

Dunscore Digest

Dunscore Church and Community Magazine

Winter 2021

Minister's Musing

Mark Smith

Advent is a-coming in! Are you ready yet! Have you panic-bought extra bits in case sprouts run out or toys don't arrive? Will the children wake up to an orange, a walnut and a pebble? Anyway that's a long way off yet ... isn't it?

YES! Before that we have plenty to get on with as November's Remembering; Remembrance gives way to Preparation & Celebration.

PREPARATION ... during Advent we get ready by focussing on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. In the busyness of family life and parties we can lose sight of the real reason for the season. As darkness increases we light candles to remind us of the imminent arrival of the Light of the World. Each Sunday during Advent at 7:00 pm we will be spending time in quiet reflection, away from the madness, seeking the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love we need. Join us if you need a break from the madness or just a chance to re-focus on what really matters!

CELEBRATION ... as Christmas arrives, we sing the familiar words, see the familiar images, meet familiar friends, light the lights to push back the darkness as the year turns. Christingles will be built, Carols will be sung, Nativity will be 'Messified', and presents will be opened as we celebrate together. The familiarity will be comforting, especially this year after all the COVID hoo-haa.

JOIN US as we Prepare and Celebrate ready to start a New Year with Hope, Peace, Joy and Love ... and Faith! Bring an unopened present on Christmas morning if you dare! See the Advent Diary for times and dates – don't miss out! May God Bless you.

Mark RS Smith YouTube / Facebook: RevMark Smith

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Staying Connected

Tim Harmer

Connect is an informal Bible Study group which currently meets weekly in Dunscore Church on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm.

During the summer we completed a course from the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity looking at the Old Testament book of Proverbs. We have started the autumn series of meetings with sessions on the Christian Year and Remembrance and have now moved on to an Advent course. The group are following the book 'Wake up to Advent' written by the former Archbishop of York, John Sentamu. The book is written for the individual to follow a daily series of readings and reflections under the weekly headings of 'Wake Up', 'Clean Up', 'Feed Up' and 'Grow Up' through Advent.

Look out for notices in the CFNs for up to date information on Connect meetings. All are welcome to join the Group, you don't have to be a church regular to attend. The discussions range far and wide as we seek to relate the bible's teaching to our lives in contemporary society. If you are interested in joining please contact myself on timharmer95@gmail.com.

Church Advent Diary

Advent and Christmas 2021 at Dunscore Church

All are at Dunscore Church unless shown otherwise.

NOVEMBER

28th Advent Sunday 11:45 am Advent Carol Service
7:00 pm A Quiet Time of Hope

DECEMBER

5th 11:45 am Morning Worship
7:00 pm A Quiet Time of Peace
12th 10:30 am Messy Christingle and collection for Standard Toy Appeal
7:00 pm A Quiet Time of Joy
19th 11:45 am Carol Service
7:00 pm A Quiet Time of Love
22nd 6:30 pm Carols in the Flying Pig car park (round a brazier)
24th Christmas Eve 3:00 pm Walking Nativity
11:30 pm Watchnight Carols
25th Christmas Day 10:30 am St Ninian's, Moniaive Joint Christmas Family Worship
10:30 am Boxing Day Special
26th

JANUARY 2022

2nd 10:30 am St Ninian's, Moniaive Joint New Year Special
9th 10:30 am Messy Epiphany

Regular Worship is on Sundays at 11:45 am but note several services are at different times. See the Church Family Notices, website and Facebook page for links and further details. Sunday morning Services also on Zoom at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86939887756>.

All of the events are subject to Covid restrictions in force at time and, therefore, subject to change. If you would like to join the church email list for updates, follow this link: <http://eepurl.com/ds0gzi>

Flying Tonight

The Flying Pig Quiz Night and Games Nights have started again. These are on Friday nights. The pub is also open every Sunday from 2:00 - 5:00 pm. Check the Facebook page for the latest activities, events and opening times.

Don't miss the Pizza and Prosecco Night on Saturday 27 November.

Santa is dropping in to Dunscore on the evening of Sunday 12 December and the Flying Pig is planning to be offering shortbread and mince pies that evening.

The next Fish and Chip van visit to the Flying Pig car park is on Saturday 18 December (there is no November visit). You can place your order by text on: 07376431441.

Bird of the Season

Lesley Creamer

Nuthatch

This issue looks at a bird with such a fitting name that you'd know it on first sighting just from its name – Treecreeper! Seeing one creeping up a sycamore tree in my garden the other day inspired me to select it for closer examination here.

Yes, they creep up trees, tending to start at the bottom of a trunk and spiralling upwards. Up they busily creep until they reach the canopy of the tree and then down they flutter to start the process all over again. As they climb, backs superbly camouflaged in an intricate brown pattern, they use their extremely sharp claws – and particularly long hind-claw - to grip even the smoothest and most slippery bark, probing into small cracks and fissures with their long, slightly down-curved beak for bugs and beasties, insects, even moths and butterflies. Despite their actual movement being more of a hop than a creep, with both feet leaving the trunk together, they're also perfectly capable of defying gravity by hopping downwards as well as underneath branches!



A study has shown that it takes a Treecreeper 15 hops to climb 1 m and that, in a very conservative 7 hour-day of foraging, it actually climbs 2,500 metres – not far off double the height of Ben Nevis every day!

Climate Change and Us

Colin Mitchell

Many of us will have looked at the reports from the COP26 conference in Glasgow as well as the many fringe events and protests. Maybe you wondered what actions we could take

HOMES We could better insulate our homes. There have been various government-funded schemes to assist with loft insulation. Since hot air rises, this is a good type of insulation. The recommended thickness is now 250mm – 270mm.

Floors and windows can also be insulated

Many of us have solid stone walls with no cavity which are harder to keep warm. Some housing associations have fitted exterior insulation to the walls of their homes. This is a good solution but is expensive. Walls can be insulated on the inside too. Although expensive, as energy costs rise, such actions will become more economic.

The heating of our homes by burning coal, gas, wood, peat etc is a major source of CO₂ and alternative types of heating are required. Electricity generated from renewable sources (wind, wave, tide, hydro) is a good type of energy although the costs in the UK are high (but not the highest) compared to some other European countries.

Heat pumps are being promoted by the government. Heat pumps take heat from the outside and move it into your home. The costs vary depending upon the type of heat pump. The most common types are "air to water" and "ground to water".

Both require electricity to run them. Solar electricity panels, also known as photovoltaics (PV), capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity that you can use in your home.

Grants and more information are available from the Energy Saving Trust (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) and Home Energy Scotland. (www.homeenergyscotland.org).

GARDENS Green plants, including trees, are major users of carbon dioxide (CO₂) which is the main greenhouse gas. Make sure that you have plants in your garden. Together the gardens of the country absorb lots of CO₂. Compost as much as you can.

FARMS AND COUNTRYSIDE Green plants (including grass) absorb lots of CO₂. We are fortunate that, in this area, we have lots of green plants growing.

Recently we have had bad flooding in the area. Such extreme weather incidents are becoming more frequent and actions could be taken locally to help prevent the effects of flooding. Ponds and wetland areas should be encouraged as they hold water and slow down water reaching the rivers. It would be good if landowners were rewarded for creating ponds and wetlands and fined for draining them.

VILLAGE It is good that we have the Cairn Valley Community Transport Community minibus. This could be used more to reduce car use. It would be good to have a car lift scheme to cut down car use (this would probably be possible after COVID is less of a problem). A community garden could produce fruit and vegetables for use locally. We should use local producers where possible. The less "food miles" the better.

TRANSPORT The exhaust gases from our vehicles are a major source of greenhouse gases. Electric vehicles are a solution although their efficiency will be improved by better battery technology etc. The Energy Saving Trust offers eligible drivers in Scotland an interest-free loan of up to £20,000 to cover the cost of purchasing a used electric car, or up to £5,000 for the purchase of a used electric motorcycle or moped. The loan has a repayment term of up to five years.

A better network of charging points is also required.

Electric tractors and lorries will become available eventually. Hydrogen powered vehicles are also becoming available.

We can all make a difference if we all take steps to reduce our carbon footprint.

Board Catch Up

Kath Aitken

The Dunscore Church Stated Annual Meeting was overdue by two years (in common with all other Church of Scotland churches). However, when we were eventually able to hold the meeting last month, we were able to give a very positive account of our finances, fabric and all other aspects of our church life.

Despite Covid, our church family has developed and we are delighted to welcome three new church members onto the Board. Amber, Sam and Kevin have agreed to join us and are already valued members of the team.

The minutes of our meetings are always displayed on the church notice board if you would like to see what we have been doing.

Messy Church is Live! Jennifer Dobson

We are back in the church for live services and it feels great. It is so good to see the families again crafting together, praising together and making a mess together. I didn't realise how much I had missed it (explaining craft is so much easier in person!). Having just had an extremely busy service in November including the baptism of Scarlett Ross we are very much looking forward to what the future brings. We are taking steps to stay safe by continuing to wear masks and sanitise all the craft utensils after use. We haven't been able to include lunch after the service yet but might be able to again in 2022.

Messy Christmas is the next big event for us which includes a Christingle service on 12th December at 10:30 am and then a very special Walking Nativity on Christmas Eve at 3:00 pm.

We always try to think "outside the box" with our services and provide something new for families to enjoy. We weren't able to do the Walking Nativity last year due to restrictions but we hope this year it will be a great village event - I hope that the weather is kind!

Taxing Times

Roy Spence

The recent statements from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Finance Secretary and a post on Facebook by Henry Gibson made me wonder about all the different ways that the Government has of collecting money. We have Income Tax, Council Tax, Business Tax, Fuel Tax, Alcohol Tax, etc., etc. In the 18th century things were a bit different!

Then, we had Carriage, Cart, Clock and Watch, Dog, Farm Horse, Land, Hearth, Window and Male and Female Servant Taxes to name but a few. Some of these taxes were only temporary, they were levied to pay for a war or other emergency. Local taxes were levied in response to some specific need such as repairing the Kirk or manse.

Dunscore Parish had only one carriage in 1785, it was a four wheeled vehicle belonging to Robert Riddell of Glenridell (Friar's Carse). He paid £5-5/- tax on it. There were 13 carts in the parish, mostly singly owned but James Crosbie of Burnside and James Lowrie of Upper Farthing had two each. They were all two wheeled and were charged 1/- each.

In 1798 there were 178 working horses in the parish, 157 were liable to be taxed. Not many places had more than three but James and Joseph Haining of Merkland had five. They were taxed at 1/1d each.

In the same year there were few non-working dogs. These were recorded only at Whiteside, Collieston and Stroquhan.

Robt. Riddell of Glenridell	2	2	4	6	1/1		
Mr. T. G. G. G.	4	3	1	6	9	1/4	2
Mr. Riddell of Glenridell	5	2	2	6	5	1/4	2
Thos. McBurnie of Dalgona	3	3	6	5	1/4	2	
James Robt. Haining of Merkland	5	5	11	3	2	3	
Mr. Riddell of Glenridell	2	2	4	6	1/1	5	
John Riddell of Springfield	1	1	2	3	3	4	
James Riddell of Glenridell	2	2	4	6	1/1	5	

Returns for Clock and Watch Tax are interesting, only eight timepieces are counted. James Grierson of Dalgona had only one clock but James McCubbin of Springfield had a clock and a watch! Only Robert Riddell had non-essential servants, four male and two female in 1789. Window tax was only levied on properties that had more than seven windows. Only Dalgona, Friar's Carse and the manse are listed in 1795. Riddell of Friar's

Carse had 18 and paid 1/6d each, Grierson of Dalgona had eight and paid 6d each and the minister seemed to get a reduced rate at 4d for 13. Some people blocked off windows to avoid the tax but I don't know of any local examples.

In 1790 one shilling was worth £7-70 in today's money. Most of the above information came from Scotland's Places website.

Lubuto Update

Alison Robertson

We have heard recently from Rev Friday Sinkonde, minister of the Lubuto church. He warmly thanks us for our support. Fund-raising for the bus has been put on hold as the church roof has developed a leak.

We tried to meet some of the people from Lubuto using Zoom. Sadly, there were technical issues at their end so we failed to link up.

Alison Boyes, Andy Barr and I are going to talk to St Mary's, Greyfriars Guild in the new year. We also hope to give a talk at Dunscore School.

Friends of Dunscore Church Mary Waugh

The church at Dunscore occupies a special place in the lives of residents and visitors alike. This historic building has over the years adapted with the times. In addition to being a place of worship, it is now a flexible facility for local events and houses the heritage centre which is run by volunteers.

Occupying a prominent position in the village, Dunscore Church is visible from a distance in all directions and as such symbolises many aspects of our village life.

Dunscore Church is responsible for any alterations, repairs and maintenance of this listed building and at present relies solely on donations and fundraising by members and those associated with the church for financing the ongoing costs.

In recognition of the widening role of Dunscore Church in the community, we are launching Friends of Dunscore Church with the aim of engaging all people who appreciate this fine building, have special memories of its place in their lives and who wish to preserve it for future generations. Full details of this new venture will be available shortly.

A Late Bus

Geoff Creamer

The Digest was all but complete when I received an article from Geoff about the recent community bus AGM. Sadly, I have only managed to make space for a few lines:

The Moniaive to Castle Douglas scheduled service is now running its normal fortnightly service and is generally well patronised. Developments over the past two years have included the creation of a website www.cvct.org.uk

We hope to develop closer links with Thornhill and District Community Transport to be able to provide a wider range of services. This may be tied into CVCT's need to consider vehicle replacement, as the bus is getting fairly old, and we have had a number of mechanical issues. It is likely that we will have to consider a replacement vehicle powered by electricity or other alternative energy sources as these become available. The committee is also working on a questionnaire to distribute to households to try and assess people's needs and aspirations for the service.

Camino de Santiago

Alison Boyes

I've often gazed up at the stained glass window at the Usual Place, where I work and thought about the words "Enoch walked with God". I imagined that a pilgrimage might be something similar - there has to be a spiritual aspect to a pilgrimage, or it is simply a walk. Indeed, a Compostela (the certificate awarded to those who walk the Camino de Santiago) is only given to those who state that they do it for spiritual reasons or for a vow. Of course, there are as many reasons for walking the Camino as there are people who walk it, but whatever the motivation you might have on setting out, you are certain along the way to learn some important things about life.



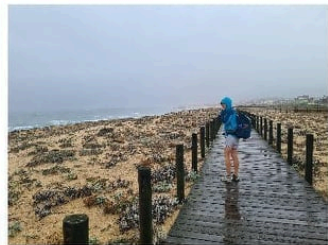
Sarah and I walked 419 miles from Lisbon to Santiago and then another 60 from Santiago to Finisterre. We walked for 34 days with an extra day in Lisbon at the beginning and two rest days. Sometimes I was walking with painful blisters or an infected toenail. The weight of the pack caused backache for the first week or so. We walked in 30°C heat and occasionally in torrential rain. On some days I wanted to lie down beside the path and not get up again. If people ask me "How was your

holiday?" I feel that they have missed the point!

And yet...we were enormously privileged to be able to have the time, fitness and funds to spend six weeks of our lives walking through the most beautiful parts of Portugal and Spain, and given the chance, I would do it all again tomorrow. There is only space here for a few impressions of our journey; if anyone would like to know more, I will happily answer questions over a cup of coffee.



There are many routes to Santiago de Compostela, from all over Europe. The best known route is the Camino Frances; others include the Primitivo, Norte, Ingles and (our route) the Portugues, which took us through the historic cities of Santarem, Coimbra, Tomar and Porto, then on the coastal route along the Atlantic as far as Caminha, turning inland to reach the fortified town of Valença on the Spanish border. At Pontevedra, we turned off to walk the "Variante Espiritual".



Between Lisbon and Porto we met very few other pilgrims. At first, following the fertile Tagus valley, we walked through endless fields of tomatoes, corn and grapes. There was little shade and few opportunities to stop for water or refreshments.

Sometimes we ate wild figs, walnuts or blackberries along the way. Few people spoke any English, but they spoke to us anyway: Portuguese people were always friendly and hospitable - they were also terrible drivers and we had to walk at the side of some very busy roads. The cost of living was low and the wine was wonderful. In the cities we could get vegan food, but in the countryside it wasn't so easy, despite the vegetables growing everywhere.

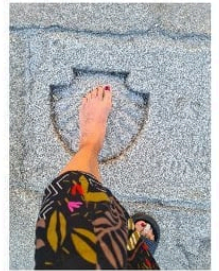
We stayed in a variety of accommodation - hostels or albergues, hotels, homestays and farms. Even in cheap hotels or hostels there would be crisp cotton sheets, fluffy towels and a hot shower. We were often overwhelmed by the kindness of our hosts. After one long day, we arrived at an apartment in Atalia, showered, changed into our dresses and flip flops and walked to the only restaurant which was closed for renovations! We were so hungry that we walked a further two miles to the nearest supermarket to find food and hurrying back in the dark, I felt the appearance of the first blisters, which were to plague me for weeks to come.



We learned quickly not to carry any unnecessary weight. I left my unused sleeping bag and towel at a hostel (and later had to air dry after a shower...). We had few clothes which we washed in the sink and dried in the sun. We carried nuts and rice cakes and a couple of litres of water. Our only book was the John Brierley guidebook to help us find our route. I had brought a small camera but ended up just using my phone to take photos. Everything else was a distraction.



All we had to do was walk. It became clear that this was one of the most important things about pilgrimage - making the space in our lives to think about what was important. Not so much walking with God, as allowing room for God to be present; to me, God was present in the people we met and those who walked alongside us, in the beauty of the ocean and the forest, in the way that the Camino provided everything we needed.



The "Variante Espiritual" ended with a boat ride up the River Ulla to Padron, to follow the journey taken by the body of the martyred St James when his disciples brought it back to Galicia where he had preached the Gospel. From Padron, it



was a long day's walk to Santiago and our approach into the city through narrow and very busy streets. Our first glimpse of the cathedral made me feel incredibly, and unexpectedly, emotional. Its size and beauty and the mass of pilgrims and tourists in the square were all overwhelming. We never managed to go to mass as the queues were too long, but we did see the shrine of St James underneath the

Cathedral and, to obtain our Compostelas, we had to queue in the dark at the Pilgrims' Office for an hour and a half before it opened. The next day we were off again, to Finisterre, "the end of the earth", and the end of our journey.



Fair-Active as Ever Alison Borthwick

We recently ran a Cop Café for Climate Fringe Week. Leading up to the café there were daily walks, each with a climate change theme, that people can reflect on with regard to the impact of climate change locally. Walkers were asked to take pictures and send them to us to take part in our photo competition. The winner of the competition received a beautiful fairtrade hamper, well done! All of the entries were fantastic so thank you to all who took part! The café was well attended with lots of coffee, tea and cake!

The FairTrade Team continues its fantastic work with the school and children learning more about Fairtrade and exploring new ideas. We are donating baking ingredients to the school to help with their baking for Children in Need Day. We helped to hand over a Fairtrade football to the school. It was donated by Steilhead Cider.

We recently donated Fairtrade tea and coffee to the Donkey Open Weekend at Farmersfield which proved to be very successful.

The Fairtrade Steering Group continues to meet up regularly. We are now starting to think about the Big Brew for 2022, if you would like to come along to a meeting or can support what we do, please get in touch!



Not Just Litter

Matthew Aitken

What do you get if you combine Lego and Dunscore EcoCongregation? You get this great video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yvvJxBiDY>. If you haven't watched the Dobson family's interpretation of Isaiah 1 - you really should! We were looking for a Dunscore contribution to the Eco Congregation Scotland Creation Time resources and the video / Lego skills of the Dobson's came to mind. It was shared to congregations across Scotland.

That apart, we have participated in the COP26 fringe by showing a video from the Glasgow summit, watching a Christian Aid ecumenical church service and welcoming the Cycle on COP team as they journeyed through the village.

And, we pick litter on the first Thursday each month.

From the Session Clerk

Colin Mitchell

We are approaching Advent and preparations for services leading up to Christmas, and beyond, are being planned. There is a list of services on page 1. We look forward to welcoming you to some or all of these services. We also use Zoom to broadcast our services to those who cannot attend in person.

The funerals of Geordie Howat and Leslie McCubbin have been held in the church, with very large numbers of mourners attending both. The baptism of Scarlett Lydia Ross took place at the end of the November Messy Church service.

We floodlit the church in red for Remembrance and hope to floodlight the building over the Christmas period also.

COVID restrictions have been eased although we still have to wear masks in church, keep 1m apart and request that everyone signs in.

Members of the Session and Board have discussed two major changes coming to the Church of Scotland. We discussed a proposed change to the rules of the church to allow same sex marriages to take place in churches with the minister officiating. Following much discussion, Dunscore church agreed to support this change.

The other big change is to reduce the number of Presbyteries and create large ones. For us the Presbytery would extend from our area to Largs and include Arran. We were asked what role Dunscore could play in this new Presbytery. A paper outlining our thoughts has been sent to our Presbytery for discussion.

I am also involved in the preparations for the change and am involved in carrying out condition and use surveys of all churches in Dumfries and Kirkcudbright Presbytery as well as having discussions with representatives from other presbyteries involved in the proposed SW Scotland presbytery.

School Report

Christine Robertson

We began our 2021/2022 school year with positivity and great hope for a "normal" school year. Covid measures are still in place to keep everyone safe – masks to be worn by adults, twice weekly lateral-flow tests to be taken, regular hand washing, use of sanitisers, cleaning down work surfaces through the day and at the end of the day. Visitors who were helping to enhance the curriculum have now been able to visit school again. Our video links have still been in use for meetings and virtual information sessions – WiFi and connections can be very challenging at times but we persevere!

Our pupils have adapted to the changes very well and have written about some of the things we have been doing in school.

PE by Solomon and Samson

When we returned to school after the summer holidays, we had to wear our PE kits to school to avoid changing. This has since changed and our kits can be brought to school with us. In Term 1 we could only do PE outside as we were not allowed to use the gym hall. We had to have warm clothes to add on layers if needed. Sometimes our timetable changed to ensure it was dry when we went outside. We didn't lose many sessions due to bad weather which was good. Nobody minded doing our activities outside – it was fresh with plenty of room to move around in. After the October holidays, we have been able to do PE in the hall but if it is dry we still tend to go outside, which we enjoy.



Remembrance Day

Pupil Forums by George and Rosie

In Dunscore Primary school, we are now able to hold our Pupil Forum Groups once a month again on a Friday afternoon to help develop and enhance our school and environment.

This year we have six groups, each led by a school or community adult: Pupil Council, Fundraising, Fairtrade, Library, Eco Group and Rights Respecting School Group.

Each pupil selects one group to be part of for two terms then another group for the next two terms. Each group takes responsibility to enhance and look after our school and grounds. So far...

The Pupil Council have been pricing and choosing new furniture for the P4/5/6/7 classroom – they have opted for a very colourful scheme, which will brighten their day even more! They also have researched and then chosen the colours for the pupils' toilets which are due to be completely refurbished at the start of 2022.

The Fundraising group have been busy organising various events to raise money for school and for others. Our next event is for Children in Need where the theme is "Wear your pyjamas to school!" We are all looking forward to this day, as the group has been organising lots of fun things to do for a good cause.

The Fairtrade Group has been researching Fairtrade school uniforms. They have been looking at different items of school clothing, which could be bought by parents with the Dunscore logo. The responses have been very positive so local firms are now being approached to see if they could fulfil the uptake.



Fairtrade Football Presentation

The Eco Group has been tidying up the vegetable garden and wildflower area as well as tending to the plant pots situated around the school. In the last session they made lovely glass jar lanterns decorated with decoupage leaves – they looked great!



Eco Group Perks

A warm welcome was extended to Helen who moved into the village recently and kindly offered to help us with our library. So the library group has been working hard to tidy up and sort out the books, organise the furniture, make posters to encourage everyone to love this area and to enjoy our library.

We are very thankful to our community volunteers who kindly give up their time with this worthwhile venture.

Harvest Assembly by Brooke and Jack

Our Harvest assembly took place at the end of term 1. It was a lovely occasion because we have been unable to join together as a school for a year, or invite others in to speak to us, due to Covid restrictions.

P7 pupils led the assembly and presented a Powerpoint telling us about harvest time and why we celebrate it. We took it in turns to present the slides and then James asked quiz

questions at the end of the information session to make sure everyone had been listening!

P1-3 enacted the story of the Little Red Hen, which was great. After that, we sang the Harvest Samba, which we enjoy singing.

Reverend Smith joined us for our assembly so he said a few words about the importance of sharing and looking after others. He also talked about people who are less fortunate than ourselves and how we can help. Donations were given to our local Trussell Trust food bank - a fantastic total of £118.00 was raised.

Halloween Party By Murray and Yakoub

We had a Halloween party with a difference this year. It took place during school hours so we had to bring our costumes to change into. Some of the costumes were funny and some were quite scary. We had our party all together and played traditional games like haunted corners, musical spooky statues and musical bumps in the night. We also danced to creepy music. We looked for apples then our Halloween art competition was judged. Yakoub and Harry won the best spooky picture for P4-7, Eric and Samson for P1-3.

Finally, we were given a Halloween party bag, which had been organised by the Parent Council. It was a fun afternoon.

We have all been working extremely hard to catch up from any lost school time - but we are still having fun, learning loads and love being back together with our friends.

To COP26 – by Bike

Sally Hinchcliffe

A hundred mile cycle ride in Scotland in November isn't for the faint hearted – but on a bright cold autumn morning, I found myself pedalling past my road end on the B729 with a small group of like minded people, heading for Glasgow. We were part of 'Pedal on COP' – just one of 21 separate rides converging on Glasgow for the UN climate conference under the banner 'This Machine Fights Climate Change'.

As well as travelling by one of the most sustainable means of transport known to man, we were also taking our message to the communities we passed through, and especially the younger generation. Our first stop was Dunscore pre-school and primary school where the pupils showed us their own climate superhero poster and posed with our polar bear banner. We were then welcomed by the church with coffee and pancakes – bike rides, like armies, march on their stomachs – and sent on our way by the church bells.

From there, we rode with some of the congregation to Penpont and the primary school there, where many of the children had cycled to school that day, and on to Thornhill to meet the primary school pupils at



Wallacehall. These are the generation who face an uncertain future due to climate change – the reason we were doing the ride in the first place.

The visits over, and knowing how short the daylight would be, there was then nothing for it but to tackle the hills that awaited

- up past Drumlanrig, and then on over the Mennock Pass to Wanlockhead.

Conversation fell away as we each tackled the climb at our own speed, and after a much-needed stop for refreshment at the Wanlockhead Inn, were



rewarded by the endless descent down into Abington for the night. A motorway service station might seem like an odd place for a climate ride to stop over, but needs must!

On our second day our group swelled as we picked up other cyclists who had come from further afield (Harrogate and London) and by the time we reached the outskirts of Glasgow that afternoon we were 11 strong. The next morning, the day of the big climate march, that number had swelled to hundreds as cyclists arrived from Perth, Inverness, Edinburgh, and all corners of Glasgow, defying heavy rain and headwinds. And in the streets of Glasgow we were over 100,000 strong as we marched alongside people from all walks of life and chanted until we were hoarse, even as our signs dissolved in the rain. Whatever the outcome of COP itself, we left the world in no doubt that there was massive support for ambitious action against the gathering climate crisis.

A bike may not be a practical means of transport to Glasgow under ordinary circumstances, but it is a great way to cut down on car miles for short journeys, and bikes and e-bikes are here now, they're not some technology of the future. But our roads are a barrier to many who would like to cycle more – even as an experienced cyclist, I do not enjoy cycling on the B729. Many of the kids we met along the way were keen to cycle to school if they could, but their parents rightly fear the traffic. We need to invest in cycling routes if we're to see more people out there on their 'climate change fighting machines'. I hope our pedalling pilgrimage to Glasgow has made that more likely over the coming years.

Appy Days

Matthew Aitken

Continuing the series about useful apps on a smartphone, I thought about which ones I use most often (every day in this case). This would be Duolingo. With a son in Chile, it makes sense to learn Spanish (in fact he sent the link and suggested that we should start learning!).



Duolingo takes you from first words in nearly any language (you could try Gaelic or even Klingon) to a pretty advanced level (something that I have still to reach!). It is simple to use, free (you do have to watch some adverts unless you buy the premium version) and, with months (years actually) of use, I can manage the basics in Spanish such as ordering food, checking into a hotel and asking directions. It's worth giving Duolingo a go!

Bugs, Baking and Learning Lee Mackenzie

We have been very busy at preschool this term. At our AGM we elected a new committee. Flora Milligan and Claire Henderson have kindly agreed to join together to take on the role of chair and Lena Boukelia is our new treasurer. A huge thank you to all the parents of Preschool who play such an important role in everything we do.

We had fun during maths week exploring all about numbers, and everyone took home an activity pack with lots of ideas. We explored how to make numbers with special hand gloves and had fun bending the fingers to make different numbers.

We have been celebrating all the beautiful colours of Autumn. Families went on a scavenger hunt during the October holidays and brought in conkers and leaves of different colours and sizes. We used some of them to make spooky lanterns.

We had fun at Halloween, learning about spiders in the woods, making broomsticks and of course dressing up and having fun at our Halloween party. We also did some spooky experiments, growing balloon monsters and making bubbly potions. At the woods we learned about fire safety as we had a campfire for bonfire night and toasted marshmallows., and we got creative with glitter, tissue and coloured cellophane to make firework pictures. We also learned about the different customs of Diwali, the festival of light and acted out the story of prince Rama and Princess Sita.

We have been working with families to learn about how we can play our part in caring for our environment in the run up to COP 26. The children have all chosen their own superhero to save our planet and pledged to do at least one thing to make a difference. Some of the things they have pledged to do include: buying food at the market to reduce our use of plastics; growing more of our fruit and vegetables; being brave and sleeping without a nightlight to save electricity; bringing toys and clothes to charity shops and buying from charity shops; and cycling to Preschool. We met the cyclists on their way to Glasgow and showed them our pledges on our display board. We have been learning about how people on the Isle of Arran do their bit to combat climate change and reading the inspiring story of 'Greta and the Giants' and how even the smallest person can stand up and make their voice heard.

Lena came to the woods to show us the invertebrates who live in the burn at the woods and teach us how they can reflect the water quality. The children knew lots about sustainable forms of energy, and Cammie will be helping us to make a model wind turbine using a generator and we will be exploring hydroelectric power by making a water wheel.

We've been involved in the community, by helping the playpark project - planting bulbs and baking and making soup for their 'Soup and Pudding' event to raise funds for the development of the park which we use every week.

Looking forward, we will be learning about Scottish customs and doing some Scottish dancing to celebrate St Andrew's day, having fun and raising money for Children in Need. As we approach Christmas the children have been designing Christmas cards for friends and family and will be busy crafting. We look forward to a visit from Santa and hope to be able to perform a Christmas play 'A Dunscore Night Before Christmas'

Community Council Column

Alistair McFadzean

The Easter Egg Hunt was a great success.

Andi Martin from Riggfoot Dunscore has taken on the running of our Gardening Group. Any help or ideas would be great.

Community Councillor Graham Walker is now our representative on the Glenkens and District Trust.

We were asked to be involved with helping to get some primary school children a place at Dunscore School. This arose due to the school only having two teachers and the total that they are allowed. The outcome was successful and all the children were included.

We have a special face to face meeting to consider applications for grants of windfarm money. The following were successful:

- The Red Squirrel Group
- The Playpark Group
- The Christmas Santa Group
- The Easter Egg Hunt Group
- The Gala Committee
- The Wednesday Club

We had our AGM on 25 October and the following people were elected to hold the positions: Chairman - Alistair McFadzean and Treasurer - Graham Walker. Joe Cook will step down as Treasurer at the end of the financial year (March 2022) when Graham will take over.

It is great to be back to face to face meetings.

Play Park Progress

Jade Crichton

I had spoken with lots of other parents in the community about the sorry state of our park. Everyone felt it was in much need of improvement. So after first consulting with the Community Council, Dunscore Playpark Project was set up in January 2021 as a community group to raise funds for our park. It was necessary to have a constituted group to carry this forward. The committee members are Jade Crichton Chair Person, Carrie Wright as Vice Chair, Caroline Waugh as Treasurer and Eve Packer as Secretary.

This year we have been doing a lot of research and planning for the project and we have had three successful fundraisers so far this year which is fab considering the restrictions. We've had a Mother's Day raffle, Father's Day raffle and Soup and Pudding. This meant we could carry out the first phase of our project, the drainage work, which was carried out in the summer. It has made a huge difference.

We were awarded money from the Community Council to carry out groundworks this autumn. We met with the head gardener from the Council to seek advice on our plans for this phase of the project. He was very nice and positive about our plans. He has donated 2,000 daffodil bulbs for the community to plant in the park and replaced the bin in the park after seeing it was badly damaged. Following the meeting with the gardener the Council has informed us they are happy for us to carry out the groundwork we had planned. We wanted to plant a community orchard with seating areas and two bog gardens

and to plant a wild harvest hedge along one of the boundaries, and also to plant lots of wildflowers.

We have purchased 16 trees for the orchard - four apple, four pear, two plums, two damson, one morello cherry, one mulberry and two walnut trees. We have marked out the site for the orchard and dug the holes for the trees which will be delivered around the end November. We will need volunteers to help with the planting of the trees so please contact a member of the group if you are interested.

Two benches and a picnic table have been chosen for the orchard and I have discussed this with the Council. They are getting back to me with quotes for fitting these. The bog gardens will be planted up in the spring as this is the best time of year to carry out this type of planting. We have applied to Scottish Woodlands for a wild harvest tree pack for spring planting.

I put in a complaint to the Council about the gate at the park. It is rusted through, broken and dangerous. When the Preschool use the park, as they do most days, they have to secure it with a bicycle padlock. The Council has decided that they will replace this for us which is great and this will be done in the next few weeks.

I have met with a drystone dyker who is going to repair the areas of broken dyke around the park. We had to have a tree cut down, an elderberry which had self seeded very close to the dyke and pulled a lot of the stone down. Hopefully having all these groundworks done over the next few months we will start to see a big difference in the park, bringing life and colour to the space. It has looked so sad for so long!

We will be applying to Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Fund in December and to Blackcraig Wind Farm in January for funding for phase three of our project. This phase will be for a tarmac track to be installed round the perimeter of the park which can be used for walking/running and also for children to have a safe enclosed place where they can cycle their bikes. It will start from the entrance gate meaning there will be a path that is suitable for all to get around the park too.

What's On?

If you want to keep up to date with what is going on in and around Dunscore, follow this link to join the email list: <http://eepurl.com/dsOCUn>. You will receive emails about local events and about items that are available locally (and you will be able to let people know about things that you want to advertise. There are 180 people on the list but there is always room for more!

And Finally... From the book 'In Praise of Daughters' by Margaret Mead (1901-1978) for her daughter, Cathy:

You must be free to take a path
Whose end I feel no need to know.
Away from this familiar land
Leaving your kiss upon my hair
And all the future in your hands.

Thanks to Aly Robertson for suggesting that we include this.