

# ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH CHALLOCH, NEWTON STEWART,

## DG86RB

*registered charity SC003582*



## PROFILE



*email: [allsaintschalloch@gmail.com](mailto:allsaintschalloch@gmail.com)*

*website: <https://allsaintschalloch.com>*

*Facebook: [All Saints Episcopal Church, Challoch, Newton Stewart](#)*



## ALL SAINTS CHURCH, CHALLOCH, NEWTON STEWART

### INTRODUCTION

All Saints is a Grade A1 listed Victorian church near Newton Stewart. We have a friendly core of members and our outreach stretches across the Machars peninsula and up into south Ayrshire. Before lockdown, as well as our regular Sunday services and mid-week services, we also held a monthly service at Whithorn, seventeen miles away. During normal circumstances when Covid restrictions have been lifted, we meet together informally to enjoy a coffee and chat after our services and our Fellowship Group meets monthly in members' houses. We have recently restarted our 'Second Sunday Sales' where parishioners bring cakes, plants and home made produce to raise funds for the church.



We also collect food for the local Food Bank, and contribute to the Shoe Box Appeal which sends gifts abroad at Christmas to the needy. We make many donations to charities throughout the year, choosing which charity to support then having events and extra collections at services to support them.

We have ecumenical links with local churches, joining them for the annual World Day of Prayer, the

Remembrance Day service in Newton Stewart and an annual service at an ancient church situated in fields near the village of Cruggleton.

All Saints is part of the Galloway Regional Council within the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway. The Lay Representative or Alternate Lay Representative attend the meetings at which all the SEC churches in Galloway come together in friendship and share their news and ideas.

All Saints Church is in the west of the county of Dumfries and Galloway on the A714, twenty seven miles from Stranraer, about twenty miles miles from New Galloway and about three miles off the A75. It is situated approximately two miles north of Newton Stewart on the bus route to Girvan. To find us, click on this link: <http://goo.gl/maps/cY9Ln>

**Satnav:** the postal address is: All Saints Episcopal Church, Challoch, Newton Stewart, DG8 6RB

## CHURCH LIFE

### Worship

Our style of worship is mainly traditional. The Sunday service uses the 1982 (modern language) Scottish Prayer Book although the Scottish Liturgy of 1970 (traditional language) is sometimes used for mid-week services. When not in lockdown, one of our monthly mid-week services uses a form of the 'Celtic' liturgy to celebrate the passing seasons.

We are fortunate in having Pastoral and Eucharistic Assistants and Worship Leaders who assist the Priest. Throughout the long period of having no priest in post, our Worship Leaders have led services of the Reserved Sacrament twice a month.

We encourage the congregation to take part in services. There is a rota for leading the prayers of intercession as well as for reading the Lessons, and a Welcomer greets people as they come to worship.



In order to ensure that a weekly act of worship is available during lockdown, since the beginning of March 2020 we have been posting the Scottish Episcopal Church's online service on our website, sending it to all members of the congregation who have an email address. This has been well received by many and although we are now back in church, albeit with compliance to Covid-prevention guidelines, it is still being posted. Some of our congregation still feel too vulnerable to come physically to church and are shielding at home. We make sure they are not forgotten and the Vestry and others stay in touch with them by phone or careful visiting.

### Vestry

The Vestry meets every two months and at present there are seven members who are appointed at the



Annual General Meeting held in November. Other post-holders are: Eucharistic Assistants, Worship Leaders, Pastoral Assistants, two Sacristans, a Property Convenor, a People's Warden, a Vulnerable Adults Officer and a Flower Arranging team. In the past year we have appointed a Fundraiser and Publicity Officer to help raise awareness of the church and maximise income. Two First Aiders are in training.

## Finance

All Saints depends on the generosity of the congregation through weekly Gift Aid envelopes, Open Plate or standing orders, which are paid monthly, quarterly or annually. The Treasurer manages the finances in consultation with the Vestry, writes up the accounts each week and an independent examiner checks the end of year accounts in August. These are presented to the Vestry and congregation at the annual general meeting.

All Saints is a registered charity (SC003582) and our accounts are submitted each year to the OSCR. Some fund-raising takes place, both for the church funds and local and international charities. We have a stable bank balance and investment holdings.

We provided our previous Priest with a full stipend, which was shared between three charges.

## Congregation

The majority of our congregation is senior in years. Even after the recent easing of lockdown, we have found that the pandemic has reduced attendance since many are in the vulnerable category and are shielding at home. In any event, we very much want to attract younger and more diverse members to church to make it a vibrant part of the community once again. At present, there are seventy-seven on the congregational roll, the majority of whom are over fifty years of age. They live in a wide area around All Saints, from south Ayrshire in the north to near Stranraer in the west, Whithorn and Wigtown to the south and Carslith to the east, although the majority is in and around Newton Stewart.



## The Church Building

Originally a private chapel built by Edward Stopford Blair for his estate at Penninghame, All Saints



was bequeathed to the Diocese in 1885. A complete restoration in 2004 was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is a fine example of a small Victorian church and seats about one hundred.

Since October 2017 the seating area comprises many of the original pews, as well as a set of modern moveable chairs in our new worship area at the back of the church. In addition there is seating for twenty in the original pews in the choir stalls. It has a Harston two manual tracker organ. The church has its own cemetery which holds the graves of some of the Earls of Galloway and registered War Graves, a large car park and exterior toilet. Both the church and the toilet have disabled access. There is a loop system in church for the hard of hearing.

## **Communication**

We produce a monthly newsletter which is emailed to those with an email address and is available in print form for others. Recently, in order to reach out to its congregation, the Vestry telephoned everyone on the congregational roll to check on their wellbeing.

We have a website: <https://allsaintschalloch.com> and a Facebook page and would like to develop our digital presence while not forgetting that many of our congregation find this daunting.

The Vestry was not able to meet physically for some months but now meets regularly on Zoom. Our intention is to develop our digital technology in the church to make us a viable venue for a range of events which can be used by the whole community.

## **Aspirations for the Future**

In 2020, we had intended to become much more involved with the community via the Walking



Festival and the Book Festival to name but two events, but given the pandemic this has not been possible. We hope this is an area we can develop.

We are once again taking part in Doors Open Day on 4th -5th September this year and it remains to be seen whether we can plan a face-to-face event or a mix of digital and physical presence. In 2020, virtual participation only was allowed. This was All Saints'

contribution:

<https://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/places/dumfries-and-galloway/all-saints-challoch-with-st-ninians-fellowship/>

One of the themes this year is Then and Now. It was thought this would suit our purposes very well and that we would try to get photos and anecdotes from people who had been married or had held family events at Challoch and hopefully revive interest in the church as a choice for weddings and baptisms.

We are planning to produce a welcome pack and seek fundraising opportunities for both this and a number of practical priorities relating to maintenance.

## **COMMUNITY LIFE**

### **The Local Community**

There are strong links with the local residential homes and the housebound. Care homes in Newton Stewart and the surrounding area are: Cumloden Manor Nursing Home in Minnigaff, Cornwall Park in Newton Stewart, Fleet Valley Nursing Home in Gatehouse of Fleet, and Merse House in Kirkcudbright. We are very keen to establish other ways of engaging with the local community and would welcome creative input on how to go about this.

## LOCATION

Wigtownshire is the county in the south west corner of Scotland. It comprises three areas: the western part, known as the Rhins, the northern part, known as the Moors and the south east, known as the Machars. These areas cover an area of four hundred and eighty-five square miles of beautiful countryside with coastal scenery, mountains, moors, rivers, lochs and rolling hills as well as a double



peninsula. It is washed by the Gulf Stream which enables sub-tropical plants to grow and the Royal Botanic Gardens of Edinburgh has one of its sites, the Logan Botanic Gardens, in this area. The county town is Wigtown which has become the National Book Town of Scotland and from where the Wigtown Book Festival, an international event, is held annually. The administrative town is Stranraer.

Its boundaries are the Kirkcudbrightshire border in the east to Portpatrick in the west, the Ayrshire border in the north and the Mull of Galloway in the south. Its shores are bounded by the Irish Sea in the south west, the Irish Channel in the west and Luce Bay and Wigtown Bay, which divide the peninsulas. The Isle of Whithorn is the most southerly point of the Machars and is the site of St Ninian's Church, the first establishment of Christianity in Scotland and Northern England.



With such varied countryside it is no wonder that many outdoor activities are possible such as sailing, cycling, golf, walking, fishing, shooting, astronomy, swimming, windsurfing, bird watching. We are fortunate in having several beautiful rivers nearby - the Cree, the Stinchar, the Luce and the Girvan, all of which offer excellent fishing. This area has been inhabited from at least Neolithic times and has many historical monuments. It is also rich in artistic talent and hosts many festivals and events during the year including a walking festival, traditional music festival and Spring Fling, an arts festival. Of course many of these have had to be cancelled during the pandemic but some have developed a virtual presence in response to the challenges they faced.

Stranraer is the largest town followed by Newton Stewart, Wigtown and Whithorn. There are many villages scattered throughout the area. The population is around twenty-seven thousand.

Wigtownshire is largely farming land with a creamery situated at Stranraer that produces the Really Strong Cheese. The area is reliant on tourism, small food businesses and fish processing. The ferries at Cairn Ryan are the largest employers in the area. A large community hospital is based at Stranraer,

which includes an Accident and Emergency unit. The county hospital is at Dumfries, which is about fifty miles from Newton Stewart.

### **Newton Stewart**



The nearest town to All Saints is Newton Stewart, which is a small town in Wigtownshire on the banks of the River Cree and is known as the Gateway to the Galloway Hills. The population is approximately three thousand five hundred. Amenities include a comprehensive school which serves much of Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire, three primary schools, a small GP-run hospital, a modern health centre, a museum and a

cinema. The town has individual shops on the main street and three supermarkets. Tourism is developing, based on outdoor activities. The surrounding area provides for tourists visiting the Galloway Forest Park (including the Dark Sky Park), the Wigtown Bay Nature Reserve and RSPB reserves. There are facilities for golfing, fishing and mountain and off-road cycling, which is becoming very popular. Employment is found in the farming, forestry and fishing industries, fish processing, a dairy produce factory, schools, retail, the NHS and tourism.

The following are links to only a few local places of interest:

- <http://www.newtonstewart.org/>
- <https://www.visitsouthwestscotland.com/attractions/wigtown-bay-local-nature-reserve/>
- <https://www.wigtownbookfestival.com/>
- <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/forest-parks/galloway-forest-park/kirroughtree-visitor-centre>
- <https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/whithorn-and-the-isle-of-whithorn-p239301>
- <https://www.rbge.org.uk/visit/logan-botanic-garden/>

### **Transport**

The main access roads are the A75 and A77. There are two ferry ports at Cairnryan, sailing to Larne and Belfast. There is a railway station at Stranraer for trains to Ayr and Glasgow, as well as a station at Barrhill, which makes New Galloway easily accessible and is on the Stranraer to Glasgow line.

However, travel can be tricky: we are a widespread congregation, some of whom live up to twenty-five miles distant from All Saints. We all understand that owning a car is a necessity as is the fact that we often have to travel in challenging weather, especially during the winter, and we accept that pastoral visiting can involve driving long distances.

## **THE FUTURE**

### **Who are we hoping to appoint?**

All Saints could be described as engaging in a liberal Eucharistic Scottish Episcopal Church tradition in its interpretation of the weekly Liturgy and the Christian feasts. We celebrate a full week of services during Holy Week and prefer to hold two services on Christmas Day - one at midnight and the other on Christmas morning. We also commemorate the seasons of Lent and Advent. We would welcome applicants who, while being desirous of maintaining this tradition, would be interested in expanding worship to explore other interpretations of the Christian faith. Therefore, we are looking for someone who has empathy for the church's existing strengths, while having the vision to inspire for the future.

We asked the congregation for their views on who they would like to see as our priest. Here are some of them:

- 'I would like a priest to stimulate and develop those inner thoughts that can raise us up from the merely mundane and guide us towards a greater human purpose/state. On a practical level I hope they could lead initiatives that increase the congregation.'
- 'To have a strong spiritual background. Enthusiastic in beginning study groups. To encourage spiritual interest by having courses on the subject of spirituality. To be a part of the Christian Fellowship when we can meet again. To look for ways to include the whole congregation, in fundraising for example. To be totally approachable, making time to listen when someone is struggling physically, mentally or spiritually, be compassionate, have empathy supporting the individual and be an important support to them. What does the person want to do /where would they like to be in, say, five years time? It would be good if they had new ideas of what we can all do together to bring us closer as a family, as brothers and sisters in Christ.'
- 'Strong pastoral skills and a willingness to visit people in their homes. Bible study would be a bonus.'

## **THE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

In terms of a SWOT analysis All Saints has:

### **Strengths**

- A strong spiritual ethos
- A dedicated congregation
- An architecturally unique building which has been sensitively modernised to include up-to-date facilities and is accessible to all

### **Weaknesses**

- We have been without a minister for some years
- At present, we have an ageing congregation

- Our out-of-town location is a challenge
- Due to a lack of internet connectivity, we currently have an insufficient digital presence
- Due to our geographical situation, there is a lack of awareness of our presence in the community, certainly among the younger generation

### Opportunities

- The proposed new partnership with St. Margaret’s is an exciting opportunity and promises to be of mutual benefit
- We look forward to networking possibilities with other organisations via event participation
- All Saints is a beautiful building in a peaceful location and we would like to develop the opportunities of offering it for venue hire
- We want to promote the church in all its aspects to encourage a wider use of its facilities and develop a vibrant church community

### Threats

- Other churches are nearer to or in Newton Stewart and members of the local community are more aware of their presence
- There is a reluctance to engage in new technology amongst older members of the congregation and some of the older members are wary of/resistant to change

\*\*\*\*\*

### PICTURE GALLERY



