

Dunscore Digest

August 2026

There will also be a limited number of black and white paper copies of this publication available for those people who aren't comfortable with technology. Please email us at dg2digest@gmail.com or speak to Gail Renaud, Gloria Burke or Ann Walton with the names and contact details of anyone who would like to be added to the distribution list.

Contents:

	Page		Page
Church news	1	Animals and Nature	16
Children	6	Moniaive Initiative	19
Community	8	Grants for young people	20

For a mobile phone friendly version of this magazine:



Church

A Message from the Manse ...

Rev Mark Smith

AUTUMN FALLS FAST ... BUT IT'S NOT DOWNHILL FROM HERE!

September seems to have come round very quickly this year! Schools are back in full swing and the season shifts into shut-down mode. Everything around changes ... leaves fall, flowers droop, temperatures drop, winds rise, days shorten. After the joys of the summer, the drudgery of routine kicks back in. Does that make me sound like Eeyore?

For the church, we start The Season Of Creation – a time when we celebrate the world around us, reflecting on the good things which surround us and how we are called to be stewards of those good things. I know many of you were challenged by the screening of the People's Emergency Briefing video which the Dunscore Church Eco Group put on. (See Matthew Aitken's report elsewhere in this edition and Debbie Smith's outline of what that group get up to.)

HARVEST ALL Together

followed by

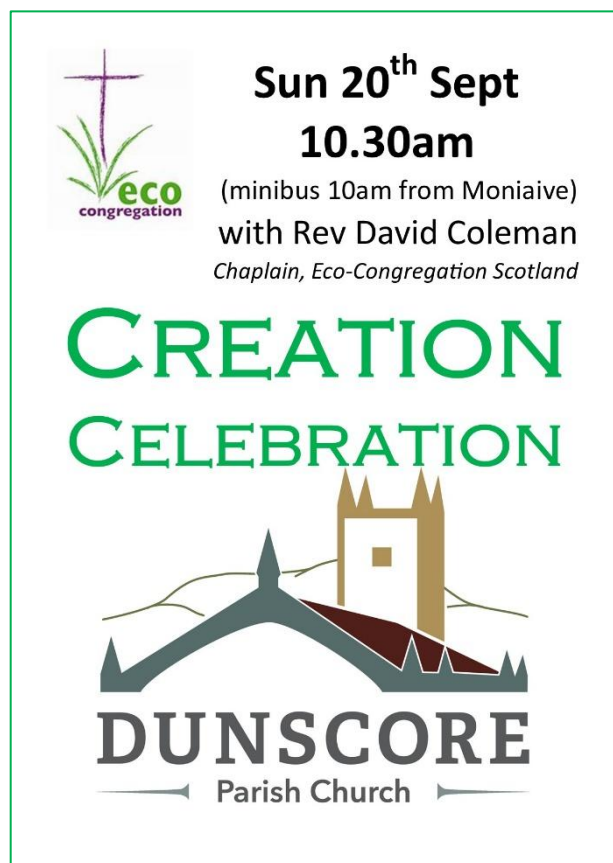
Bring & Share lunch

Sun 13th Sept, 10am

*Donations of food
(tinned preferred)
or money to
Food Bank*



This September, we will hold HARVEST ALL Together on the 13th, with our service followed by a Bring & Share Lunch. We thank God for the harvest and “all good things around us”. Donations of food (tinned goods preferred) or money will go to help the work of the local Food Bank. Join us to celebrate this ancient festival, as we mark the change of seasons together.



We then welcome Rev David Coleman (Chaplain for Eco-Congregation Scotland) to join us at a special CREATION CELEBRATION on 20th – a joint service with our friends from Glencairn & Moniaive. David will bring his unique mix of wisdom, insight and songwriting to share with us the importance of caring for the world around us. This is a reminder of the first job given to humans in the Bible, to work and take care of the Garden of Eden!

I started off sounding like Eeyore but, really, I want to be more like Pooh Bear – drifting through life without a care! That would be nice, wouldn't it!? Yet we all know that is not how it works. If we are aware of each other's needs and think about the wider picture, it takes thoughtfulness and energy to balance our rights with our responsibilities. “No man is an island ...” costs us emotionally, mentally, and spiritually!

Nor do I want to be like Piglet, frightened, jumpy, naïve, and lost, but rather be realistic in the face of the challenges of living well, sustainably and responsibly.

None of the issues we face as a society are simple or easy. There is no one-size-fits-all solution other than to be guided by love. Love for others, love for the world we live in, love for ourselves, love for God.

Our celebrations across September end with a great BLUEGRASS GOSPEL WORSHIP at St Ninian's in Moniaive (part of the Moniaive Michaelmas Bluegrass Festival). In the midst of the chaos, uncertainty and complexities of life, we come together to give thanks for all the good things we have.



The Bible challenges us to have an attitude of gratitude, to consciously be grateful for the good, even in the face of the bad. Many of the Psalms are written in the face of personal trauma, national crises, or general bewilderment at the state of the world, yet time and time again they remind the reader to give thanks, be grateful and re-focus on the good. By doing this, we can all begin to play our part in making the world a better place.

Autumn is about being ready, storing up what is needed for the future, paring back and simplifying. Are you ready to live simply so that others may simply live? Are you looking beyond this life to what is still to come? Is satisfying your wants outweighing, overwhelming and frustrating the meeting of your basic physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs?

Join us on a celebratory journey through the maze that is life.

May God Bless you,

Mark

PARISH MINISTER:

Rev Mark RS Smith

T: 01387 820475, 07762 152755

E: mark.smith@churchofscotland.org.uk

F: RevMark Smith

Associate Minister:

Rev Tim Harmer – 01387 820861

Session Clerk:

Colin Mitchell – 01387 820455

Board Chair:

Kath Aitken – 07906 814512

Parish website:

www.dunscorechurch.org.uk

Facebook GROUP:

Dunscore Church

YouTube channel:

CairnValley Churches

SUNDAY SERVICES

September:

6th 10am Morning Worship

13th 10am HARVEST ALL Together
... with lunch!

20th **10.30am CREATION CELEBRATION
with Rev David Coleman

27th **10.30am BLUEGRASS GOSPEL
WORSHIP at St Ninian's, Moniaive

October:

4th 10am HOLY COMMUNION

11th **10.30am ALL Together ... NOW!

18th 10am Morning Worship

25th 10am Together with KiKs

November:

1st 10am Morning Worship

8th 10am REMEMBRANCE WORSHIP
in church
10.30am Act of Remembrance
at War Memorial

15th **10.30am ALL Together ... NOW!

22nd 10am Together with KiKs

29th **10.30am ADVENT SUNDAY
Holy Communion

People's Emergency Briefing

Matthew Aitken

Recently, people across England and Wales received an emergency alert on their phones. It seems that the UK government is taking the current drought and wildfire risk seriously even if only giving rather obvious advice about not starting fires and not using barbecues. It was also interesting that our new prime minister yesterday made the link between the "tinderbox conditions" and climate change.

Sadly, advising the public to be careful about lighting fires is only just scratching the surface of the actions that we, as individuals, need to take, let alone what our governments need to be doing to keep us all safe in a changing climate.

The first thing that the government should be doing is to be straight with the public. Everyone in the country needs to be told the scale of the issue and what has to be done about it. The wildfires that we have seen in the UK and Europe are just an indication of what can be expected in the future if we don't take action. But we can, and must, act and the longer we wait before doing so will make the problem that our children and grandchildren will have to deal with so much harder.



If you attended the People's Emergency Briefing in the Glenriddell Hall last month, thank you. There, you will have heard this message loud and clear and not from me, but from professors and experts on climate science, national security, food security, nature and more.

The hall was packed with over sixty people from Dunscore and the surrounding areas. We watched the National Emergency Briefing film which is hosted by Chris Packham and shows the experts who presented to a briefing of MPs, peers and others in Westminster last November. They explained the science of why our climate is changing at an alarming rate and the consequences (some that we are seeing already) that we can expect.

It was sobering and shocking but also hopeful. There are things that we can do and that our governments can do. But we don't have lots of time.

The People's Emergency Briefings are happening right across the UK (and now in other countries, too). There have been around 2,500 screenings so far and more are being presented all the time. Politicians are invited (we had two MSPs and one D&G councillor at our screening) so that they can see the film and talk directly with their constituents afterwards. The main reason for the briefings is as a ground-up movement to pressure the UK government into levelling with the public about the climate crisis. The "ask" is for the Prime Minister to host a national televised briefing with support from climate experts (a bit like the regular Covid briefings) to tell the UK population that this is a crisis and needs to be treated like one.



And there are a few things that you can do right now!

There is a petition. Please sign it:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/767687>

Attend (or host) a People's Emergency Briefing like the one in Dunscore. We are hopeful that there will be one in Moniaive and Thornhill soon. Could you host, or help to host, one? You can see where they are happening here: www.nebriefing.org/screening-map

Write to your MP and ask for him / her to support the call for a televised briefing. Find out what to say and where to send it here: www.nebriefing.org/take-action

Have a look at the National Emergency Briefing website: www.nebriefing.org.

Reduce your impact on the environment where you can

When presenting to the National Emergency Briefing, one of the experts, Professor Hugh Montgomery, Director of the Centre for Human Health at University College London, said: "I am scared for my own life and future and I'm absolutely terrified for that of my son, and you should be too." I feel the same. Please do what you can.

Connect Tim Harmer

The Connect group is our church weekly Bible study group which meets in the church on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm for various blocks of time during the year. The group has taken a break during the summer and will resume in September as advertised in the church notices.

KiKs - Kids in Kirk Tim Harmer

KiKs is our church children's group for primary school age children to help them explore the Christian faith. It is held every 4th Sunday morning in the church. The youngsters leave the main church worship for a separate meeting for their own age-appropriate activities. They return to the main worship after the sermon to explain what they have been working on. Members of the congregation volunteer to lead the group and teach material based on Bible readings taken from the lectionary. During the summer months, we have been looking at some of Paul's message to the Church in Corinth about how, as Christians, we can honour all the gifts God gives and use them for the benefit of others. Later in July, following readings from Matthew's gospel, we were thinking about how we are Christians who don't compromise and who understand God's call on our lives.

Lubuto Alison Robertson

Friday writes to say that they will soon be putting the roofing on the new church. He and the congregation are very grateful for the support of the Dunscore and Moniaive churches. The photos show the Reverend Friday Sinkonde and the materials laid out ready for building.



Eco Congregation

Debbie Smith



Dunscore Church is an Eco Congregation, and we have an Eco-group that welcomes people from the congregation and wider community

The Dunscore Eco-group continues to have activities based on the Eco-Congregation Scotland

'Gold' award categories and their targets give us direction and see what we can achieve with our own activities.

In April 2026, Dunscore Eco Hustings was held by the Eco-group with a 'Meet the Candidates Night' in the church. Candidates from the main political parties were present to talk to the community about their party policies and how they intend to care for the environment. It was also an opportunity for them to discuss related topics with the attendees. Six candidates attended, along with community members, and there was a great deal of conversation between all. Conversations included what policies politicians should commit to and how Scotland's political parties should be protecting the environment

The Eco-group also hosted a People's Emergency Briefing on the climate and nature crisis in July 2026 this included a film screening followed by a discussion of the issues. The event was attended by a wide variety of people, and the Glenriddell Hall was full to capacity with people who were interested in the subject. See a fuller report from Matthew Aitken elsewhere in this edition.



Swift boxes have now been mounted on the Dunscore Church clock tower with a swift bird caller hoping to once again get our feathered friends back in residence and increase swift numbers. Several swifts have been seen inspecting the area, so fingers crossed! There have also been bird boxes and an owl box installed locally so possibly they too will be successful.

The inclusion of the Eco and Fairtrade groups in the weekly Church Family Notices gives regular information updates to all who receive them and written information with publicity on eco projects such as toilet twinning and garden twinning. This information has also been given out at various events (such as the Annual Plant sale) for community inclusion as well as seeking ideas to help keep up our profile and attract new members.

The 'Dunscore Freecycle' email system is managed and updated regularly with items offered and requested. This continues to give the community the opportunity to support a minimal waste ethic and is well used. It also gives the opportunity to share information to a wider audience.

The Litter Larks have been out and about throughout the early part of the year helping to keep the areas around Dunscore free of litter not only for the benefit of us humans but also the wildlife. They are having a break during the summer but will set off again in the autumn through to next spring. Contact Raymond on nelson_nomad@yahoo.com.au if you can join the monthly Thursday morning picks.

The members of the Eco-group continue to attend international and local events personally and via zoom, giving the opportunity to see what is being done around the local area and indeed the globe. It also gives the chance to share ideas with others.

The Eco-group has been busy over 2026 with various activities. Please contact our Chair or Secretary for a copy of the latest Activities Plan to see what is going on and what you can join in with and to share what you would like to see done in the future.

We can achieve a lot with your help and support as: "To do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." (26th December 2021 Archbishop Desmond Tutu)

So, we would love to hear your thoughts, ideas or comments. You can contact the Ecoroup via:-

Debbie Smith, Chair marksmith247@btinternet.com or Matthew Aitken, Secretary matthew.aitken@posteo.net

Children

Pre-school Caroline Waugh

A Busy and Wonderful Term at Dunscore Pre-school.

Dunscore Pre-school had a very busy and exciting term as we headed towards the summer holidays, with lots of wonderful learning experiences, adventures and special memories made along the way.

Our learning journey was focused on Life Cycles and Nature, giving the children lots of opportunities to explore the world around them. From watching and learning about life cycles to spending time outdoors, the children enjoyed discovering, investigating and asking lots of questions about nature and the environment.



We also enjoyed some fantastic adventures outside the pre-school. The children had a wonderful trip to the beach, where they explored the sand, sea and natural environment. We brought the beach back home with us too, creating our very own beach in the pre-school garden! This provided lots of opportunities for imaginative play, sensory experiences and developing our understanding of the seaside.

Another highlight was our trip to The Cocoa Bean at Twynholm, where the children had a fantastic time enjoying a special day out and making some lovely memories together.

As always, the end of the term brought mixed emotions as we said goodbye to our children who were moving on to Primary 1. We are always sad to see them leave



us, but we are incredibly proud of how much they have grown and developed during their time at Dunscore Pre-school. We wish every one of them the very best as they begin their next exciting adventure at school. We know they will do wonderfully!

We also had a fantastic day at the Dunscore Gala, where our theme this year was Arts and Crafts. The children, families and staff all looked fantastic, and it was wonderful to see so much creativity and colour throughout our float. Everyone made a fantastic effort, and we were delighted to come away with second prize in the competition!



A huge thank you to all the children, families, staff and everyone in our local community who helped make our term and our gala such a success. We are very lucky to be part of such a supportive and creative community.

School Miss Atkins

We hope everyone had a lovely summer and enjoyed a well-earned break! It has been great to welcome

everyone back to school and hear about all the lovely things our pupils got up to over the holidays. We were also very proud of the pupils who won prizes in the gala art competition before the summer, and they were delighted to receive their prizes and see their fantastic artwork recognised.

We have had an especially exciting start to the year in P1–4 as we welcomed six new pupils into P1 – Tom, Paul, Freddie, Douglas, Katie and Remy. They have all settled in really well, are already getting used to our school routines and are very excited about everything their first year at school will bring!

Our new topic for this term is World Explorers. We will be travelling around the world from our classroom, exploring the seven continents and finding out about different countries, landmarks, people, animals and cultures along the way. We have lots of fun activities planned and are looking forward to seeing where our adventures take us. It's going to be a busy and exciting term!

How it felt to be Gala Queen 2026

Alice Dunn

I was so happy to be queen and be involved with lots of great things.

I really enjoyed the pet show. I loved seeing all the animals there and giving out all the prizes. It was a big responsibility and was hard work but I really loved it!

I felt nervous and excited for the coronation and loved being crowned. It made me feel proud to be part of the community.

My favourite part was sitting on the throne on the gala float with Oscar, Katie, Sadie and Irene. Thank you Dunscore - I really enjoyed being your 2026 Gala Queen and I'm sad that it's over.



Dunscore Playpark

Finlay Carson

The new members of the playpark committee are looking to continue the excellent work that has been done so far. We're looking into another item for the play area: additional seating, a storage box for used toys for everyone to enjoy and a notice board to keep everyone up to date. We're always looking for new members to join the team or just to hear other ideas. Keep an eye out for our next meeting and come along.

Archie McFadzean

Ann Walton

Earlier this month, 10-year-old Archie McFadzean cycled over 10 miles to raise funds for [Scottish Action for Mental Health](#) in memory of his teenaged cousin, Flynn, who took his own life in April this year. At the time of writing, Archie has raised £825 towards this excellent cause and it's not too late to donate to his [Go Fund Me page](#). His target is £900 and every little helps!

It was Archie's own idea to start the fund raiser. His mum helped by publicising the ride on Facebook and setting up the Go Fund Me page and his dad accompanied him on the ride, making sure that he had enough snacks and drinks along the way to keep him going.

Archie hopes to visit the headquarters of SAMH in Glasgow to see the work that they do first hand but he has been told that he's already raised enough money to help save the lives of three people.

He can be very proud of his excellent achievement. Well done, Archie!



Community

Community Council

Andi Martin

After a long summer of hot weather, a busy gala and having the kids at home, the autumn and winter seasons are still full of fun and games, all supported by your community council.

Recently the annual windfarm benevolent fund distributed funding to the different groups in the village including: the Dunscore Gala, the Art Collective, Dunscore Amateur Dramatic Society, The Auld Alliance Twinning Association, the Pre-school and the Primary School.

Dunscore Community Council are very happy that we can support these groups as they are able to provide much needed events in our wee village.

Moving into winter, Dunscore Community Council are happy to support two more events. Dunscore's 3rd annual bonfire and fireworks event will be held this year on the 1st of November 2026 in the playpark from 6.30pm onwards. More details will be confirmed over the coming weeks, but I am sure, as always, it will be a huge success. Over 900 people attended last year.



In December, Dunscore Community Council will again be supporting the Santa Run, where selection boxes and treats are delivered by Santa and his helpers to all the children (and bigger children) of the local communities. This year, it will be on the 5th of December from 6pm onwards. Afterwards Santa will be at the Flying Pig for photos. The pub will also be open for refreshments.

Dunscore Gala

Alison Borthwick, Chairperson

Wow! What an amazing Gala Week - where do I start?

Firstly, I would like to very much thank the Crawford Family of Dalgonar for the use of the field for Gala Week; without this, it would have been very different!

Thank you to everyone who helped in Gala Week, all our volunteers. It made a huge difference!

We had a lovely church service in the marquee on Sunday morning, so thank you to Rev Mark Smith and his team for this.

Joanna and Aidan Smith opened our gala this year and carried out their duties wonderfully - thank you so much to you both!

Our Crowning Day was wonderful with our beautiful Queen Alice, King Oscar and attendants Sadie and Katie. The Gala Queen and King were crowned by Joanna Smith.

Following on, we had baking, craft and art competitions, a tug-of-war, bottle rockets, a barbecue, ice cream, and bouncy castles. It was a super afternoon and a great way to get our gala started.

Baking Winner Adults - Lesley Crichton

Baking Winner Kids - Robbie Kirk

Crafts Winner Adults - Diane Cowen

Overall Winner - Mary Paton

Overall Winner for Art - Olivia Broughton



On Monday evening, the Road Runner entertained us with his dancing, games, fun and laughter! He has more energy than Scottish Power! He is amazing and we love having him.

On Tuesday evening, we held our Pet Show with a huge variety of pets on display, including ducks, hens, calves, a tortoise, guinea pigs, dogs and cats. The overall winner prize went to the guinea pigs, Daisy and Daphne, with Ettie Griffin.

On Wednesday evening, we held our Car Treasure Hunt, extremely well designed by Ann and Shirley – well done ladies! We had 41 cars taking part and the winners were The 3 D's and Hilux Hunters, good job!



On Thursday evening, we had Robbie's Family Bingo. This was another great night, with eyes down and lots of winners. Thank you, Robbie, a great night as always! It was also Robbie's birthday, so we had a wee sing-along and some cake!

On Friday evening, we held our Quiz, which was created by Ann, with help from Andy, Kirsten and Inez. ! It is always so popular and this time the marquee was bursting at the seams! Packed! Well done to everyone who came along - it was great fun and a brilliant night. Hats off to Ann, our Quizmaster!

Congratulations to the adult winning team, "Sunday club on a Friday" - few people will ever forget Laura's acceptance of the winner's trophy! "The Marquee Muppets" came a close second and "Us In't Corner" came third. The winning children's team was the mysteriously named, "Barking For a Fart". It's probably best not to ask...

On Saturday, our Gala Day was here! The weather was perfect and the day was amazing! We had a wonderful array of floats. The colours and the effort that goes into these are incredible. Well done everyone! The winning

float was 'The Greatest Showman' by the DADS group - well done to them!

We had our parade down to the field, where the main acts were the Tanzanian Acrobats, the Dog and Pony Show and the Falconry Days Display; they were all amazing! Some wonderful talents!

Showcasing amazing dancing and music were the Next Level School of Dance, Lynette Turner's Highland Dancers and the Buccleuch and Queensberry Pipe Band.

We also had all our inflatables, climbing wall, slide, meltdown, rodeo bull and bouncy castles, along with archery and pony rides, so there was something for everyone!

The craft tent and our food vendors did wonderfully too. Thank you all for coming along.

As the day drew to a close, it was time to dance the night away to Memphis and let our hair down! It was a fabulous night, with lots of dancing, a few drinks and lots of socialising. A brilliant gala, and a brilliant week!

The raffle was drawn and the winning ticket for £100 cash went to Carrie McFadzean! Thank you to everyone who bought raffle tickets over the week. All the money we make goes towards the 2027 gala.

Thank you to all of the gala committee for their efforts, hard work and support in producing a wonderful week for you all!

Would you like to get involved with the committee, planning and organising the gala, or would you like to be added to our helpers list to help out in Gala Week next year? For us to continue with the gala, we need your help and support, so get in touch if you can help with either.

Thank you to you all for your support. We hope you all had fun!



The Auld Alliance Twinning Visit

David Odd

It all started at Church.

"Hi David, I'm Mary. How do you fancy helping out with the village twinning event?"

Mary went on to explain that "The Auld Alliance" had evolved out of contact between the primary schools at Dunscore and Penpont and L'Ecole Primaire de la Neuville d'Aumont, just south of Beauvais and about 45 miles due north of Paris. I was immediately struck by the age and resilience of the twinning association - over thirty years of contact and still going strong!

Mary went on to suggest that I would be a good candidate to accommodate one Thierry, an experienced early years teacher. After a moment's thought I came to the conclusion that "I can do that" and signed up. Soon, I was in touch with Christine Carson (organiser in chief) and reaching out to Thierry to establish dietary preferences and any red lines in relation to food and drink.

The visit was scheduled to take place between 13th and 18th August and was supported by a detailed programme of events and activities, participation in all of which was optional from the host's perspective. I didn't have to do much preparation - a bit of a tidy up, some basic menu planning and a normal shop, and I was ready. I also sent Thierry some photos of my house and his room.

The joint WhatsApp group kept everyone in touch whilst our visitors travelled and the Cairn Valley Community bus was dispatched to Edinburgh Airport, piloted by the excellent Brian. The arrival at Dunscore Church car park was full of laughter, hugs and good humour. In no time, Thierry and I were sitting down to a late dinner and a cold beer. From the very first moment, we got on



famously well. The burden of thinking in a foreign language fell mainly on Thierry, his English being markedly better than my French.

The programme of events was an eye opener and turned out to be unexpectedly rewarding for me. Visits to Stirling Castle, Bannockburn and Dunblane Cathedral (accomplished via the use of a very comfortable Houston's coach) were followed by a day out at NITHRAID and, the following day, more trips to Sanquhar Tollbooth and the mining museum at Leadhills. I had been to none of these places previously and thoroughly enjoyed learning about my own country's history.



I've saved the best to last. My two highlights were the visit to Nate's Forge in Thornhill and the ceilidh night at Tynron village hall. Nate and his colleague spent time with our group, showing off their brand new (French manufactured) induction forge and his somewhat older (1907) power hammer. Nate was an engaging and passionate speaker about his work - truly inspirational. He created a lifetime memory for me.

The ceilidh night was truly fabulous. The food was excellent, with thanks due to everyone who cooked for the night. Christine's spanakopita hit the mark for me. And the three-piece band, Bogle Mufty, helped the evening go with a swing. Jean-Pierre's address to the masses and his dance with Christine created abiding memories, but the standout feature of the evening was the can-can infused version of Auld Lang Syne provided by the band and the community's joint effort to do it justice. The noisy feeling of goodwill this created was palpable.

I'm a relative newcomer to this area, only two years in Wallace-ton. Taking part in the twinning visit has offered me the otherwise unlikely opportunity to get to know my neighbours better. I can't name them all, but Mary, Robert, Gail, Fabrice, Christine, Michael and the redoubtable William count as acquaintances well met.

Thanks to everyone who contributed, it has been a very worthwhile experience for me and I hope to take part in the future.

To find out more about our local events or about getting involved with our next trip to France, please contact Christine Carson at c.carson@hotmail.co.uk.

Speddoch Hall

Jane Lenza

Here's a little update on events held at the hall during the summer.

Afternoon teas in May and July were a mega success with the hall full on both occasions. It is great to see so many people gathered together and a super opportunity for folks to catch up for a natter with friends and family.

Both these teas helped raise funds for charity. In May, we raised the sum of £400 for the local Chest, Heart and Stroke Group. July teas raised £350 for the Dumfries & Galloway Blood Bikes.



Jane donating the cheque to D&G Blood Bikes at the gala

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who came along and supported the above, it's very much appreciated.

Our final afternoon tea of the year will be on Sunday 13th September. Time 2pm to 4pm. 50% of the proceeds will be going to the Nith Inshore Rescue, another great local cause.

Another date for your diary - Sunday 22nd November for our Soup & Pudding. Times will be posted in the Dunscore Diaries nearer the time. As always, we will be

delighted to welcome everyone, so please do pop along for a little social get together.

The hall is available for hire throughout the year for any event, be it a special birthday, just a party and of course children's parties.

For further details/info etc please contact Jane Lenza on 07879 604513.

Eco Resin Art Class
Hosted by Dunscore Art Collective

Saturday, September 12th
10 AM - 3:00 PM
Glenriddel Hall
Dunscore DG2 0TA

Join us for a day of making art using Eco Resins. Create beautiful, useful objects that you can take away with you.

All materials supplied
Bring your own lunch
Tea & Coffee included
Adults Only

£20

Book your spot at
www.trybooking.com/uk/GWOT

Flying Pig

Ann Walton

The pub continues to tick along with the help of a steady group of volunteers who do their bit to keep it all going.

Over the summer, the outside of the pub has been painted but, possibly more importantly, the leaking flat roof that was causing so many problems in the Ladies toilet has been replaced and the ceiling washed in preparation for it getting a fresh coat of paint. Joe has promised to do it but I'm sure that he wouldn't object if anyone volunteers to do the job for him. If you've a couple of hours to spare and fancy helping out, then please get in touch.

Other than that, there are no anticipated changes to the regular events at the pub and we look forward to seeing you at the quiz, games night or just for a drink on a Thursday night or Sunday afternoon.

Gentle Movement

Gloria Burke

Glenriddell Hall Tuesdays 1:30 - 2:30pm

First of all, we want to thank Evan Trayner for getting us all healthier and making best of the muscles we can use. Evan and Zoe have gone to Australia and we want to wish them all the best ... and just remind them both we want them back, lol!

In the interim, we are carrying on with our Gentle Movement every Tuesday in the Glenriddell Hall. We are all working together to keep up on our exercises and well-being.

Of course, at the end we have a cup of tea, latte or cappuccino or decaf, and occasionally something sweet.



Cairn Chorus

Cath Ingham

Cairn Chorus is a community performance choir based in Moniaive. Founded in 2007, it encourages the joy of singing as an inclusive community activity.

Each year our Musical director, Kate Howard, leads us through fantastic repertoires and ambitious new challenges. Choir members hail from all parts of D&G and learn songs by ear/or sheet music.

Our next term starts on August 30th with an all-day session, with a shared lunch, in the Institute in Moniaive to see what Kate has chosen for us this term. We meet every Thursday during term times at 19:30 - 21:30 at the

Glencairn Memorial Institute in Moniaive. We will be performing four concerts around Christmas time: December 17th and January 2nd.

All are welcome to join and there will be a link to book on the website cairnchorus.com to sign up for a ticket. Take a look at the website and you can see what we have been up to over the years. It's great fun!

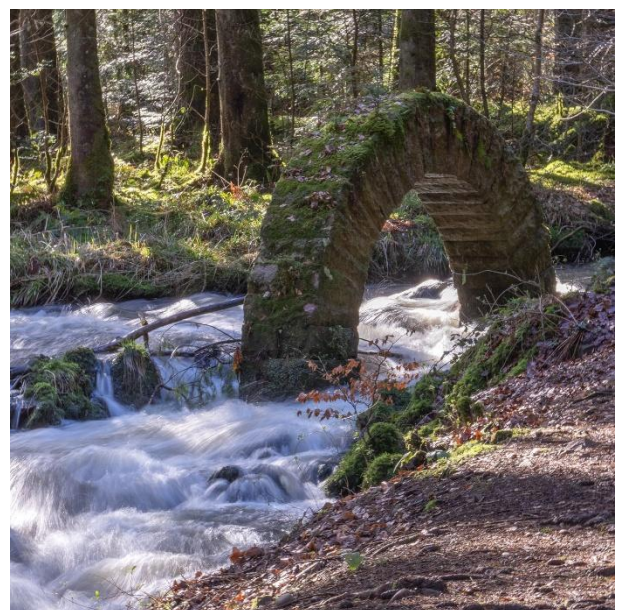
Walking

Eunice Laidlaw

The Friday Walkers continue to meet every Friday afternoon—one week at the Thornhill Community Centre car park and the next at a pre-arranged location. Last week we met in the main car park at Drumlanrig Castle and, although it was still quite hot, much of the walk was shaded by mature trees.

Leaving the car park, we headed towards Druids Loch, where the water lilies were in full bloom. We followed the path around the loch before joining the Red Road leading to the Marr Burn. After crossing the road, we went over a wooden bridge and continued to a right-angled junction, where we turned left and made our way back towards the castle.

We then took the narrow path beside the Marr Burn, giving the dogs a chance to enjoy the clean, clear water. Crossing the main path once again, we continued with the burn on our left until we reached Andy Goldsworthy's Leaping Arch.



From there, the path continued with the Marr Burn on the left until we arrived at the Duchess's View, which offered a wonderful perspective of Drumlanrig Castle and was well worth pausing to enjoy.

As the path descends, you can read the interpretation board explaining the location of a planned cascade.



At the bottom of the hill, visitors with garden tickets can cross the bridge and enter through the Rock Garden. If you have not purchased a ticket, continue over the small bridge, passing the hydro system on your right. At the next wooden bridge, cross over, bear right and then left, and follow the path uphill to the Larchwood car park before returning to the main car park.

This enjoyable walk takes approximately one to one and a half hours, depending on the number of stops along the way.

Craft and Chat

Gloria Burke

We are on a summer break at the moment as it's holiday season; however, we are also beavering away on our Remembrance Day church Poppy Waterfall in the background.

We will need approximately 30ft of netting and a lot of poppies as it's going on the buttress of the church and will be seen from all angles.

If anyone would like to help us then all volunteers are welcome. All supplies will be given to you so if you fancy getting involved just inbox me or come along to the Flying Pig on Tuesdays from 8th Sept 6:00pm - 7:00pm.

Once we have finished making the poppies we will move to the Glenriddell Hall to put it together. This is a bigger job, as you can imagine; however, we have hot and cold drinks, baking and biscuits from time to time, and most of all we have a lot of laughs and put the world to rights.

DADS

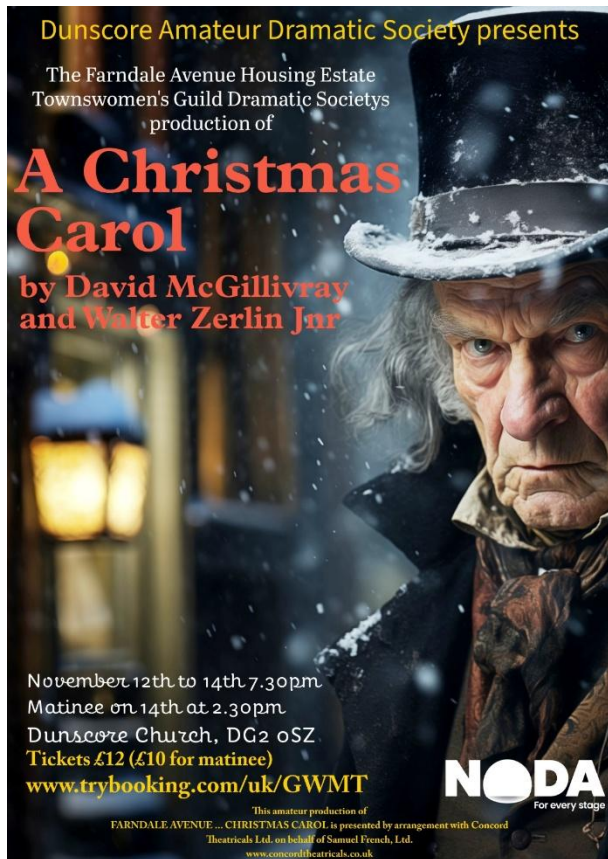
Gail Renaud

DADS took on their first gala float this year. What started as a daunting 35 feet of bare metal was quickly transformed, thanks to Jen's float-building expertise, Inez's artistic vision, and the contents of Richard's tool bag. With plenty of eager hands jumping in, pallets and planks were strapped into place and decorated to bring the big top to life!



The Gala Day excitement kicked off as the tractor and trailer made their precarious descent from Hillhead Farm, banners holding strong against the breeze. Over in the church car park, the spectacle came alive as the fabulous cast of the Greatest Showman assembled—featuring the bearded lady, albino twins, a strongman, gymnast, tall man, and even a lion with its tamer! Powered by a brand-new sound system courtesy of the community council grant, hits from the show accompanied the parade, which was led by Greatest Showman himself, resplendent in a brilliant red coat and top hat.

Everyone agreed the hard work had paid off when the float was awarded first prize! Congrats, too, to all the other float builders - the effort that goes into putting these together is quite substantial and they all looked great on the day. Ideas are already 'floating around' for next year, so watch this space!



DADS' next performance will be another outing for the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society. Following our previous success with the Farndale Avenue Macbeth, we will this time be tackling A Christmas Carol, with all its associated character development, Christmas spirit(s) and humbuggery. Many things are bound to go wrong - it will be up to you to decide what is intentional!

See you in Dunscore Church on 12-14th November. Tickets will be on sale soon in the pub and from this link: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GWMT>.

Moniaive Horse Show Eunice Laidlaw

The annual Moniaive Horse Show took place on Sunday 26th July and, despite a few light showers, the weather stayed comfortable and the turnout remained strong. The rain certainly didn't dampen spirits, and competitors and spectators alike enjoyed a lively and successful day.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Wilson family of Marwhirn for kindly providing the fields for the show. Their continued support is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

The committee and helpers once again delivered an outstanding effort, both in preparing the grounds and in packing everything away on the Monday. Special thanks go to **Geordie, James, Rob, Steven and Keven**, whose hard work made the whole process run smoothly.



Our sponsors continue to play a vital role in keeping the show running, especially as costs rise each year. We are grateful to **Moniaive Community Council** for awarding us windfarm funding, which provides essential support.

We also thank the **Dunscore Gala Committee** for supplying and erecting the marquee, **KPT of Penpont** for keeping everyone well fed with filled rolls, and **Arabella's Ice Cream**, which proved extremely popular throughout the day. **Knockenhair Hospitality** provided



excellent lunches for judges and stewards, which were much enjoyed.

This year proceeds from the tombola and the “Name the Horse and Dog” competitions will be donated to [Horses4Help](#) in Wigtown. There are still squares to be filled, so the final total is yet to be confirmed. Horses4Help attended with a stand and spent a busy day chatting with visitors about their work.

Finally, we thank all competitors for their continued support. We hope everyone had an enjoyable day and left with good memories.

All in all, it was a very successful show.

Cairn Valley Community Transport

Ann Walton

We have undergone some recent changes at CVCT that people need to be aware of. As you will probably know, we have been struggling for some time to keep the numerous different aspects of our service running efficiently. Our main problems have been the inevitable aging of many of our drivers and the desire of people who have served us well for many years to step back to take a well-deserved break from their responsibilities.

We’ve welcomed a few new drivers in the past year but the retirement of two of our most reliable drivers, Stephen and Dean, has meant that we’re still short of people to cover all of our journeys. One of the knock-on effects of the shortage is that we’re currently unable to offer longer excursions. We took a policy decision a while ago that it was unfair for us to expect volunteer drivers to undertake trips to places that are more than a two-hour drive away, and that anything longer would require a second driver. As we’re often struggling to allocate one driver to a trip, we’ve been unable to offer a few excursions that we’ve had in mind in recent months.



Jen Dobson

All of this takes up a great deal of time and effort behind the scenes. Alan James who has been taking bookings for the bus and allocating drivers has been trying to step down for years and, despite our best efforts, we have been unable to find someone to volunteer to replace him. This is a vital part of the service, and we would be unable to continue

without this work being done. After much discussion, we have decided to employ the services of Jen Dobson who has agreed to take on Alan’s role for a trial period. She has also agreed to take on Kirsten’s role taking passenger bookings for excursions. To make things simpler, we now have a single phone number for all bookings, 07469616365. Jen can be contacted on this number by phone, text or WhatsApp. Please note that she has other responsibilities and may not be available at all times. Please text or leave a voice note if she doesn’t respond immediately. We have also set up a dedicated email address for Jen if you prefer to communicate that way – cvctbookings@gmail.com

We would like to thank Alan, Stephen and Dean for their many years of service and are delighted to keep them all as committee members for the foreseeable future. We are still looking for someone to replace Stephen as the chair of the organisation and would welcome any offers from people wanting to get involved in any way, either as an ordinary committee member (we meet every two months), as a driver or in any other way that you think you can help.

On a more positive note, our winter schedule is now being advertised, and Jen is now taking bookings for all the excursions. One or two of the trips are nearly fully booked so get in touch early if you want to ensure a place!



CAIRN VALLEY COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

EXCURSIONS

Autumn/Winter 2026

FRIDAY 25 SEPT	ALLOWAY/BURNS BIRTHPLACE Depart: 9am Fare: £8 Admission: £12 (Conc £9.50). NTS members free.
FRIDAY 16 OCT	PEEBLES/KAILZIE ESTATE GARDENS Depart: 9am Fare: £11 Admission: £8.50 (Conc £7.50).
FRIDAY 6 NOV	WIGTOWN BOOK TOWN/NEWTON STEWART Depart: 9am Fare: £8
FRIDAY 4 DEC	HOUGHTON HALL/GRETN A GREEN OUTLET Depart: 9am Fare: £8

TO BOOK: Phone 07469616365 Email: cvctbookings@gmail.com
Children under 9 go free, 9-17 half price.
Leave times are from the cross, Moniaive. Stopping at Dunscore 15 minutes later.
Other pick-up points can be arranged if practicable and depending on route.

THE MONIAIVE TO CASTLE DOUGLAS SERVICE will run on:
20 August, 3, 17 September, 1, 15, 29 October, 12, 26 November, 10 December
For prices and pick-up times see www.cvct.org.uk

Animals and Nature

FRED

Iraina McGroarty



The summer has whizzed past this year. Long, unbearably hot days that have made us ache for the cooler days of autumn. Here at FRED we have witnessed a beautiful parenting experience, we have said goodbye to a FRED stalwart and we have opened our hearts to four new donkeys.

We have three Crollwitzer turkeys, Chase, Lucy and Moana. In early summer the girls were regularly laying eggs and once they had enough eggs, they became broody. They shared the egg sitting and all the sacrifices the incubation period brought. But, at some point, one of our hens managed to shove her egg under the turkey ladies because after 21 days our proud turkey mums hatched out a hen chick! The turkeys did not care that their pride and joy was not a turkey and the baby chick basked in the love and devotion of two fierce, proud and devoted mums. Chase, the 'step' dad, was equally besotted and just as protective. It has been lovely to watch this strange little family with their curious dynamics succeed in raising a hen. Mind you, we are finding it really difficult keeping the mums and baby off the road. For some reason, they seem determined to cross to the other side. So please go carefully on the Morrinton road - we would be devastated if anything happened to the girls.

In late July, we took the decision to have Frankie put to sleep. Frankie was a great donkey who had spent nearly 25 years with us. He was gentle, safe and a very good

partner to Daphne. Physically, Frankie was in good shape for a donkey of his age, but he had dementia. Yes, donkeys, dogs and dolphins are all susceptible to dementia. For us, it was challenging caring for Frankie. We had adored him through the years and appreciated his kind and loving nature. But dementia eroded so much of him and it was heartbreaking to see Frankie confused and lost in his own home. His death was very peaceful and his friends spent as long as they needed with his body. Young Patsy was initially spooked because she had never experienced the death of another donkey, but current thinking still supports the practice of letting animals choose whether they want to spend time with the body of their deceased friends. Daphne has accepted Frankie's passing with stoicism and spends her days with Noddy, Patsy and Lizzie.

But in life, when one door shuts another opens and so it was with FRED. We said goodbye to Frankie but hello to four new donkeys, in two pairs. The first pair were Elvis and Bella from the Stewartry. Bella is a very beautiful girl with such a feminine face. Her partner is Elvis who could be described as a cheeky chappie! These guys have integrated with our donkeys like long lost friends. Their acceptance into the herd has been swift and complete. The girl donkeys love Bella, and Elvis plays rough and tumble with the boys. Their last-but-one owners visit Elvis and Bella every few weeks and the donkeys remember Nicola and Lee and are clearly pleased to see them.



The other two newcomers are Donna and Blossom, who are big donkeys in both height and girth. Donna and Blossom came from Borgue, where they were loved and

cared for until old age and Parkinson's meant their owner had to relinquish them. Our initial jobs are getting the donkeys to lose some weight and to gain their trust before we can introduce them to the wider herd of donkeys. At their present more-than-ample weight, both girls are at serious risk of laminitis. Donna is a very majestic donkey of many colours, whilst Blossom is pure white. Some people think a white donkey brings good luck; we now have two white donkeys (Noddy and Blossom) so here's hoping we get a double dose of luck!

We also welcomed big Eddie the horse. He belongs to one of the boys who comes for animal assisted therapy. This talented boy also brought Alice, his tractor, to FRED after he spent a winter fixing her. She is a 1939 Aliis Chalmers and, although truly terrifying to drive, she is an amazing piece of mechanical history.

Finally, please keep your eyes peeled for one female Horsfield tortoise who has been missing for several weeks. Maud has made several bids for freedom but this one has been her most successful so far.



Dunscore Birders

Colin Mitchell

This is a quiet time of year for bird watching as most birds have nested and the young have flown. Also, many birds moult their feathers and start to grow in new ones.

However, the bird group walked around Castle Loch at Lochmaben on a very hot day in July. We saw 27 species of bird including sedge warbler, reed bunting, blackcap, tree creeper and swift.



Our next outing is on Monday 14th September. New members are very welcome.

SWIFTS IN THE TOWER – an update

The swift callers that send out swift calls are attracting lots of swifts. Up to 20 swifts have been seen circling the church tower and giving their screaming calls. We hope that some come back next spring, take up residence and breed.

Wood Wasps

Gail Renaud

Back in May, my kitchen windowsill was once again a source of inspiration for an investigation into the life of an insect and a surprising discovery. This time, the intruder was a giant wood wasp and my idle Googling revealed that this humble insect and its relatives have been the source of some extraordinary technical innovations, including medical devices and even space exploration technology.



If you are unfamiliar with the wood wasp, as I was, it is about two inches long, striped like a wasp and the has a fearsome-looking black rod sticking out of its rear, making it quite an intimidating beast at first sight. A bit of research revealed that, although it belongs to the same order of insects as other wasps (Hymenoptera,

from the Greek meaning "membrane-winged"), the giant wood wasp, or giant horntail, belongs to the family of sawflies and wood wasps and is quite harmless. The intimidating organ at the back is not a stinger, but an ovipositor, which the female uses to 'drill' into wood and deposit her eggs. It is the remarkable mechanism of this ovipositor that piqued the interest of engineers working in the fields of bioinspiration and biomimetics.

Engineers have long known that the natural world contains many examples of ingenious designs and have sought to copy them, a process known as biomimicry. Examples include burdock burrs as the inspiration for Velcro, termite mounds as models for the passive cooling of buildings, and the shape of the kingfisher's beak which gave rise to the Shinkansen bullet train.



The giant wood wasp and other wood-boring sawflies are of interest to engineers because the drilling mechanism used by the ovipositor works with a reciprocating, back-and-forth action, rather than the rotational mechanism of a conventional drill. The ovipositor consists of three parts surrounding the egg canal: an upper 'lance', which is attached to the abdomen of the wasp, and two lower 'lancets', which are free to move backwards and forwards. Each section has teeth along its edge that act like saw blades. The movements are controlled by the wood wasp's abdominal muscles.

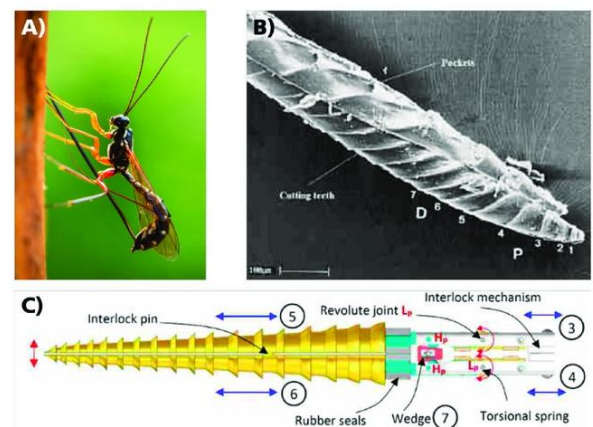
One lancet moves forwards into the wood while the other lancet and the lance hold it steady. The first lancet then moves back, and as it does so, it pushes the other two sections further into the wood. The second lancet then moves forwards and the process repeats, gradually cutting a pocket into the wood. At the same time, teeth inside the egg canal ratchet the egg along the ovipositor into position. The sawdust generated during drilling is pushed into spaces between the teeth and into a groove on the top of the lance, from where it

can be ejected. Some sawflies even appear to jiggle up and down while sawing, and it has been suggested that this movement helps to clear sawdust from the ovipositor.

The main advantage of this type of drilling mechanism is that it allows objects to penetrate a material without the external forces that would be needed for conventional rotary drilling. This is especially useful in space, where payload weight is limited and drills need to operate in low-gravity environments. Efficient drills based on the wood-wasp ovipositor have been developed for use on planetary rovers, where they can be combined with sampling mechanisms to collect relatively soft rock.

The interlocking sections of the ovipositor also allow steering mechanisms to be incorporated. This steering capability, combined with the reduced impact on tissue associated with reciprocating drilling, makes this technology potentially useful in medical applications. These include drills with interlocking parts for creating cavities in bone for hip prostheses, as well as endoscopic devices with multiple elements that can be moved around inside the large intestine.

The insect that startled me in the kitchen turned out not to be a dangerous giant wasp at all, but a sawfly carrying one of nature's most ingenious engineering tools. The same mechanism that allows it to drill deep into wood without buckling has inspired engineers to develop surgical probes, drills that don't rotate, and even technologies that may one day help explore the Moon and Mars.



Wood wasp reciprocating drill, (A) Photograph of a wood wasp, (B) magnified view of its ovipositor consisting of two serrated valves, Reproduced from King and Vincent (1995), with permission from the authors, (C) schematic picture of a micro drill for aerospace applications. Reproduced under CC-BY-4.0, Pitcher et al. (2022)

Moniaive Initiative

Moniaive Initiative

Kate MacPhee, Chair

What is Moniaive Initiative?

Moniaive Initiative is a Development Trust delivering legacy projects for Moniaive and the surrounding parish of Glencairn in partnership with the community and community groups. The trust is administered by a Board of Trustees, employs three members of staff and has 40 active volunteers. Our aims are to advance sustainable community development, to relieve rural disadvantage, and to encourage wider participation in community life. We currently operate a successful Charity shop and Hub, an accessible, affordable house, a Repair Café and a community garden, and we provide Health & Wellbeing activities to benefit a wide cross-section of our community.

Every five years we consult with the community to ascertain what their priorities are and from this we create our Action Plan. This is what guides us in our activities for the following five years. We are about to start consultation for our next Action Plan for the years 2027 to 2032.

We work closely with other community organisations such as the Glencairn Community Council. We have supported the work of the Glencairn Land & Woods Trust since 2021, helping to prepare their organisation to manage land-based activities and events, and to upgrade their governance to eventually enable them to become community landowners. Moniaive is a 'Biosphere Community' as part of the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. We have worked together on several successful events, including the popular Midsummer Gathering, which brings together local residents to learn about and enjoy the local environment.

Moniaive Initiative Activities

The Hive Community Shop: sells local crafts, pre-loved clothes, second-hand books and has an art gallery. One room in The Hive is rented out to a couple of hairdressers. Opening hours: Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10am-2pm.

The Pop Up Shop (in the Old Playcare Building, Chapel Street): sells second-hand furniture, electrical goods, paintings, bric a brac and much more. Opening hours: Sunday midday -3pm.



The Repair Café: First Saturday of the month 10am-1pm in Glencairn Memorial Institute. Volunteers offer their skills for free to repair broken items. Refreshments available.

Table Tennis: Every Wednesday in Glencairn Memorial Institute, 9.30am-10.30am - £2 per person. Free refreshments.

Digital Buddies: drop-in sessions to get you online and help you stay safe on the internet. The Hive 10-11.30am every Thursday.

The Community Garden (in the car park): Weekly gardening and social get-togethers. We have a community composter. Activities advertised on social media.

Moniaive Community Café: Last Saturday of every month, 12-2pm, in St Ninians Church.

Telephone Box: recently acquired by the community and undergoing restoration by volunteers. Its use will be decided following community consultation.

Contact

Website: www.moniaiveinitiative.org.uk

Email: moniaiveinitiative@gmail.com

Phone: 01848 200138

Address: The Hive, AMD House, High Street, Moniaive, Thornhill, DG3 4HN

Grants for Young People

The Hollywood Trust

Ann Walton

The information in this article has been gathered from the website of the Hollywood Trust. For more information about their work and how to apply for grants, go to <https://www.hollywood-trust.org.uk/>. Please note that their application process is currently closed but is due to reopen in September.

The Hollywood Trust offers grants to individual young people, groups of young people and organisations who support young people. For information about how they support groups and organisations, take a look at their website.

History of The Hollywood Trust

The Hollywood Trust is a charitable grant-giving organisation which takes its name from the Parish of Hollywood on the outskirts of Dumfries. It was founded in 1979 and endowed by Sir John Keswick of Portrack and his daughter, Maggie Keswick Jencks.



Sir John Keswick was Chairman of Jardine Matheson Limited from 1952 to 1956, and he and his family spent much of their life between China and Portrack. Sir John and Maggie also established a charitable organisation in Hong Kong, known as The Keswick Foundation.

The Hollywood Trust became operational in 1981 with the aim of supporting young people throughout Dumfries and Galloway. Following the death of her father in 1982, Maggie Keswick Jencks continued her father's commitment to the Trust, and its work supporting local young people.

Maggie sadly died in 1995 of cancer. However, she brought inspiration to many and her legacy lives on, particularly through the [Maggie Cancer Caring Centres](#) which she founded with her husband, Charles Jencks, and the wonderful [Garden of Cosmic Speculation](#) she designed with Charles at Portrack.

What is an individual young persons grant?

You can apply to The Hollywood Trust for a grant if you are a young person normally resident in Dumfries and Galloway and require financial support to move your life forward in some way.

Our priority age range is young people aged 15 – 25 years old. However, occasionally The Hollywood Trust will consider applications from young people aged 12-14 years if the young person is disadvantaged or especially talented/skilled in a specific area such as sports or the arts. The Hollywood Trust does not normally accept applications from children under 12 years old, however if you feel you have an exceptional case, please contact The Hollywood Trust to discuss at funds@hollywood-trust.org.uk.

What can the grants fund?

Some examples of the support provided to Individual Young People include:

- To support young people who are in difficulties because of exceptional circumstances (i.e. homelessness, substance misuse, health issues, disabilities, criminal justice, financial hardship etc.)
- To purchase household items for a young person leaving care.
- To contribute towards training, skills development, and higher education opportunities (excluding additional or post-graduate degrees).
- To support young people who find it difficult to participate in clubs and activities due to financial hardship.
- To participate in a particular activity (i.e. sports and performing arts at regional, national or international level).
- To purchase musical instruments or sporting equipment.

This list is by no means exhaustive. If you are in any doubt, please [contact The Hollywood Trust](#), and we will be pleased to speak with you.