



## Church of Scotland Parish of Central Cowal



*Working together as a Family of God to fulfil His purpose here in this place.*



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### Area Profile Central Cowal

#### A warm Argyll welcome to Central Cowal Argyll



Dunoon is a pleasant and friendly seaside resort, located on the southern end of the Cowal Peninsula in Argyll on the banks of the Firth of Clyde. The town has a population of around 10000 people including the adjoining villages of Kirn, Innellan and Sandbank.

Dunoon not only prides itself in being the “Gateway to the Western Highlands” but also is now recognised as the maritime gateway to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. The town is surrounded by some of the most natural stunning scenery Scotland has to offer.

The scenic beauty of the Cowal peninsula is complimented by a nearby busy and expanding marina, 3 golf courses, and several bowling clubs including an indoor club, a tennis club and all the usual rural indoor clubs. The area is also well renowned for outdoor sports such as mountain biking, hill walking, sailing and fishing (both fresh and sea water)

Dunoon is widely known as the home of the world famous Cowal Highland Gathering – the largest and most spectacular Highland Games in the world and is the keynote event in the highland games calendar attracting over 20,000 into the area from all over the UK and the world!



This takes place on the last Thursday, Friday and Saturday in August with over 1000 pipers and drummers competing and the World Highland Dance Championships being held.

#### **The Local Economy**

Cowal is in a rural economy with forestry and land management, local government services, Education, Social Work, Roads, being major employers as well as a number of residential homes for the elderly in which many locals are employed. There is private sector employment in Local Service industries as well as a Call Centre.

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## **Local shops and amenities**

The town is served by two large supermarkets, two petrol stations, DIY outlets and garden centres. Dunoon town centre has a busy main street (Argyll Street), with shops selling fancy goods, fresh produce, clothing, hardware etc. A small two screen cinema shows the latest releases; the Queens Hall is the venue for various concerts, shows and exhibitions. The Riverside swimming pool and sports complex has a 25 metre pool, a modern fully equipped gymnasium and health suite and offers tuition to adults and children.

## **Education**

The area has a modern state of the art Grammar School constructed and finished in August last year. The school is very well equipped with educational, technical, arts and sporting facilities. The school serves the secondary needs of the entire Cowal Peninsula and has a roll of about 1000 pupils. The school has a very good academic record.



<http://www.argyllbute.gov.uk/pdf/filesstore/schoolreportspdf/hmiefollowthrudunoongr?a=0>



The three Primary Schools in the Central Cowal Parish are Dunoon Primary with a roll of 250 pupils, Kirn Primary with 161 and Sandbank Primary with 125. Sandbank also has a Gaelic medium unit with 34 pupils. All three schools have pre 5 school provision. Below are the internet links to the HMIE reports for the primary schools.

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/pdf/filesstore/schoolreportspdf/hmiereportkirn?a=0>

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/pdf/filesstore/schoolreportspdf/hmiedunoonps?a=0>

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/pdf/filesstore/schoolreportspdf/abftsandbank08?a=0>

## **Transport Links**

The drive to Glasgow by road via the famous Rest and be Thankful and thereafter along the banks of Loch Lomond takes about 90 minutes.

There are also two modern reliable ferry services to Gourock – Caledonian MacBrayne who operate from the main Dunoon pier and Western Ferries who operate from a terminal two miles north of Dunoon pier at Hunters Quay. Between these two operators there is a service to the “mainland” every twenty minutes and Glasgow can be reached within the hour. In fact it is often said that by using the ferry a Dunoon person can be in the centre of Glasgow in a shorter time than a resident of East Kilbride!



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## **Health Care**

The town has a GP led Community Hospital under the control of Highland Health Board. The hospital has 2 wards, a midwife led maternity Unit, and houses the Cowal Hospice, a total of about 40 beds. . The GP out-of-hours service is operated from the Accident and Emergency Unit, newly constructed as part of a £3m refurbishment .



There are three General Practitioner Surgeries in the town, two at Argyll Street and one at Church Street.

## Section 2

### Aspects of Common Ministry

#### Tenure

This position will be to build a team ministry commencing in Kirn Parish

St. John's and Sandbank, currently an unrestricted charge, will, on the retirement of the current minister, join with the parish of Kirn to form an unrestricted linked charge to be named The Parish of Central Cowal.

#### Deacon

We are blessed to have the services of a very capable Deacon who has begun the process of linking the three Congregations through joint services and activities. These include a Christingle event at Christmas, together with trips, barbeques and at the same time giving considerable support to the youth movements in the churches. This year there was a successful barbecue, a joint venture among the three churches, further cementing our relationships.

#### The Manse

The charge has a modern well equipped manse built by a renowned local builder. Centrally located in the Parish of Central Cowal, it was built in 2003 and has two public rooms, a study, four bedrooms and is fully equipped with all white goods. There is gas central heating and double glazing throughout.



#### Church Minibuses



The charge has two mini buses which provide an invaluable mode of transport for those members of the Congregations who are less mobile. They are also used to transport our Sunday schools on their outings and other events. This service is provided by a very willing group of volunteers.

The minibuses are available as an asset to the local community.

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## **Church and Parish Profile Kirn**

### **The Parish**



Our Parish is compact with a mix of private and social housing. We have three residential homes, three Sheltered Housing Complexes and two supported accommodation facilities within our boundaries. We also attract visitors from Hunter's Quay Holiday Park which is a very popular tourist destination within the Northern end of our Parish.

### **The Church**

The Church is a McGregor Chalmers designed building of dressed freestone from Corrie in Arran. We are justifiably proud of our beautiful sanctuary which, in itself, is an inspiration to the Congregation.



There is one primary school and the newly built secondary, Dunoon Grammar School which has one thousand pupils, within the parish. We currently hold the chaplaincy for Kirn Primary and our Minister will be part of the Fraternal who support the Assemblies at Dunoon Grammar. Dunoon Hospital with its associated Hospice is also within our boundaries.

### **The Congregation**

We maintain an enthusiastic, happy and proactive congregation of three hundred and sixty members. There are thirty Elders on the Kirk Session and they are joined by another seventeen members of the Congregation on the Congregational Board. Meetings are convened on alternate months.

### **Church Services**

We hold Morning Worship each week at 10-30am with a Family Service on the last Sunday of each month. The children of the Sunday school attend for the first part of the Service before leaving to complete their own programme of work after the children's address.



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Members of the Congregation participate in Worship with Bible readings. We use Mission Praise supplemented by CH3. All Acts of Worship are enhanced by an enthusiastic choir capably led by our organist. We also have the services of two other organists when required.

We celebrate two formal Communion each year with a further two acts of worship with the Sacrament on Maundy Thursday and at New Year. Kirn Primary School holds its Easter, End of Term and Christmas Assemblies in the Church

### **The Church Centre**

The present building accommodates our own Church Group, ladies group (COG) who meet regularly for fellowship.

Many other local organisations make use of our spacious facilities for their activities. These include a thriving Toddlers' Group, a Keep Fit class, the local Music Club, a Drama workshop for young people, Kirn Brownies, Dance classes, a newly formed Pipe Band and on occasion private birthday parties for children are held there.

Each Wednesday lunches are served by a very dedicated band of workers from the Congregation. This provision generates considerable funds for the work of the Church. On average sixty five people attend each week and this amenity provides an opportunity for outreach as many who attend are non members.



Planning permission has been lodged for a purpose built Centre which will be part of a residential complex. This will be at no cost to the Congregation.

### **Church Newsletter – The Frontier**

This is a monthly publication and includes a letter from the Minister, relevant rotas, items of interest from members and news of events from other Churches in the area – especially those of St. John's and Sandbank

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## **Community Involvement**

As can be seen from the activities outlined above Kirn Parish Church seeks to become involved in as many aspects of our Community as possible.

We have strong links with our schools – indeed our Deacon helps to deliver the Personal and Social Education programme in Dunoon Grammar. We work with the Residential homes in the Parish and regularly visit The Church of Scotland Eventide Home, Inverreck.



At all times we endeavour to involve non members in all our activities. On Friday mornings the Church Crypt becomes a venue for morning coffee and tea. This provides the opportunity for an informal chat with the Minister. We run a Fairtrade stall and regularly contribute to the Raven Trust which sends containers of much needed essentials to Malawi.

Kirn Parish Church is home to a warm, welcoming and adaptable congregational family who await the appointment of their new Minister with prayerful anticipation.

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## **Church and Parish Profile St John's**

### **The Parish**

The parish is relatively compact, composed mainly of private housing with one large and one small area of social housing with many of these houses being in private ownership.



The parish joins with that of Kim on the one side and South East Cowal on the other. It operates within the Presbytery of Argyll and contains a fair spread of denominations including Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist, Free Church, Apostolic and two other Church of Scotland charges.

The parish also contains the main primary school [the chaplaincy currently rests with St. John's] the local library and the majority of retail and public buildings and offices.

### **The Church Building**

The Church, imposingly situated in the centre of town is probably the first physical feature of Dunoon to be seen when approaching on the ferry. Erected in 1877 and recognised as a leading example of the architect Robert Bryden's work the church and its magnificent interior are Grade 'A' listed by Historic Scotland under whose auspices a major restoration is being carried out.



A magnificent three manual pipe organ is situated behind the pulpit in a raised choir loft.

The building is open to the public in the summer months.

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## **The Congregation**

The membership of the church is approximately 240. This is supported by an active and loyal group of elders, deacons and office bearers who oversee an active Sunday school, a Coffee Club for older children, the very active Guild who are joined by members of Kirn Parish, Choir practices and other events.

## **Church Services**

The format of worship is traditional Church of Scotland. At present there is one service held on Sundays at 10:15 am with an evening service held monthly at 6:30 pm on the last Sunday of the month.



Sunday school is held in the adjacent church hall each Sunday during term time, the children join the main congregation for the children's talk and hymn. Holy Communion is celebrated in March, June and November during the morning service, together with a short Communion service held at 5:45pm immediately before a Thanksgiving service.



Maundy Thursday is also celebrated with a Communion service. At least once per year the Elders conduct morning worship. The youth group, known as the Cosy Coffee Club meets twice monthly – again during term time – at 7pm and is joined by youngsters from Kirn Church and Sandbank church. A large group of children are taken by minibus to Crossover at West Linton each year and benefit greatly from this enjoyable event.

The Kirk Session and the Deacon's Court meet on alternate months throughout the year, special meetings being called as requested.

## **Community Involvement**

St. John's Church is part of the open church scheme and attracts many visitors during the summer months, opening Monday to Friday am, June, July, August & Sept.

Our excellent organist Dr. F. Barclay gives an annual series of concerts in September and this brings notable musicians and choirs to these popular events.

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The church hall is used by a considerable number of local groups throughout the year. Their donations also make welcome additions to the church funds!  
In addition to the hall being used by community groups, which include the Cowal Choral Club and the Archaeological Society, our minibus is available to other church groups and also to supervised youth groups in the area.



On Cowal Games Saturday a faithful band of volunteers man a food stall in the grounds helping to feed the thousands who attend "The Games". The money raised is utilised for the good of the fabric of the church.

For many years St. John's has provided the pastor to the main Dunoon Primary School. Apart from usual end of term services this also brings a tremendous Christmas service with the excellent school choir leading the praise.

### **St. John's**

Comprises a vibrant congregation offering genuine warmth, sincerity and deep spiritual understanding who are looking forward to being part of the charge of Central Cowal under the guidance of a minister who can rise to the challenge and "feed My people" in this beautiful part of Scotland.

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## Church and Parish Profile Sandbank

### Location

Sandbank is situated on the shores of the Holy Loch approximately 1.5 miles from Dunoon.

Many years ago Sandbank was renowned for its yacht and boatbuilding expertise at one time achieving fame as the builder of the Americas Cup challenger "Sceptre". The connection with boats still remains in the form of an expanding marina complex. Just outside the parish boundary are the renowned Younger Botanic Gardens and the same boundary is common to the National Park.

### The Parish

Sandbank is a typically rural lochside village which was home to an American naval base for over thirty years. On the decommissioning of the base, around 114 homes were upgraded and now form an attractive development in which around 10% of the congregation live. The village itself has over 1000 homes.



### The Church Building

Built in Gothic style, the church was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has a distinctive bell tower over the main entrance. The church hall is situated at the rear of the building. A recent bequest has permitted the installation of new windows and other works to be carried out. The same bequest has also permitted upgrading of the heating system in the church.

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## **The Congregation**

The Electoral Roll stands at 129 and the governing body of office bearers consists of 14 members on the Congregational Board and 10 members of Kirk Session. There is an independence of attitude with the members being very supportive of the financial needs of the church, raising funds through various projects.

## **Church Service**

Our Sunday service takes place at 11:45am and is traditional by nature. Our minds are, however, open to change as is evidenced in the inclusion of the fiddle being played alongside the organ on a regular basis. Office bearers participate in our services of worship. There are three formal communion services with an informal communion at the start of each year. Joint services and activities with the other two congregations in the Parish Linkage have been well supported.



## **Community Involvement**

The Minister and Deacon are involved in the local primary school and our hall is used by Hand Bell Ringers, Sandbank Brownies, the Cowal Fiddle Workshop and other community groups. Our Christmas Lunch is held in the bowling club and this is always well attended and indeed is a great opportunity for fellowship at a special time of year. We do not have a newsletter but instead use the Sandbank Scene which is used by the Community Council and distributed throughout Sandbank's homes. The Minister has a column in the newsletter and this is a real link with the general population on a quarterly basis. Each Christmas we produce Christmas Cards for distribution throughout the village not only wishing the season's greetings but also as an open invitation to everyone to the Christmas Carol Service which always has a "full house". The fiddle workshop members and local youngsters attend this annual service contributing to a really lively event.

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