



# Presbytery of Argyll

## Islay & Jura Churches



## Parish Profile

November 2022

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## **Introduction**

We are looking for a compassionate and committed minister to lead the charge of Islay and Jura and who will engage with all ages, lead us in the New Normal, to open our minds to the challenges that are ahead of us in the modern world.

### ***Mission Statement***

*Set in an idyllic location, the people of Islay and Jura are seeking a minister to work with us to communicate the Word of God through regular worship, fellowship, pastoral care, outreach activities and to work closely with all churches to develop, encourage faith and engagement within our communities.*

Both islands are known for their welcome and as congregations we seek to extend God's welcome and share His love with all. We value the contribution of each individual as they bring their gifts and skills to our community, and recognise that each congregation has its own unique flavour, adding richness to the whole body of the church. As we come together as worshippers, we seek to deepen our relationship with God and with each other, so that our daily lives reflect Him as we go out into our communities.

We are living through a time of change and are excited at the opportunities this brings to strengthen each other and to further the kingdom of God in the place we call home.

All Kirk Sessions have voted in favour of departure from the Church of Scotland's practice in relation to Act 1 2015 (Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages), applications for the current vacancy are welcome from, amongst others, individuals who are in a civil partnership or same sex marriage.

Congregational accounts can be found on the Scottish Charity Regulator's website

[www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

South Islay SC006032

North and West Islay SC015317

Jura SC002925

## **For more information**

If you share our enthusiasm for the future of the churches in Islay & Jura then please get in touch with us.

Initial enquiries can be made via our Interim Moderator:

Mrs Aileen Binner

Email: [ABinner@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:ABinner@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Applications, including two references, should be sent to the Clerk to the Nominating Committee:

Mrs Sheena Gow

Ardcraig

Craighouse

Isle of Jura

PA60 7XR

Email: [sheenagow3@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sheenagow3@hotmail.co.uk)

## **Charge of Islay & Jura**

Jura, linked with North and West Islay, linked with South Islay.

The Charge currently consists of six separate congregations and is an unrestricted call. By the end of 2023, North and West Islay will be one congregation, meeting in St. Kieran's..

Number refers to map on cover.

- 1 St John's Church, Port Ellen – Kildalton & Oa
- 2 Kilarrow Parish Church “The Round Church” – Bowmore
- 3 Jura Church, Craighouse – Jura
- 4 Kilmeny Parish Church – Ballygrant and the north of the island
- 5 St Kieran's Parish Church - Port Charlotte/Bruichladdich
- 6 Portnahaven Parish Church – South Rhinns

On a rotational basis the minister would be expected to lead worship, twice on a Sunday morning, in consultation with the Kirk Sessions and with the agreement of Presbytery. At present, services are led by pulpit supply in the form of visiting ministers, readers, elders and a Worship Team in North and West Islay. There is a wealth of experience available to lead worship on the islands. Presbytery provides financial support to cover pulpit supply for 52 weeks of the year.

**Constitution** The churches are administered under the Unitary Constitution

### **History of the linkages**

Bowmore and Port Ellen churches linked in 2008 and Jura joined the linkage in 2012. In November 2019 Bowmore and Port Ellen congregations joined to become a Union to be known as South Islay Church of Scotland. Kilmeny, linked with Kilchoman and Portnahaven from 2006 to 2017, became part of the Union known as North and West Islay Churches on 1st January 2018 There are joint services during the year held in each church in rotation. Under the Presbytery of Argyll's reformed Mission both Kilmeny and Portnahaven Churches must close by the end of 2023, leaving St Kieran's Church as the church for the three congregations. We look forward to working together for the benefit of the charge and to fulfil the aims of the local Mission Plan. Until closure takes place Sunday worship services will continue to be held in all three churches. We wish to develop and strengthen the linkages and create opportunities to work together and worship as one.

### **Our Strengths**

- We are used to change – our experience of the union of the congregations, followed by a long vacancy, during which we have had a variety of visiting preachers and locums have shown that we are willing to adapt and to welcome new ways.
- We have not lost members in the absence of a minister and have excellent Pastoral Care Teams along with several committees: Finance, Church and Community, Fundraising, and Property.
- We are hardworking congregations and support all fundraising in the churches
- We have a willingness for mission and service

### **Challenges**

- Congregations are ageing
- We have few young families and young people who attend our services
- We face financial challenges as we strive to maintain properties
- We know that many other congregations are facing similar challenges, but we will give our full support to our new minister as we work together to build our church.

## **Variety of Worship**

Weekly services are held in each parish, with additional services held in different churches across Islay and Jura, including ~ Gaelic, Christingle, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and World Day of Prayer services. In August there is an ecumenical, open air service held at Kildalton Cross and representatives from the churches participate. This is organised by St John's Church.

Special services are held throughout the church calendar.



## **Partner Worship**

There is a Baptist Church in Islay which meets in two different locations. We have a good relationship with past and present ministers who have assisted us on a number of occasions. There is also a small Episcopal Church, at the moment without clergy. There is a Eucharistic Minister for the small Roman Catholic congregation in Islay, which uses the Episcopal Church for twice monthly services, and a Quaker group on Islay which meets on an informal basis.

Our congregations are not large, but our churches serve their whole communities. Members of our community volunteer free support in maintenance and small works involved in keeping our churches in good order. With the help of the Holy Spirit we aim to nurture and take forward our close relationship that our churches have with our communities. We hope and pray that the new Minister will help and lead us to do this.

## St John's Church, Port Ellen

St John's Church is in the heart of Port Ellen, the second largest village on Islay, population of about 1100. There is a service every Sunday at 11.30 am with extra services, many ecumenical for example The World Day of Prayer, an open - air service at Kildalton Cross and a Christmas Tree Service with trees decorated by different groups in the village. We have membership of 73 with an average weekly congregation of over 40. We have developed a close relationship with the Islay Baptist Church who run the joint Sunday School with St John's. Our young people from all over the island participate in a week-long Summer Beach Mission, which is supported by St John's and Kilarrow churches, culminating in a joint family service in St John's at the end of the week. We recently enjoyed fellowship with our Baptist friends in the form of a Harvest Supper and Quiz Night.

Flowers adorn the church each Sunday and they are delivered as part of the outreach to people in the community who have experienced illness, bereavement or would appreciate a visit and chat. We also knit prayer shawls for the ill and bereaved.



We have a strong fundraising team specializing in catering at events small and large throughout the island. We have a weekly lunch in our Church Hall in the summer. This is well supported and enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

Our Church Hall (St. Columba Hall) is well used by many local groups including fitness groups, slimming groups, children's birthday parties, wet-weather facilities for MYFOS (Mactaggart Youth and Families Outreach Services), summer activities, lunch venue for visiting cruise ships guests, MYFOS fashion show. Our hall is the main centre for all our fundraising events. We have recently established links with MYFOS centre and are helping to provide a Warm Hub throughout the winter. We hope to build on this relationship with MYFOS. The village has an award-winning Primary School, a playing field complex, 3 general stores, Post Office, Medical surgery, 2 hotels, restaurant (sit-in and takeaway), numerous B & Bs and self-catering holiday homes for the year round visitors. There are 3 distilleries who make a major contribution to the area, with a further 2 under construction as well as a new rum distillery. Port Ellen is one of the 2 ferry terminals and there is also a growing marina.

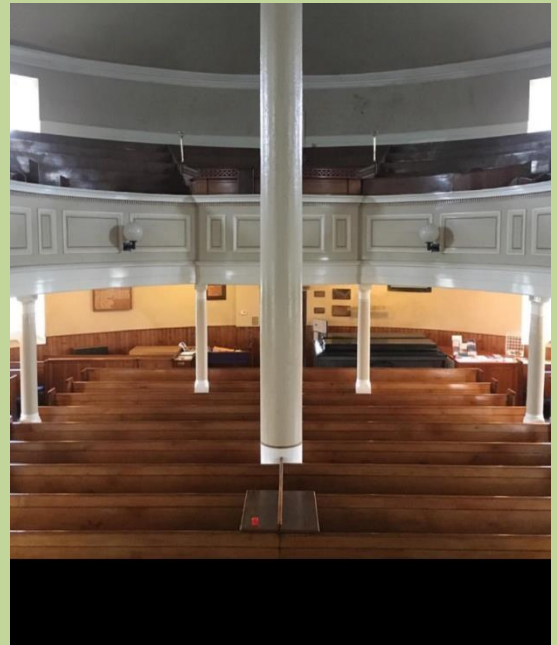
Our Church is always open, with easy disabled access and fully accessible toilet, and our visitors' book is testament to its popularity and the warm welcome given to everyone.

## Kilarrow Parish Church

The Parish of Kilarrow covers an area of approximately 102 square miles. Bowmore is the largest of the villages located in the centre of the island where the Church, completed in 1769 is situated at the top of the Main Street. It is also known as the Round Church due to its design. The population of the local community is approximately 1100.

We enjoy a service of worship at 10am each Sunday. We are a committed and enthusiastic group of regular worshippers with visitors attending throughout the year. Our services are accompanied every week by an organist on a modern digital organ. In addition, there is a sound system and laptop presentation can be projected onto the back wall above the pulpit.

Ecumenical services often take place during the year. The Session Clerk conducts the services of worship when no locum Minister or Reader is available. Special services include Mothering Sunday, Holy Week, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. In November, the annual Remembrance Service is held where representatives lay wreaths at the foot of the Communion Table. Following the service, there is a short service held in the Commonwealth War Graves at the side of the Church. The Primary School often holds its end of year service in June, and in December Carols by Candlelight in the Church.



Information cards inviting people to attend services together with other details were delivered by hand to the houses in Bowmore. At the moment the Sunday School is not running, but would normally meet during school term time. There is a leader with a rota of helpers.

We have a fundraising team who organise occasional coffee mornings which take place during the year and are well supported by the community.

## Jura Parish Church

Jura has a resident population of around 250 people. The church building is in good condition and is well looked after. There is a worship service every Sunday and the church is always open for residents or visitors. There are a number of holiday houses on the island, and the church regularly welcomes holiday makers who attend Sunday services and come to view the exhibition of old photos of Jura.

There are no other places of worship on Jura, and the islanders as a whole would view it as “their church”, even though they may only attend for weddings or funerals!

Although there are only 12 regular attendees at Sunday services, the church engages with the wider community and visitors to the island through special services and events, including:



- Christmas service for the primary school
- Carols round the village Christmas Tree
- Family nativity service
- Watchnight service on Christmas Eve
- Easter egg hunt and shared lunch following Easter Sunday family service
- Family harvest service followed by a shared lunch
- Special Music Festival Service at the end of September
- Providing the teas for the Regatta and the Christmas lights switch on (proceeds from

which are usually donated to the Lifeboat and Mary's Meals)

- Regular “View from the Pew” features in Jura Jottings, the local monthly magazine

During the closure of church buildings due to the coronavirus pandemic, the congregation sent out activity packs to the primary school age children on the island.

We are positive about the linkage with the parishes on Islay, and hosted an afternoon tea for all the churches pre pandemic, but recognise that the strip of water between the two islands can create difficulties in joining together for events, particularly in the winter months. The church on Jura has therefore developed its own mission plan that recognises the needs of the island's community.

### The Plan

- Strengthen links with Small Isles School and look at ways of working more with the children and their families
- Visiting of elderly / housebound / sick
- Continue to develop special events and services to encourage community engagement
- Information cards re church to be put in holiday houses / hotel and develop welcome packs for new residents
- Further develop links with the congregations on Islay
- Continue to communicate church events / activities etc through Jura Jottings and local Facebook page
- Continue to contribute to a regular column in the Jura Jottings
- Find out what people want from the church and look into possibility of running an Alpha / Exploring Christianity course





## Kilmeny Parish Church

Until closure takes place, weekly worship will continue in Kilmeny.

Kilmeny Church, situated in the north of the island, is a B-listed Parliamentary Church built in 1828. The original plans for the church were remodelled by the heritor at the time and the church was built within the wooded grounds above the main Port Askaig / Bridgend road. The building was again altered in the late 1800s when the two doors on the gable walls were removed and a porch added to the front wall. One of the two galleries situated on the gable walls was removed and a pulpit placed below the window. Pews were introduced to replace the long table and in 1980 the remaining gallery was removed as it was unsafe. The building is in a very good state of repair and is bright and welcoming. Welcome leaflets for visitors to the church are placed on every pew and a leaflet about the church is available in the porch for any enquirers.



There is a worship service every Sunday at 10.00am with Communion held twice a year in May and November. Communion is also held at a joint service in one of the three churches in our union. A member of the well-established Worship Team leads Sunday worship when the minister is elsewhere in the charge.

Regular events are held throughout the year, some in the church and some in the local village hall and these are well supported by people within and outwith the parish. During the summer months a cup of tea with home baking is served in the vestry after the service as an opportunity for any visitors to meet congregation members.

Special services include Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas, the latter two well supported by the community, as is an annual Songs of Praise in August.

The local primary school children hold their Harvest and Christmas Assemblies in the church and the minister is a frequent visitor to the school.



Puppet Workshop, Ballygrant Hall

## Saint Kieran's Church



Saint Kieran's church was built in 1897 by well-known Glasgow architect Peter McGregor Chalmers. The church is situated between the picturesque villages of Bruichladdich and Port Charlotte and has beautiful panoramic views over Lochindaal.

Within the last four years the church has had an update, with disabled toilet and access, kitchen and meeting room.

Our services are held at 11.30 am on Sundays, although this may change when we become one congregation for North and West Islay, and we have a very active Sunday school who meet at the Field centre in Port Charlotte at the same time.

Throughout the year we hold Family services involving the Sunday school including Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and Christmas services, with the always entertaining Nativity.

The church is supported by a dedicated Worship Team, and talented musicians who enjoy playing for all our services and social events.

We have regular attendance amongst the congregation which rises in numbers during the holiday periods, with new and returning visitors, who always comment on the warm welcome they receive.

The church actively fundraises throughout the year with ceilidhs, coffee afternoons, strawberry teas and coffee cakes and carols at Christmas.

As a congregation we make regular donations to Mary's Meals and Christian Aid, along with other local charities.

With the additional membership of Kilmenny and Portnahaven Churches joining St. Kiarnan's in



2023, we hope to plan for the future with the addition of an annexe in the grounds. Our Mission Plan includes the addition of a small hall to be used for church activities and events and we hope to upgrade the church and install wifi and recording facilities.

## Portnahaven Parish Church

Until closure takes place in 2023, weekly Sunday worship will continue in Portnahaven Church.

Portnahaven Parish church is located in the picturesque village of Portnahaven. This Thomas Telford building has stunning views of the busy fishing harbour and Orsay lighthouse. It was built in 1828 and is a listed building due to the unique architectural features. The setting and building has made it a popular wedding venue.



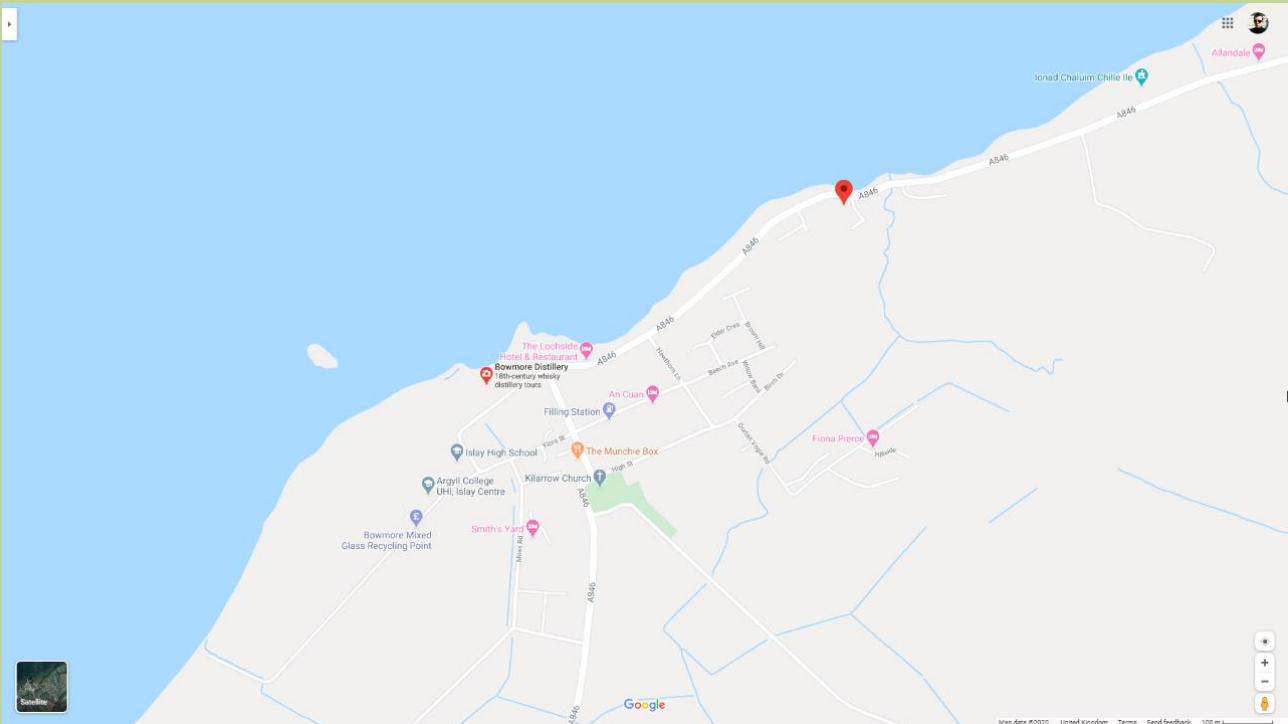
The parish includes the villages of Portnahaven and Port Wemyss as well as the surrounding farming community. The church glebe is rented by a local family. The winter population is around 200 but this doubles in the summer months. Many of the families have ties to the church going back generations and value its role in community life.

Services are held at 10am every Sunday.

Every effort is made to hold a Gaelic service on an annual basis



## General Information Bowmore



### The Manse

The manse is a well-proportioned detached villa built in the early 70s, situated in a quiet residential area of Bowmore overlooking Lochindaal. The Parish Map shows the locations of the church and manse.

The accommodation comprises living room, dining room, study, downstairs WC and shower room, four bedrooms, kitchen, utility room, cloakroom, bathroom, and various cupboards.

Oil central heating throughout. The property is double glazed. There is a large back garden and front garden with off-road parking and single garage.



## **Islay & Jura**

The islands of Islay (the Queen of the Hebrides) and Jura have a population of approximately 3000 people which can increase to 15000 during festivals and holidays, when visitors and holiday home owners take up residence. Jura's population is approximately 230. Islay is the southernmost of the Inner Hebrides lying approximately 70 miles due west of Glasgow. The Gulf Stream ensures the climate is mild compared with mainland Scotland.

### **Getting Here**

Travel to the islands is by road and ferry or plane. The journey from Glasgow takes approximately 3 hours by road via Loch Lomond to Kennacraig where the Cal Mac ferry takes you to Islay in 2 hours. The onward journey to Jura is from Port Askaig - 5 minutes on the Jura ferry which is operated by Argyll and Bute Council.

Daily flights leave Glasgow Airport for Islay and take only 30 minutes.

### **A Snapshot of Islay & Jura**

Bowmore, dominated by the Round Church at the head of main street, is known as the commercial capital of Islay with 2 banks, post office, nursery, primary school, High School serving both islands, leisure centre, council and housing offices, hospital, residential home, dentist, SNH office, accountancy firm and the largest supermarket (Co-op) on the island as well as a number of smaller shops.

Picturesque Port Ellen in the south of Islay is the main port for ferries, fishing boats, grain boats, tour boats and has excellent pontoons for visiting yachts. It boasts the only tennis court on the island plus putting and bowling greens.

In the Rhinns of Islay you will find the pretty villages of Bruichladdich, Port Charlotte, Portnahaven and Port Wemyss all with their own special charm.

To the north there is Ballygrant, Keills, Port Askaig (where the mainland ferry also berths), Caol Ila and Bunnahabhain.

Jura is dominated by the famous Paps which form part of the course for the annual Fell Race, with competitors from all over the world. Craighouse is the main village on the island and is the hub for most events and activities, including the Jura Music Festival at the end of September. Jura is described as one of Scotland's last wildernesses, with an abundance of wildlife.

Islay & Jura are steeped in history ~ check out Finlaggan, Dunyvaig, Kildalton, The Oa (to name but a few) and the Museum of Islay Life in Port Charlotte

Outdoor pursuits are well served whether it's walking on the miles of beautiful beaches to walking up the Paps of Jura, cycling, bird watching, wild swimming, surfing. There are sports and clubs galore to become involved in ~ golf, football, rugby, badminton, table tennis, netball, archery, yoga, keep fit, kick boxing, bowls, chess, bridge, language classes, choirs, quilting . . .

Between the two islands there are 10 distilleries with more planned. They provide employment for many in the production of the whisky for which they are famous and in visitor centres. Tourism, farming and construction are major employers on the islands. Unemployment is less than 1%

The Ilead is the local award winning newspaper which is produced fortnightly on Islay.  
Jura Jottings is a monthly newsletter.



### Useful Websites

<https://www.islayjurachurches.co.uk>

<https://islay.blog/>

<https://www.calmac.co.uk/destinations/islay>

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/port-askaig-islay-feolin-jura-ferry-timetable>

<https://www.hial.co.uk/islay-airport>

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk>

<https://www.islayinfo.com>

<https://isleofjura.scot/blog/>

<https://www.ileach.co.uk>

<https://jura-jottings.co.uk>

<https://juradevelopment.co.uk/>

