

Highlight of 2024And the Winners Are

As those of you who have been at the services throughout September/October will be aware, we were nominated for an award for the community work we have been carrying out at Dalmilling Church. Not only were we nominated, we were then short-listed, before being selected for the final, where we beat competition from St Mary the Virgin in Hamilton and Musselburgh Congregational Church.

Our success has been the subject of much interest—with the story being told by The Church of Scotland, Ayrshire Live, Ayr Advertiser and was recognised in the Scottish Parliament in a motion submitted by Sharon Dowie. I thought it would be good to share with everyone the report written on and for the Church of Scotland website, which was then shared on social media. Hopefully it will give all our members and their friends and family a flavour of what life is like in the church outwith our Sunday morning services.

“St Quivox Parish Church was presented with the coveted Church and Volunteer Award for Scotland at the 2024 National Church Awards.”

The honour centres around the "brilliant contribution" that volunteers make to both caring for and making best use of churches to reach out to the local community they serve, using the building as a hub for activity.

Parish minister Rev John McCutcheon recently attended a ceremony at Lincoln Cathedral in England to accept the award. He described the accolade as a "great achievement for the church and the fantastic team of volunteers who give up so much of their time to run groups, initiatives and events.”

St Quivox refers to the name of the [entire parish](#), which has two churches: Auchincruive Church in St Quivox village, and Dalmilling Church on Dalmilling Road in Ayr.

Auchincruive Church is a T-plan church with a medieval core, remodelled and extended in 1595, 1767 and 1825.

The grade A listed building is a superb example of a post-Reformation Scottish country kirk with a largely unaltered late 18th century interior.

The vast majority of mission outreach work is held in Dalmilling Church hall and hundreds of people pass through the doors every week to take part in events run by volunteers, who range in age from their 20s to 70s.

A mother and toddlers group called Teddy Bear Tots meets every Wednesday and there is no charge to take part.

Established 10 years ago, volunteers strive to make the group a safe place for all and a place that parents can get a wee break and speak with people with similar experiences.

Volunteers raise money to run the group and all parents are provided with a breakfast roll on arrival and children always receive a healthy snack.

The group provides nappies, wipes and baby food to ensure no one has to struggle with essential items.

On Wednesday afternoons, a project called the Community Corner is held and is run in partnership with a local charity called Vics in the Community.

People who might otherwise experience loneliness are provided with a warm space to gather and a delicious lunch, followed by some games, music, crafts or just a good conversation.

The Man's Cave group also meets on Wednesday afternoons and participants enjoy lunch with community corner project users and then head off to their own space to play pool, cards and dominoes.

A disability music group, Wild Rhythm meets on Thursdays and is one of the only groups of its kind that runs in South Ayrshire.

Established seven years ago, around 40 people with seen and unseen disabilities and their carers gather and a local musician performs a live music set.

Participants are encouraged to join in by singing, dancing and playing instruments.

The group is the highlight of the week for participants and some travel over 25 miles to attend.

The parish church also hosts a woman's fitness group, runs quarterly discos, Christmas events, church fayres, fundays and community trips. Rev McCutcheon said: "We were thrilled when we originally heard that we had been nominated for this award and shortlisted for the final.

It's an award not just for the church but it is also an acknowledgement of all the hard work that our volunteers are doing within the community.

Most of them aren't members of the church but they give of themselves tirelessly for the good of the church and the well-being of the community and we couldn't do most of the things we do without them.

Ultimately the church is just a building but when God works and his people get involved with what he is doing, things change, lives are transformed and the church is able to be the living heart of God's kingdom within the community".

"That is what we have tried to do within our parish."

The awards are organised by the National Churches Trust.

In August, St Quivox Parish Church took 144 people, aged three months old to 75, to enjoy a free day out at Blair Drummond Safari Park.

The day was organised by a team of volunteers and financed by parish fundraising as well as a grant from a local housing association.

St Quivox Parish Church is a [Priority Areas](#) parish – a place that sits within the 5% most deprived rankings in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

Supporting the most marginalised people in society is the "gospel imperative of the whole Church, not just the Church in the poorest places".

A report on Priority Areas to the General Assembly stated: "Mission weaves through these good places, offering an inviting and welcoming church model and often doors are open seven-days-a-week".

"Typically, there will be community meals and other food poverty initiatives, outreach into the streets around the church, worship not just on Sunday but in other spaces in the week, work with older people, children and youth work, employment initiatives and more".

"The best places have a continually outward focus, joining up with local people and organisations to support the community."



Volunteers Allannah Jones, Caroline Vance, April Barrie and Kaya Hope.