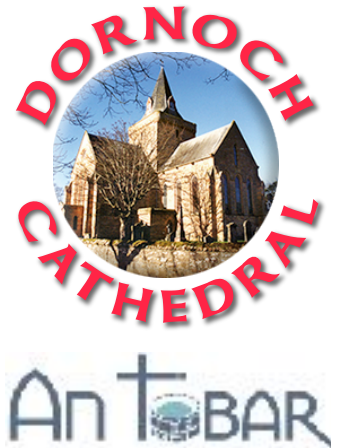
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And much more!

Minister's Thoughts

Dear friends

I GOT TO thinking this morning about 'thin places'.

Maybe it's because I recently finished catching up on a show about pilgrimage on iPlayer (other entertainment apps are available).

The thought must have lingered. The Celtic notion of there being 'thin places', spaces in time where the gap between earth and heaven feels so 'thin' as to be almost imperceptible.

Perhaps you've felt it yourself? This 'thinness'? What do you remember? What did you feel?

It can happen sometimes in a building or in a place which has enjoyed a long and enduring religious presence.

It can happen out in nature, in a field, on a mountain, by the sea.

It can even happen in a hospital ward or in a prison visiting room or on a car ride or across a kitchen table.

'Thin places' can feel variously like a tug on our sleeve... or a pounding in our heart... or breath-held wonder.

They can feel like a sense of one-ness with another person... or awareness of some presence in the room we can only call holy.

Sometimes, in my experience, the air can even be 'thinned' somehow by an honest question... a truth dared out loud... a shared yearning beyond what we can give word to.

I guess God does as we see in Jesus, God comes to us in different ways as we each have need.

I got to wondering if there is an opposite. I suspect there is. Sometimes the thinness might stretch out to a widening gulf. Buying. Consuming. Scrolling. Doing. Perpetually moment filling.

And then there's all the stuff that separates us even from ourself. Anger. Guilt. Worry. Finger-pointing. Shame. Politicking. Looking backwards always. Protecting our carefully chiselled hard edges.

Maybe we could stand to learn to live a little more lightly, and with a little more spaciousness.

Maybe we could do with laying ourselves bare to the Spirit, wild as she is and wilful in all the right ways.

Maybe we could let her surprise us into love and joy and gentleness.

Maybe our hearts can know this 'thinness', this nearness.

Friends, I pray for you today, as always, that you can let go of whatever needs losing and be freed to hold lightly whatever is for you in this moment.

Thin spaces are everywhere, I suspect. May we have eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts open wide to wonder.

With you,

Carol Anne



Royal Visit

Photos: © John Wright

ON WEDNESDAY 13th May, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited Dornoch to meet charitable and volunteer groups who have, when added together, delivered over 1000 years of service to Dornoch and the wider area. The visit was the brainchild of Major General Patrick Marriott, Lord-Lieutenant of Sutherland who was assisted in organising by a local working group and many others.

The Princess arrived at the Cathedral a little earlier than planned and programmed but we were all poised and ready nonetheless - even the Junior Band were quiet as mice when she arrived, waiting for their cue to strike up and play. A few moments before, Skye, the band's drummer, asked me why this band had been chosen to play for the Princess. My reply was, why wouldn't this band play for the Princess, this band is magnificent!

Princess Anne was, as you'd expect, extremely pleasant and came across as genuinely interested in the history of the Cathedral and in the people who worship in it. She paused every now and then as we made our way up the aisle from the West door, asking questions, taking in her surrounds. I was very glad I did my homework and have finally learnt a little more about the building and the characters who have played their part, for good or bad, in its formation - I almost sounded like I knew what I was talking about!

The Princess listened carefully to the band's performance too and I'm 99% sure I heard her humming to their very fine rendition of the Skye Boat Song!

I was privileged to present several of our members to Princess Anne - Kathleen Mackenzie, Willie Mackay, Stella Petit, Trish Geddes, Kisha Black, and Donald and Frankie Goskirk. Conversation ranged from odorous bodies beneath the Cathedral floor (thank you, Willie!) to the nearest curling rink to working ponies! She was somewhat taken aback at the length of service of some of our Elders and surprised to learn their service was continuous!

After presenting representatives from other churches, Princess Anne met Graham McCarthy and chatted to members of Dornoch Firth Junior Band. She'd clearly had some kind of troubling childhood experience with the



Jack Tarry presented The Princess Royal with a posey

oboe after being given one to play at school. "You really have to practise", she said staring at the reed on Lily's oboe. Indeed, Ma'am, correct embouchure does not happen overnight! As it happens, Lily's might have been slightly altered on this occasion as one of her teeth fell out on the way to the visit! The Princess unveiled a slate plaque with an inscription commemorating her visit. "I hope it's local!" she remarked. I replied that it had come from Skibo and she assented with an emphatic "Good!" (Though I'm now wondering, was it the inscriber who was from Skibo and the stone



Royal Visit – continued

from elsewhere? Ah well.) The last person I presented to the Princess was our own Margaret Macrae who before inviting her to sign our visitor book, chatted to the Princess about her experience of meeting the late Queen and King Charles while he was still The Prince of Wales.

Before the Princess left to meet others out on the Green, Jack from the junior band presented her with a posy made by Edderton florist Rachel who had researched the Princess's favourite flowers. On receiving them, she said, rather delighted, "They look like they've just been plucked from the shore!" Oh, and in case you're wondering, I did, as promised, slip her some of Mhairi's homemade tablet! It was smuggled by way of a Deputy Lord Lieutenant and a Lady in Waiting!

I hope those who met the Princess will remember the moment long and well. And I hope The Princess Royal left having experienced the love and welcome that is, on our best days, so much a hallmark of our life together.

Carol Anne

What some thought of The Princess Royal's visit...

"IT WAS A LOVELY MORNING (apart from the weather.) I thought The Princess Royal looked very regal. She was charming and very easy to speak to. I liked how she spent time with everyone and seemed really interested in the Cathedral. All seemed to go without a hitch." (TG)

"WHAT A CHARMING LADY The Princess Royal is. She gave of her time so generously. She was gracious, curious about the Cathedral and interested in the people. With her visit built around volunteering and 1,000 years of service she had done her homework. She found more facts with her interesting and searching questions."

"The Dornoch Firth Junior Band playing The Skye Boat Song was a key moment in the Cathedral and I saw a little foot tapping. She chatted for ages and the children were so well behaved as they waited. A memorable day for Dornoch." (WD)

"WHAT AMAZING ATTENTION for us all from The Princess Royal. What a nightmare of a job. A true professional and lovely with it to old and young alike. A memorable day indeed. I underestimated how twitchy I would be. Couldn't find the right words. Lucky I found any!"

"Nothing puts me off my sleep but I didn't sleep properly the night before nor the night of the visit as I was still high as a kite!"

"Hats off to the Lord Lieutenant and his team. As Faldo said, "Fail to prepare, prepare to fail". No chance of that with the Major General in charge."

"I never saw anyone not smiling!! The visit certainly hit home on many levels." (KB)



The Princess Royal signing the visitors book



Family Summer Fun

RETURNING this summer! Family Fun on the Cathedral Green and at An Tobar on alternating Tuesdays. Everyone is welcome to come and join in. And volunteers to help will be very welcome - please let Carol Anne know if you can help.

THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL...

What's that thing Jesus said about the harvest being plentiful and the workers just needing a wee bit of encouragement. I think that's how it went!

We have made a start to work with school children and families in our communities but, to sustain it, we really really need more people to help.

Can you spare an hour a week?

We've tried an after school club at An Tobar - think games, crafts, snacks, playing outside when the weather allows. We've been to Bonar Bridge Primary on Friday afternoons to bake and play Lego and make stuff. We've visited Dornoch Primary where we are given tasks by teachers - reading with pupils and playing games. And we have volunteers willing to put on something like Messy Church, a monthly gathering where families can eat together, learn stories of faith together and make and play together - but without a team to help they just can't get anything of the ground. There's also the West Church Hall, passed by school kids every day, which could easily be a stop on the way home for unwinding or somewhere to get a warm meal. We'd also like to organise a treat for the kids who come to youth theatre and Girl's Brigade and so on, maybe a picnic on the beach or whatever they'd enjoy. There's so much we can do together and so little can be done on our own.

So, all of this is to say, please will you think about getting involved and helping? No special skills are required except maybe a willingness to try new things or share hobbies and, most important of all, be a friendly face.

Hoping, ready, sleeves rolled up,

Carol Anne (07400 313303)



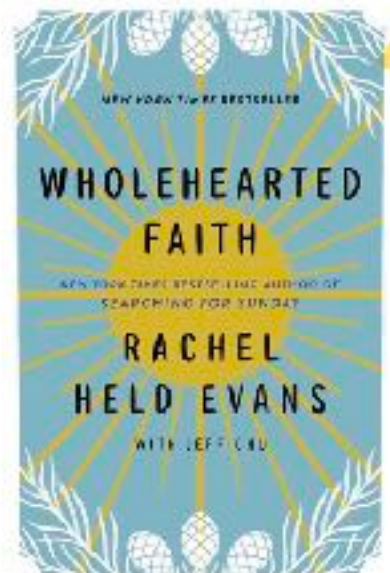
Wholehearted Faith

LAST SUMMER I put it out there that I was reading a book by Rachel Held Evans, wondering if anyone wanted to read it alongside me. I didn't mean to start a summer book group but that's kind of what happened and it was a rich and deep experience for many of us.

After we finished Inspired (which lived up to its name and left us so) we said we'd pick up another book of Rachel's, Wholehearted Faith. A collection of unpublished work, the book was put together and released after her death, at the request of her husband, Dan, and with care-full editing by her friend Jeff Chu.

We are just getting reading now having had our first gathering on Thursday 7th May. We continue to meet weekly probably well into the summer. Wholehearted is available in print, as an audiobook and on kindle. If you'd like to join in though we've gotten going, please do, each chapter is a stand alone reflection.

Carol Anne



Life Events

Funerals

9th April
16th May

Lesley Smart
David Rutherford

Marriages

9th May
15th May
23rd May

Lyla Murray and Graham Macleod
Stephanie Smith and Lewis Cowie
India Main and Stewart Miller

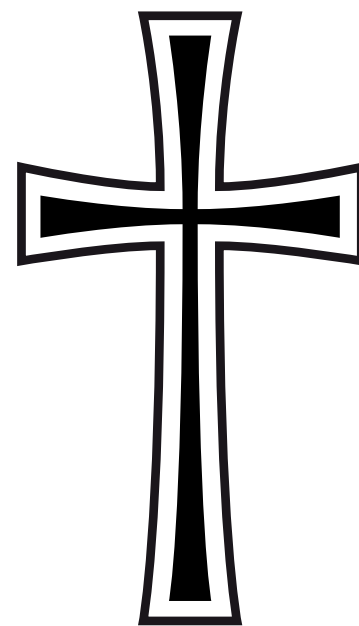
Baptism

24th May

Callum George McIntosh-Smith

*To everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose under heaven...
but God has made everything beautiful in its time.*

From Ecclesiastes



Prayer

*As wild as wind to shore
As fragrant as gorse in spring
As Love comes to turn us*

*As old as earth beneath us
As new as buds unfurling
As Love comes to stretch us*

*As keen as curlew calling
As near as wave to water
As Love comes to move us*



A prayer for you from Carol Anne

Walk of Witness

ON GOOD FRIDAY, a group of more than 30 people gathered outside Creich Church, Bonar Bridge, to take part in the Walk of Witness marking the betrayal, trial, suffering and execution of Jesus Christ.

People from different churches and fellowships across East Sutherland and Easter Ross, stopped at eight locations between Bonar Bridge and An Tobar (The Well), formerly the Church Hall at Kincardine Church.



The walkers led by Rev James Currall

At eight stops there were readings followed by a short reflection and a prayer as the walk continued. Some favourites Hymns such as There is a Green Hill Far Away and When I Survey the Wondrous Cross were included in the walk.

The first stop was a short distance to the Bradbury Centre where those spending the day there took part in the reading and prayer.

The weather remained fine despite the forecast, and those who took part enjoyed the opportunity to reflect more deeply on this important aspect of their faith. The group walked behind a rough wooden cross, which was carried by different people along the route.

When the walk arrived at An Tobar everyone was welcomed with tea and coffee, along with traditional hot cross buns.



The walkers stopped at The Stones, Bonar Bridge.



Arriving at An Tobar

Afternoon Tea in Bonar

THURSDAY 26th March saw the Pastoral Care Team busy in Bonar Bridge, in their “Caring for the Community” role. With lots of yummy baking donations, and the urn bubbling away, the doors were flung open in the village hall, waiting for folks to come in.

The afternoon was a roaring success, with every table full and extra chairs found. Lots of chat ensued, with the scones, cakes and shortbread greatly appreciated by all.

Carol MacLean



Maybe link with Weight Watchers after all these calories!

Lambing Service

ON SUNDAY 10th May a Lambing Service was held at Christine Mackay’s croft at Hillview, Dounie, near Ardgay. Carol Anne chose lovely hymns and while it was damp outdoor we all crammed into Christine’s pristine clean garage and gave thanks for all the new -born lambs.

Thanks are due to Christine Mackay and her helpers for the lovely baking we enjoyed. We had a few new faces and even a young family on holiday in Dornoch saw the Lambing Service advertised and made their way to Dounie.



Ethan McCarthy enjoying holding the lamb



Singing “You’ve got the Whole World in His hands”

Sundays @ 7

SUMMER is almost upon us and with it comes the return of Sundays@7 an opportunity to meet for a short worship half hour on Sunday evenings. Starting on Sunday evening 7th June and running through to 30th August, join us for a relaxing end to day.

Summer Walks

Last year we enjoyed the opportunity to spend some time in each other's company and discover some new walks in and around the Parish. Do you have a favourite walk that others might like? Speak to Alasdair MacKay or email alasdairmackay1870@gmail.com It would be good to get out and get to know each other a little better in an informal setting.

Keep an eye on FaceBook and also details in the Sunday Order of Service.

Faith Journeys

As we explore ways to deepen our relationship with our God and our understanding of His calling for each of us, some might wish to look into existing resources. With this in mind, you may be interested to know what is available through The Iona Community, who have recently released their programme of events for 2027.

<https://iona.org.uk/visit-and-stay/iona-abbey-centre/2027-iona-abbey-programme/>

Alasdair Mackay



Gift Day

WE HELD a Gift Day in the Cathedral on April 24th, enjoying company and fellowship with many from the congregation and beyond.

Thank you to all who contributed in any way - to those who donated to our funds, those who provided and served the refreshments, and to those who came along and gave us their company. It was all very much appreciated. So far the total raised is £6,784.

If you missed Gift Day and would still like to donate you can do so through the bank – Dornoch Firth Cashflow, 80-06-36, 06002380 or by leaving a donation marked Gift Day in the safe or handing to Kim McCarthy or Christine Mackay.

Finance Team

Social Committee

THANK YOU to everyone who has attended our coffee mornings this year. Our last coffee morning before our summer break is on Friday 19th June.

The first coffee morning of the autumn season will be on Friday 18th September.

The Social Committee Team



No more stamps please

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Stamp Project came to an end in February 2026 after 56 years. It was a pivotal part of World Mission Council, collecting much needed money for projects from Partner Churches around the world simply by collecting used stamps. From 1995 to 2024 an amazing total of £96,459.67 was raised for projects such as the HIV programme and Mount Olivet Boys' home in Jamaica & Cayman Islands.

Thank you for all your contributions over the years. Other charities may take used stamps but please do not leave any in the Cathedral.

The Guild

ON TUESDAY 24th March 2026, Margaret Macrae welcomed a good turnout of members and friends. The AGM was first and Margaret gave a report of the year's activities. There have been many various topics and speakers and each meeting was well attended.

Liz Broadhead stood down from the committee after many years organizing the World Day of Prayer and serving as Tea convenor. Una Reid is taking over as Tea convenor. Lizzie Campbell is standing down as Treasurer but will take on the organising of the World Day of Prayer. Carol Maclean was welcomed on to the committee and has agreed to be the new treasurer. Margaret thanked all who serve on the committee with particular thanks to Liz, Lizzie, Carol and Una.

The Guild Committee for 2026/27 is Margaret Macrae, Gwen Muir, Carol Maclean, Morag Macaskill, Ann Creed, Trish Geddes, Lizzie Campbell, Una Reid and Annie Macdonald.

Margaret Macrae and Annie Macdonald then led us in worship and Carol Anne gave a lovely reflection which included her beautiful singing. We were all encouraged to join in. We then enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea provided by the committee and some members.

Roddy Maclean once again provided the music and we had a singalong of favourite hymns from 'Songs of God's People' led by some members who are also in the Cathedral choir. It was a lovely afternoon to finish off our session and we look forward to September. Hope you all have a lovely summer.

Trish Geddes



Women's Group

THE WOMEN'S GROUP met in February and March to plan and create gifts for the congregation on Easter Sunday. You may think two meetings a little excessive for the small gifts we made, but there was chocolate involved and we all know how that needs to be sampled, discussed and sampled again before a group decision can be reached! Said chocolate accompanied a cross that proclaimed "He is Risen".

Our group held our AGM recently, at Royal Dornoch Golf Club, and made provisional plans for our next few monthly meetings.

8th June - Meet for a walk at Loch Migdale

6th July - An evening of summer games on Dornoch Beach

Further details of the above from any member of the group - all welcome to join us.

Caroline Gilchrist



Welcome and Sales Team

Our summer season opened on Monday, 4th May and we're pleased to say that our friendly presence has yet again been very well received by all our visitors, who are pleased to find a welcoming smile and offers of help during their visit to Dornoch and the Cathedral - of which, most are in awe!

The items we offer for sale are also proving very popular with folk of all ages and, of course, every sale we make goes towards helping keep the Parish, Cathedral and An Tobar in good shape.

We are delighted that we have a few new recruits to our loyal team of volunteers, who are all helping us to keep open between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00 pm Monday to Friday. If being a part of our enthusiastic team, appeals to you, please give one of us a call. We would love to hear from you.

We wish everyone a very happy Dornoch summer season.

Sue (07833 698040), Anne (01862 811520 and Lisa (01862 810973)



Knit and Natter

LOOKED AFTER by the wonderful Jen, who juggles Knit and Natter (upstairs) with the Mother and Baby group (downstairs), it's a welcome chance to have 2.5 hours of "me" time every Tuesday between 10.00 am and 12.30 pm.

The group currently has a core of about 15 ladies all enjoying a few hours to catch up on knitting/crocheting projects over a cuppa. There is a wealth of craft experience amongst the ladies and always someone to offer advice. It's lovely to see younger folk coming along too in the school holidays. All are made welcome.

It's not an issue if you just want to sit and chat. No one is counting how many rows of knitting you've done! Life is discussed, problems shared and friendships made. The group What's App ensures that everyone is looked after if they're unwell or in need.

We've had days out celebrating milestone birthdays and afternoon tea at Dalmore. Poppies are crafted for Remembrance Sunday, and there's the biennial fun of decorations for a "No Christmas Tree" for the Cathedral.

I feel truly blessed to be part of such an amazing group of lovely ladies.

Jane Hadley



Our New Highland Home & Garden - part 3

IN MY PART TWO article Woodgate's story had reached the mid-1960's and, sadly, in 1963 my great aunt Helen MacRae (Nellie), a retired District Nurse, passed away. Nellie was one of eight siblings born in Woodgate; she was a spinster and, after her retirement, returned to live in Woodgate with her sister (my maternal Grandmother - "Grannie Johnstone").

My memories, as a six years old boy, of Nellie are very vague; not the case with Grannie Johnstone whom I remember as a kind and loving person despite losing her husband, then in his early 40s, to pneumonia and also her younger daughter, Rhona, in 1951 at the age of 31 in a tragic accident three weeks after Rhona's wedding.

In March 1964 Grannie Johnstone died, and for the first time in its history Woodgate was vacant. As there were eight siblings (with families) none of whom had made a will the laws of intestacy meant the ownership of Woodgate passed to fourteen relatives all living elsewhere.

Tragically, in May 1966, my mother (Christine, nee Johnstone) suddenly died at the age of 47 leaving my father to care for three young children aged 10, 9 and 6.

As is often the case with shared ownership it was very difficult to get agreement on Woodgate's future with fourteen different opinions. Indeed, from 1964 the house was unoccupied and, effectively, a holiday home for the Hadley family as every summer during the school holidays until the mid-1970s Dad took the three of us to stay at Woodgate for a month to "escape" from the Black Country!

For me, as a lover of the great outdoors and a budding angler, those summer visits to Dornoch were the highlight of my year (despite the annoying Highland midges who seemed ever-present both at Woodgate due to the adjacent Dornoch Burn and as loch-side fishing companions!). When I was a young boy the Dornoch Burn instilled my life-long love of the natural world from Woodgate's doorstep. I observed shoals of sticklebacks, eels (a common sighting in those days but now rarely seen), flounders and, memorably, once a brown trout under the bridge. Also notably kingfishers, mallards, pied and yellow wagtails and lots of fly life. In the evenings bats would swoop along the water scooping up (in the main) my midge friends!

My memories of Woodgate from that time were of sleeping bags, coal fires and very old furniture. Sadly, the once beautiful garden was virtually abandoned to nature; when older my job was to cut the lawns (actually fields) - a Herculean task when, in late July, mine was the first cut of the year!



Once 18, having left school, I was entrusted with the keys and stayed in Woodgate unaccompanied for the first time between June-September 1975. For me those three months in 1975 were heaven; it was independence at last and good preparation for my approaching student life at Reading University.

"Heaven" meant having three jobs - the main daytime one working in RR Johnstone (the chemist, now called Mitchell's) helping the pharmacist, and my cousin, Walter Wickham, with my evenings split between San MacGreggor's chippy on Dornoch Beach Caravan site and in Castle Street behind the bar either at the, then-named,



Our New Highland Home & Garden – continued

Sutherland Arms pub or in the upstairs 'One Up' restaurant (now the Coach House Bar & Restaurant) working for Robin Armstrong alongside his son, Michael, and daughter, Fiona.

During the ensuing summers of 1976, 1977 and 1978 Woodgate similarly “enjoyed” my presence as I repeated the “heavenly” 1975 work experience whilst a student. In particular I remember the hot summer of 1976 dealing with many cases of severe sunburn at the chemists and a run on sales of calamine lotion resulting in Walter and I driving to Elgin and back one evening to get fresh supplies. 1976 was the year that the Dornoch Burn dried up and I added rabbits to the list of wildlife observed therein.

Next time I'll continue the Woodgate story but back to the present....

Work on Woodgate's garden has proceeded at pace over the last three months. I am under increasing pressure with Amy and Roy's wedding date of 22nd August fast approaching. Flower borders have been reclaimed/created and stocked, a feature archway erected to support the now, rapidly growing climbing roses and clematis planted underneath, a new lawn laid and an old (mostly dead) boundary privet hedge removed and replaced.

That's all for now as I'd better get back to the gardening!

Wilf Hadley

Choral Concert



A LARGE AUDIENCE was treated to an outstanding evening of choral singing on Thursday 30th April. When Golspie Choral and Invergordon Singers were together they formed a large choir with very well balanced male and female parts.

Conducted by Roddy Maclean and accompanied by Mairi Mackenzie it was obvious that the singers were enjoying their performance and their voices were enhanced by the excellent acoustics in the cathedral to enthrall the audience.

The repertoire varied from the sacred 'Non Nobis Domine' by Golspie Choral and 'Sanctus' by Invergordon Singers to the light-hearted 'Mice and Men' and 'Bring me Sunshine' by both choirs together.

The most moving pieces were 'Cross the wide Missouri' and 'You Raise me up'.

The concert also enjoyed the solo singing of a young man called Joseph Kelly who is a pupil of Mairi and sang with great assurance, but also sensitivity.

The concert was brought to a meaningful close by 'A Clare Benediction'.

With Thanks from Anne & John

Dornoch Gatherings

Photos: © Peter Wild

DORNOCH CATHEDRAL

welcomed visitors from across the Highlands and beyond for a moving and memorable event marking the 280th anniversary of the Battle of Littleferry, organised by Dornoch Gatherings.

The commemorative gathering paid tribute to an important chapter in Highland history, remembering the events of 1746 and honouring those connected to the Battle of Littleferry. Through a thoughtful programme held within the historic setting of Dornoch Cathedral, attendees were invited to reflect on the significance of the battle and its lasting legacy in the region.

The event brought together members of the local community, history enthusiasts, and visitors, all united in recognising the importance of preserving and sharing the stories that have shaped the Highlands. The cathedral provided a fitting and atmospheric venue for the occasion, offering a meaningful backdrop to the commemoration.



L to R - April Sutherland, Ross Little, Ruairidh Mackay, Rachel Campbell



Lord Lieutenant of Sutherland, Major General Patrick Marriott told the historic story of the Battle of Littleferry. The audience were taken on a marvellous musical journey by the very talented local musicians Ruairidh Mackay (violinist), Rachel Campbell (violinist & singer), April Sutherland (piper) and Ross Little (pianist). An evening quite poignant and full of splendour.

Representatives from Dornoch Gatherings expressed their gratitude to everyone who attended and supported the event, highlighting the value of bringing history to life through community gatherings in places of heritage. "It was a privilege to mark the 280th anniversary of the Battle of Littleferry in such a special setting. Events like this help keep our local history alive and create opportunities for people to come together, reflect, and remember," said Ruairidh Mackay, Programme Director for Dornoch Gatherings.

The success of the event reflects the growing enthusiasm for heritage and culture based gatherings in the area and underlines the role that community organisations such as Dornoch Gatherings play in celebrating local culture and history.

Lastly, but not least - Dornoch Gatherings would like to thank everyone at Dornoch Cathedral for their continued support in helping to bring Culture to The Highlands of Scotland in the most wonderful historic building. Your encouragement, partnership and commitment make a real difference. Allowing our community & visitors to experience and celebrate music, art, heritage and creativity together. Together we can create opportunities for connection, inspiration and shared experiences across the Northern Highlands.

See details of future Dornoch Gatherings events overleaf and follow us at <www.dornochgatherings.com>.

Joanne Johnson of Dornoch Gatherings

DORNOCH GATHERINGS PRESENTS

ADULT TALENT WINNER

Amira

For a special performance
IN DORNOCH CATHEDRAL

A once in a lifetime opportunity to witness
Amira Wilgigegen (Soprano) -
one of the most beautiful
voices in the world

SAT. 20TH JUNE
8.30 - 10.30pm

BOOK NOW:
www.dornochgatherings.com
info@dornochgatherings.com

Dornoch Gatherings SC054924



Calum Stewart
Sophie Stephenson
Luc McNally

Tuesday, May 19th, Dornoch Cathedral

7PM - 8PM

Adult - £15
Under 18s - £0

www.Dornochgatherings.com




DAISY

Goodwin

Victoria and Albert - a royal love story or a relationship based on coercive control?
Daisy Goodwin, the BAFTA nominated screenwriter of ITV's *Victoria* and the new play *Victoria & Queen Elizabeth*, discusses the real nature of this famous royal relationship.

28 MAY 2026
7.30 - 8.30 PM
Dornoch Cathedral

TICKETS AVAILABLE £10
WWW.DORNOCHGATHERINGS.COM




DORNOCH GATHERINGS PRESENTS

SIAN

08/07/26

As a composer, three of Sian's most popular pieces of music, written for a variety of instruments, will be performed. A blend of enchanting traditional music with a folk poetry experience, showcasing the artist's contribution to the Scottish music scene.

DORNOCH CATHEDRAL
7.30-9.30PM

Tickets £0-£18 - www.dornochgatherings.com
Dornoch Gatherings SC054924




Sutherland Sessions 10th Anniversary Concert

THE LONG QUEUE outside the Cathedral promised not only a full house but an exciting evening to come. The expectation did not disappoint as this special tenth anniversary concert for Sutherland Sessions delivered a remarkable evening of music enhanced by the majesty and intimacy of the Cathedral setting.

Local Bonar Bridge musicians, Duncan and Rona MacLeod, began the evening with a beautiful set of Gaelic songs and music, introduced naturally in Gaelic and English, which set the scene perfectly for the main act.

Donald Shaw, Duncan Chisholm and Hamish Napier don't need any introduction to those familiar with Scottish traditional music. They are all masters of their specialist instruments; keyboards, accordion, fiddle and wooden flute and throughout the evening offered tunes and stories from places and associations dear to them. But the star of the show was the cellist, Su-a Lee, Assistant Principal Cello with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra for over 30 years, who has performed in major concert halls throughout the world. In 2022, she released an outstanding debut solo album *Dialogues*, which inspired the choice of her musical guests for the evening and much of the music performed on the night.

Su-a Lee has described the cello as “the original Scottish folk rhythm section instrument” and she ably demonstrated its capability in that regard. But the times the cello in its own right came to the fore and filled the Cathedral were the most thrilling moments of all.

The encore brought the biggest surprise of the night as Su-a Lee drew from her ‘tool-kit’ an ordinary hand saw and produced heavenly music with it. The rapport between musicians and audience was special and we're sure that the concert will live long in the memory of all who experienced it.

Annie and Geoff McKee



Su-a Lee captivated the audience with her music



The atmosphere in the Cathedral greatly added to the evening

beautiful music ranging from Scottish and Finnish trad to classical music and she was very clearly an expert in all. The way she structured her concert was brilliant, and bringing each member of her band – Duncan Chisholm, Donald Shaw and Hamish Napier - up on to the stage one by one to play their collaborative duets from her newest album was very immersive. I absolutely loved every minute of it.

Lucy Robertson

I was lucky enough to get a last minute ticket (thank you Grandma) to see Su-A Lee and friends in the Cathedral on April 23rd. The Cathedral is such a beautiful and atmospheric setting in which to hear any instrument, but hearing the cello was particularly amazing. Su-A-Lee filled the Cathedral with such

Editor – many readers will know Lucy who plays for us often, especially at our New Year Concert

Natter & Nosh

WHAT A WONDERFUL session we have enjoyed since the cold January days through to the sunshine and showers with our last lunch coming up on Monday 8th June! Thank you all for being part of our Mondays with all the happy chatter and positive feedback. Special thanks to our two serving and clearing teams who do a brilliant job. The ladies who look after the money and keep the purse refilled thank you! Last but not least our kitchen team for planning, shopping and for preparing the Nosh which we're told is 'nae bad'!!

If you have missed out this spring then please think about joining us in the autumn especially if you feel you could be part of our volunteer teams where we do need a few more gems to join us...

We hope we can all enjoy a lovely summer when it's hot enough that a salad or sandwich will do on a Monday!! Watch this space for dates but looking forward to seeing you all in September!

Roz

Dornoch Firth Junior Band

THE BAND MEMBERS were very excited and honoured to have been asked to play in the Cathedral for the Princess Royal's visit on May 13th – truly the experience of a lifetime.

They are currently trying very hard to learn Gaelic words and tunes for the Mod in Golspie on June 6th – a first time adventure for them all – and a big thank you goes to Russell McCarthy for teaching the Gaelic words.



Practice sessions in West Church Hall on Fridays

Before the Mod on June 6th they were playing at the Dornoch Firth barbecue on Friday May 15th and will play at the Lord Lieutenant's Garden Party on May 30th at Littleferry.

On Thursday June 4th the band will open for Gizzen Briggs at the Cathedral – busy times ahead indeed!

The band is extremely grateful to a number of benefactors who continue to donate instruments. Of the 8 violinists, 5 are playing instruments that have been donated. People have been so generous – thank you.

We have also been extremely fortunate to receive two wonderful donations recently. Royal Dornoch Golf Club has awarded us £500 from its Community Fund and the Royal Dornoch Monday afternoon Bridge Club have donated £140 to Band funds.

We are so lucky and extremely grateful to both organisations. These donations are going towards the purchase of a practice marimba and other equipment. The marimba will add an extra dimension to the Band's sound and the children are very much looking forward to its arrival.

Graham McCarthy

Youth Theatre Group

HAVING HAD a break, the Youth Theatre Group is back with a bang! Our numbers have doubled this year with a large influx of very enthusiastic thespians from P5 and P6. Now numbering 30, all are working towards a production of Robin Hood.

Robin of Huntingdon, returning from the wars, finds all has changed. The despotic Sheriff of Nottingham is ruling his territory with an iron fist. Robin is imprisoned and heading for the gallows at dawn. The villagers are hopelessly outnumbered. What is to become of them all? Find out on Saturday 20th June at 2.30pm and 7.00pm in the West Church Hall. Entry is by donation.

We are looking forward to seeing you there!

If you get a seat at 2.30pm you can also enjoy Amira Willihagen at 8.30pm in the Cathedral.

Graham McCarthy

1st Dornoch Brownies

World Thinking Day

On February 22nd we celebrated 'Friendship' and 100 years of World Thinking Day. We explored what makes a healthy friendship and the importance of community, both within our movement and beyond.

World Book Day - 5th March

World Book Day was the perfect chance for the girls to celebrate stories, creativity and discover inspiring women from history and in fiction.

Promise Day - 12th May

The Brownie Promise remains centred on Personal Development, Community and Kindness. This year's theme is Kindness and the girls have each made a list of things they would like to do to promote Kindness. This included 'be kind to my brother,' we will keep you updated!

Julie Herbertson



Winning potato characters for World Book Day

Golf Charity Event

ONCE AGAIN the Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland with their main hub being the historic Dornoch Cathedral is needing support for funds to meet our ongoing running costs.

A charity golf event on Royal Dornoch's Championship Course is planned for Friday 23rd October. We are offering golfers the chance to collect a "goodie bag", and have a bacon roll, play on the World famous Championship Course and enjoy a two course meal afterwards in the wonderful new clubhouse. At £150 per player this is less than half the normal green fee cost with the offer of playing the Struie on Saturday for £50 (half cost of green fee).

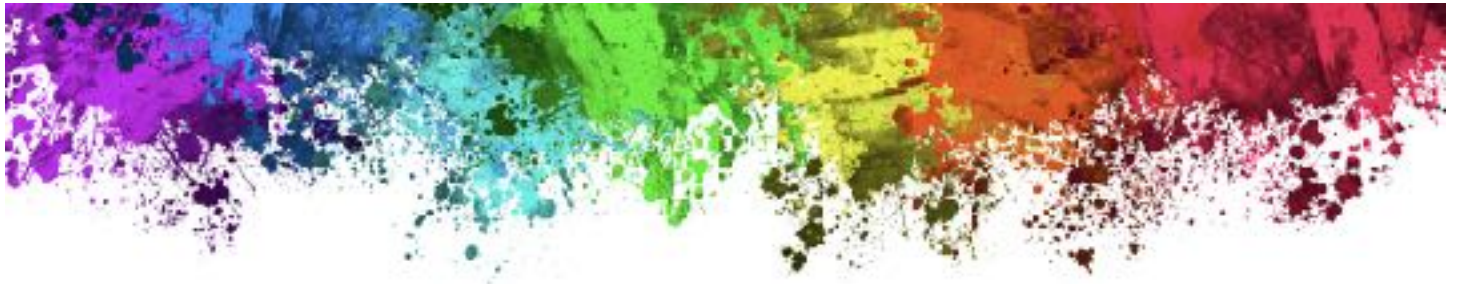
Our target audience is to attract players from across Scotland and the UK with this opportunity to play a Championship golf course which is regularly in the Top 10 Worldwide. We hope that you might have golfing friends that will find this an attractive offer. Please forward details.

We are grateful for Glenmorangie Distillery for generously providing special malt whisky for the first three teams. There will also be a raffle and an amazing list of auction items to bid for after the meal.

Entry forms are available on www.dornochcathedral.com or by emailing neilsenhunter@btinternet.com

There will also be a social golf day at Bonar Bridge & Ardgay Golf Club on Saturday 18th July at the low cost of £10. Entry forms will be circulated soon.

Jeani Hunter



Art Exhibition in The Cathedral – 27th July to 1st August

Made Visible is more than an art show – it is art created in prison - it is a bridge between worlds. It offers those in custody a chance to be seen as creators, not just inmates. It strengthened ties with families and communities, and it reminded us all that rehabilitation begins with recognition.

This Made Visible exhibition builds on the very successful 2025 event and an exhibition in HMP Inverness (March 2026) for inmates and selected guests from the community.

Participating in this year’s exhibition are currently HMP Castle Huntly, Dundee, HMP Low Moss, Glasgow, and HMP Inverness

For many, in prison the shift from being labelled offender to being recognised as an artist is transformative, changing not only their lives, but those of their families and local communities.

Last year, visitors to the Made Visible exhibition state that it was:

“Incredible to see such powerful art in the setting of Dornoch Cathedral. It really changes how you think about people in prison.”

“The Made Visible exhibition is both moving and inspiring. Art has the power to transform lives.”

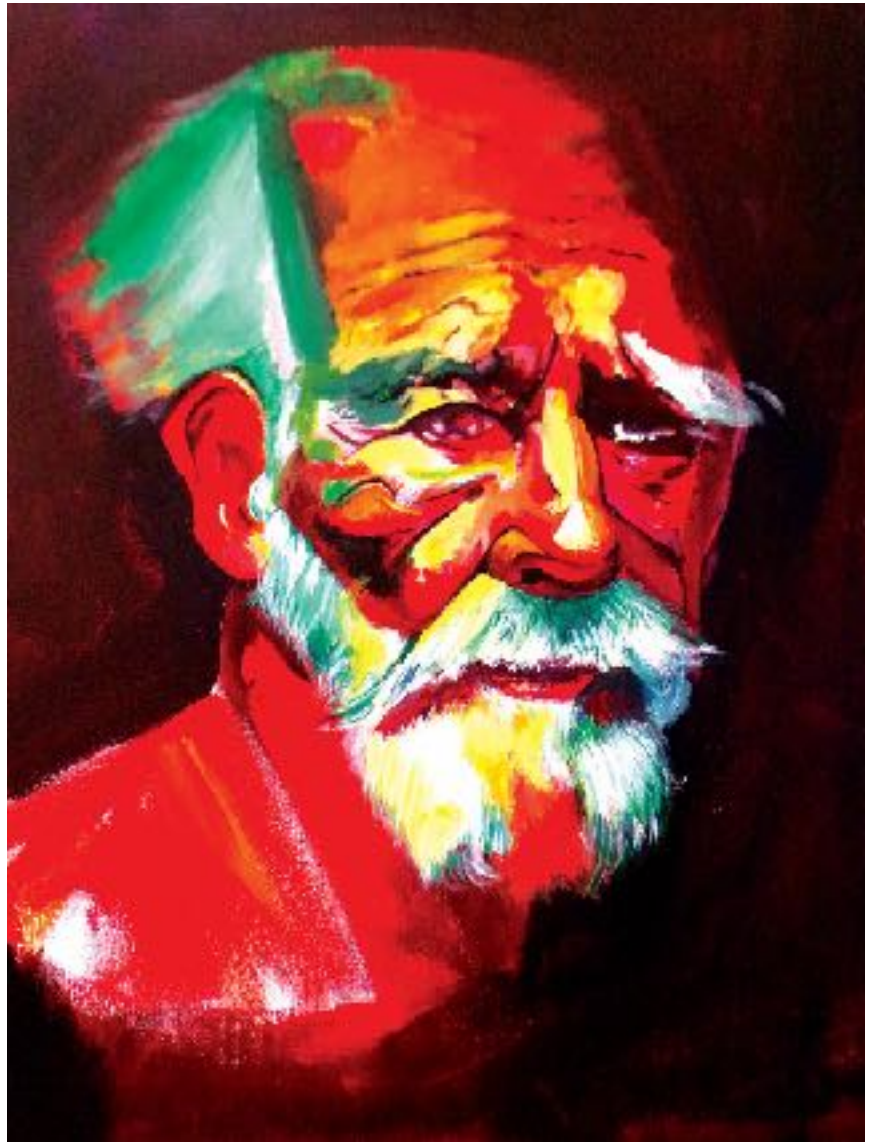
“The Pictora Made Visible exhibition has given prisoners dignity, visibility and hope - proving that creativity can be a bridge between confinement and community, and a catalyst for change.”

Launch events are on Monday 27th July at 2pm and also 7pm, with shortbread and wine (or a soft drink), plus a welcome from guests supporting the prison system.

Donations from the launch events go to supporting Dornoch Parish.

This exhibition is organised by Dornoch resident, Robert Morrall and his “not-for-profit” social enterprise: Pictora - Art with conviction. www.pictora.org

Come along and enjoy the interesting range of art and poetry – Made Visible. All are welcome!



Enjoy many more works of art. Pictures tell a Story

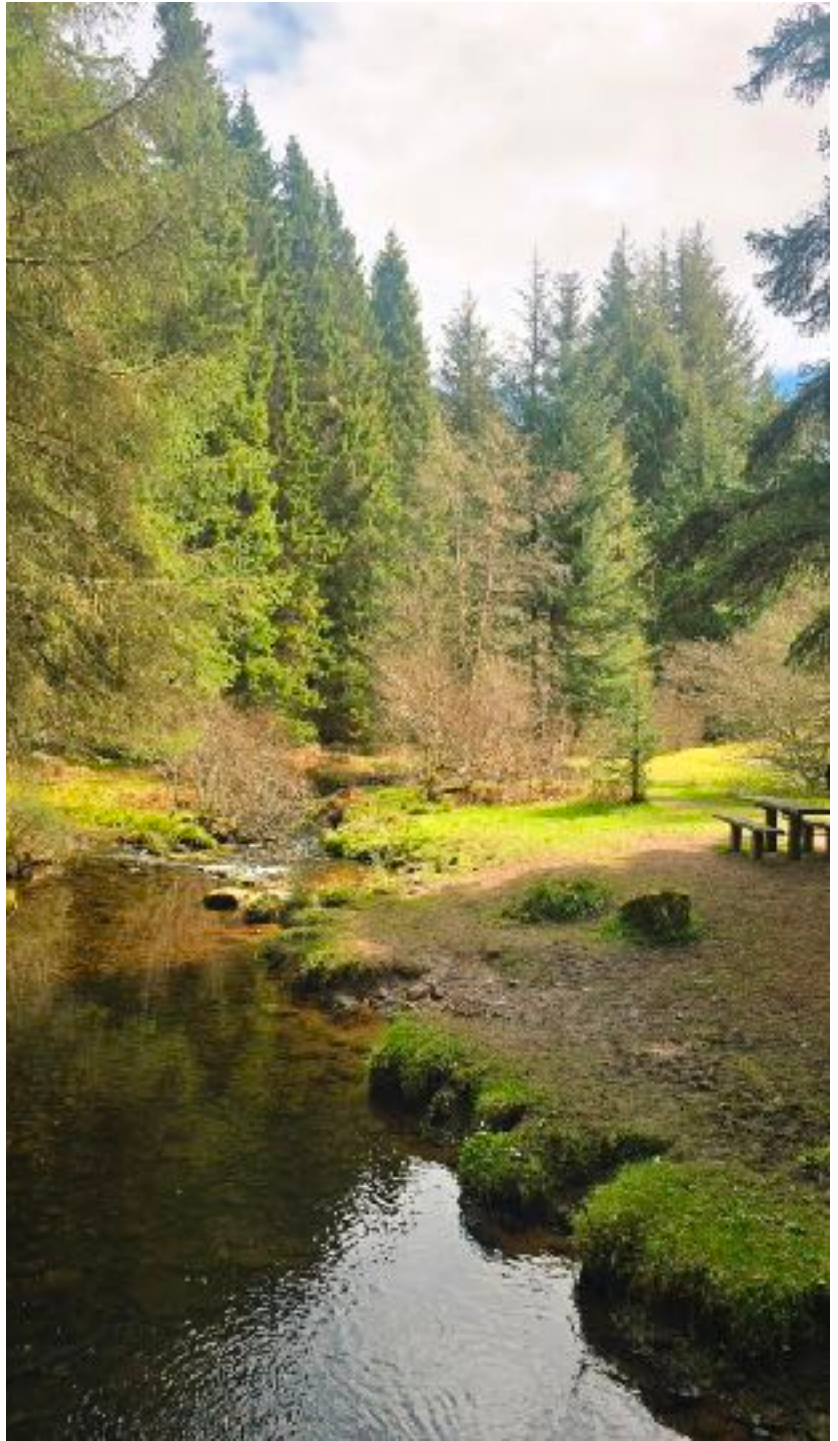


Dornoch Firth Group

THE WEST CHURCH HALL continues to be a hub of activity for our activities! Tuesday Tots have been enjoying the outdoor space for sensory play and sunshine as well as indoor crafts, farmyard games and an upcoming session exploring different emotions (of which pre-schoolers have many!).

Our latest Woodland Storywalk was well attended at Aldie Burn - and we only got soaked by the rain twice! Mamas' Club continues to thrive with a recent craft workshop making decorations for one mum's upcoming wedding, a lovely show of support. Knit and Natter never cease to amaze with their fabulous creations - including... "everybody knows his bright red van.. isn't Postman Pat marvellous!

Jen & Eilidh



Where is the West Church Hall letterbox?

Scenic Aldie Burn, near Tain



Crown copyright

Forestry and Land Scotland

For your entertainment

THERE IS A TREMENDOUS list of events for you to enjoy in Dornoch Cathedral with a few others in the West Church Hall. Why not mark these in your diary to remember them? As more events are organised they will be displayed on our website <www.dornochcathedral.com> and also for some events please check <www.dornochgatherings.com> where you can buy tickets.



Thur 28th May 7.30pm	Daisy Goodwin – Speaker in Cathedral (Dornoch Gatherings)
Sat 30th May 7.00pm	Three men who changed Dornoch (Dornoch Gatherings)
Thur 4th June 7.00pm	Concert – Gizzen Briggs in Cathedral (tickets at Bookshop & Will Porter)
Sat 20th June 2pm & 7pm	Youth Theatre in West Church Hall performing Robin Hood
Sat 20th June 8.30pm	Concert – Amira Willighagen in Cathedral (Dornoch Gatherings)
Fri 26th June 7.00pm	Ceilidh Buttons & Bows – West Church Hall - tickets available soon
Wed 8th July 7.30pm	Sian in Concert in Cathedral (Dornoch Gatherings)
Sat 18th July 10.00am	Social Golf Day at Bonar Bridge & Ardgay Golf Club
Sun 19th July 3.00pm	Organ Recital – John Brozovsky in Cathedral
Mon 27th July to Sat 1st August	Art Exhibition in Cathedral. Launch Mon 27th at 2pm & 7pm
Mon 17th Aug 7.30pm	Gary Innes & Ewan Henderson, in Cathedral (Dornoch Gatherings)
Thur 20th Aug 7.30pm	Talk by Dr Sean Kelly, Head Orthopaedics & volunteer in Zambia (DG)
Sat 29th Aug 7.00pm	Concert – Dornoch Parish Women’s Group in Cathedral
Sat 12th Sept 8.30pm	Charlie McKerron & Friends in Cathedral (Dornoch Gatherings)
Sun 18th Oct Time TBC	Damien O’Kane & R. Block Band in Cathedral (Dornoch Gatherings)
Sun 25th Oct 3.00pm	University of Aberdeen Choral Choir in Cathedral
Sat 30th Oct 6.00pm	Singing Waiters – Bonar Bridge Village Hall (tickets ready in September)
Sun 13th Dec Time TBC	Carol Concert for Christian Aid in Cathedral

Events still to have dates finalised:

Fun Bowling Evening, Dornoch Bowling Club

Quiz in Bonar Bridge Hall - November

HELPERS PLEASE– Family Summer Fun –

Cathedral Green 10.30 to 11.30 on Tuesdays 14th & 28th July & 11th August

An Tobar 11.30 to 12.30 on Tuesday 7th & 12st July & 4th August

Book Chats – Thursdays – Wholehearted Faith – contact Carol Anne on 07400 313303

Summer Walks – see Order of Service

8th June & 6th July - Mondays Womens Group contact <carriejgilchrist@gmail.com>

19th June & 18th September Coffee Mornings West Church Hall

Cathedral Tower Opening – open on Saturdays when Dornoch Pipe Band plays 7.30pm to 9pm



Dates for your diary

WORSHIP SERVICES

JUNE

- 7th 11.00 am – Communion Service in Cathedral
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7
- 14th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7
- 21st 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
Livestreamed to An Tobar, Ardgay
2.30 pm – Oversteps Service and 3.15 pm The Meadows Service
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7
- 28th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7

JULY

- 5th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7
- 12th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7
- 19th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
Livestreamed to An Tobar, Ardgay
2.30 pm – Oversteps Service and 3.15 pm The Meadows Service
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7
- 26th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Dornoch Cathedral
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7

MORE DATES TO NOTE

Advance notice

A special Communion Service is to be held in Croick Church on Sunday 9th August at 3pm, with a walk starting at Amat phone box at 2pm.

