



# ***St Mungo's Messenger***

**October / November 2012**

**Web edition**





# St Mungo's Messenger

Twinned with All Saints-Sharon Chapel, Alexandria, Virginia, USA

October / November 2012

***With God's help, sharing the joy of Christ's love with all***





## SERVICES & EVENTS

Kalender Oct / Nov 2012

**Sundays** 9.00 am *Eucharist* 11.00am *Sung Eucharist*  
*There is no Sunday School /Mini Mungo Club at present, but children are always welcome at our services.*  
*Story cards and Children's Communion Books are always available.*

**Wednesdays** in the Lady Chapel 10.00 am *Eucharist*



Above: Interior looking East and Side Chapel, note the extra light streaming in with the trees cut down.

Cover picture: St Mungo's interior looking west.

## **Readers and Intercessors Rota: October / November 2012**

<b>9 am Eucharist Reader (RCL Year B)</b>	<b>11 am Sung Eucharist Reader (RCL, Year B)</b>	<b>Intercessor</b>
7th October Ian A. 18th Sunday after Trinity (Proper 22)	Jean B. Job 1.1; 2.1-10 Psalm 26 Hebrews 1.1-4; 2.5-12	Jim M
14th October John S. 19th Sunday after Trinity (Proper 23) Harvest Festival	Jock S-P Job 23.1-9, 16-17 Psalm 22.1-15 Hebrews 4.12-16	Fiona W
21st October Ian A. 20th Sunday after Trinity (Proper 24)	Jim M Job 38.1-7 Psalm 104.1-9, 25, 37b Hebrews 5.1-10	Pauline D
28th October John S. 21st Sunday after Trinity (Proper 25)	Pauline D Job 42.1-6, 10-17 Psalm 34.1-8, 19-22 Hebrews 7.23-28	Pauline D
4th November Ian A. 4th Sunday before Advent	Jean B. Ruth 1.1-18 Psalm 146 Hebrews 9.11-14	Jock S-P
11th November John S. 3rd Sunday before Advent (Remembrance Sunday)	Pauline D. Ruth 3.1-5; 4.13-17 10:50hrs Psalm 127 Hebrews 9.24-28	Jim M.
18th November Ian A. 2nd Sunday before Advent	Jim M. 1 Samuel 1.4-20 Canticle 1 Samuel 2.1-10 Hebrews 10.11-14, 19-25	Pauline D.
25th November John S. Christ the King (Red or White)	Pat B. 2 Samuel 23.1-7 Psalm 132.1-13 Revelation 1.4b-8	Fiona W.

Readers, please arrive at the Church in time to make sure that the book is on the Lectern and open at the right place before the service starts. At the 9.00 am Eucharist the reading is normally just the Second Reading/Epistle from the Revised Common Lectionary, and at the 11.00 am Sung Eucharist readings from the Revised Common Lectionary, as shown above. In the RCL it is Year B and we are following Track 1 after Trinity Sunday. The page numbers and layout are the same as in the smaller paper-back edition. Please ensure that the "book" is passed on to the next week's reader. If you need to change dates, please arrange an exchange.

### *Feast Day:*

Thursday 1st November All Saints (All Saints will be celebrated on Wednesday 31st October at 10am)

## ***From David Cook, Interim Priest-in-Charge***

*Dear Friends,*



**I**t is Harvest – time and so Christians should make a particular point of thanking God for the material blessings which God provides for us for our daily lives. Very few of us now have any contact with, or part in, an actual harvest from the fields, although a few of us may have an allotment or vegetable patch in our garden and (if the weather permits!) we may harvest the brambles etc. from the hedges. Much of the time, however, and largely due to the supermarket chains, a particular ‘harvest-time’ is irrelevant because we can buy any type of food, any time, anywhere. I think this last fact sometimes dulls our sense of gratitude, especially when we have so much while so many people have so little or even nothing.

Some of those folk who do not have enough to eat, or clothes to wear, or a roof over their heads, are on our own doorsteps – or at least ‘up in the Toon’, which is why the Glasgow City Mission (and other charities) has to exist. Most of Glasgow City Mission’s clients (note the ‘most’) have little choice about being homeless or hungry. Some cannot cope with civilian life after serving in the military, some cannot cope with failed family – or marriage – relationships, some really cannot find work (and the London politicians who think you can find work just by riding around on a bike ought to try it!) and some just cannot cope with life, full stop.

The demands on the Glasgow City Mission are increasing continually. This increase on the Mission’s resources can be met because God, in His generosity, has given the rest of us the means to supply the Mission’s needs.

In an age when we have little contact with actual ‘harvest’, we can still show our gratitude to God by sharing with those for whom Jesus particularly came and who the Glasgow City Mission serves today.

Please note what items the Mission does need. There is a Glasgow City Mission poster in the church porch with their requirements on it (ring-pull tins of meat are especially welcome!).

Please also note what the Mission cannot use (fresh produce definitely cannot be accepted).

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

*God bless you all, David*

## Church notes

**Harvest Festival Sunday** 14th October with a light lunch after 11am service. No need to bring anything for lunch – just yourselves!

**All Saints will be celebrated on Wednesday 31st October at 10am.**

A Eucharist for All Souls will be held on Saturday 3rd November at 9am followed by coffee in the hall.

**St Mungo's Autumn Fayre** will take place on **Saturday 24th November 11am to 1pm.**

Coffee, Cake and Chat, gift stalls, raffle etc. Come along, relax, socialise before the December rush!

**St Mungo's Annual General Meeting will take place on Sunday 2nd December after the 11am Service. Please try to attend this important meeting.**

## Assistant Guide Leaders Required

Do you know someone who would make a good Assistant Guide Leader and help to maintain St Mungo's Guides as a thriving unit? This is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the development of young women and develop St Mungo's relationship with young people.

The Guides have just one leader at present (she is so committed to maintaining this unit at St Mungo's that she travels each week from her home in Musselburgh after a day's work in Edinburgh) and she relies on parent helpers (with occasional back up from church members) to enable each meeting to take place.

Assistant Leaders must be at least 18 years old and female. Mentoring and training are provided. Please give this some thought and if you, or someone you know, wishes to learn more about it contact Pauline Dow on 01389 751046 in the first instance.

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## War Memorial

*The Lectern in St Mungo's is a 'war memorial' as the son died of fever during his service in the Boer War.*



**Gildea.** — 2nd Lieut. George Frederick Campbell Gildea, 2nd Batt. Royal Scots Fusiliers, died of Enteric at Johannesburg April 18th, 1901. He was the only son of the late Maj.-Gen. Gildea, C.B., formerly of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who commanded a battalion in South Africa in 1881. 2nd Lieut. Gildea was born April, 1876, and educated at Charterhouse. He entered the 1st Lanarkshire Batt. of the Scottish Rifles May, 1896, and was promoted lieut. May, 1899. In May, 1900, he was granted a commission in the

Royal Scots Fusiliers, and joined the 2nd battalion in South Africa, and served with it till his death. His name is inscribed on the tablet in the War Memorial Cloister erected at Charterhouse.

# Our Historic Organ

by Andrew Baxter

It is good to be back at St Mungo's and to see the church in such good heart.

Several people have spoken to me about the recent interest in the organ. There is a scheme, UK wide, in which special organs are identified. The Historic Organ Certification Scheme has four classes, then there are many more organs which do not merit classification at all.

Our organ is Grade II\* meaning that the instrument is a good representative of the work of the builder in substantially original condition. Very few organs qualify for Grade I – an organ of outstanding historic and musical importance in essentially original condition – and many are found in out-of-the-way and/or impecunious churches.

Many cathedrals and prosperous churches have regularly altered their organs to follow fashion resulting in a tonal mishmash, usually operated by an electric or part-electric action between the keys and the pipes which tends to require major work every 30 years or so. Interestingly many of the Oxbridge Colleges have discarded much altered organs, replacing them with new organs, often smaller, but with the integrity that comes from a single artist's hand. The majority of these new organs have mechanical action – wooden levers connected by “trackers”, long fine strips of wood – as at St Mungo's.

In the West of Scotland we are fortunate to have the organ builder James MacKenzie, who has devoted his long career to the care and conservation of precious and unspoiled older organs. He was at the forefront of this movement, decades before the ideas were widely accepted. Jim undertook the restoration work at St Mungo's and continues to tune and maintain the organ.

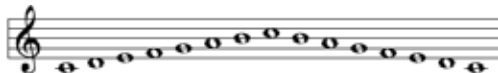
Lloyd of Nottingham built the organ about 1880. It came to us from a closed Methodist Chapel. Over 110 years later it



had what appeared to be its first major refurbishment. The organ had clearly had hard use. Some of the key ivories had worn through, so the keys were re-covered with secondhand ivories. Hardened and cracked leather was replaced and centres of the levers were relined with dense wool cloth. Following this, the touch is superb. The pedal action is rather noisy, but this reflects the novelty of pedal playing in Britain at the time. It tended to be used just for the occasional chord, whereas on the continent the feet were used equally to the fingers. At the thanksgiving service in St Paul's for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid in 1872, a separate pedal keyboard was set up because the cathedral organist of the time did not play the pedals at all!

In the 1880s feet were smaller than today, so I have to take off my size tens. I'm also grateful not to have to reach out the extra 2 or 3 inches to the top and bottom notes of a modern pedal board!

In summary, our organ is a precious inheritance. Whilst it has very real limitations, it has integrity. What it can do, it does rather well. Given sympathetic care it has a couple of centuries more hard work to do.



## The Harvest Festival this year is on Sunday 14th October



We will be preparing and decorating the church with flowers etc. on Saturday 13th October, beginning at 10.00 am. All helpers welcome! Putting up tables and arranging chairs, sorting crockery, arranging tins, bottles, flowers, fruit etc, making tea and washing up – something for everyone!

Donations of tinned food, coffee, diluting juice, tomato ketchup and brown sauce will go to Glasgow City Mission (they are not able to accept fresh food, pasta or tea (please see poster in church porch).

## Monthly Rota for October into December

### Sidesmen/women Rota

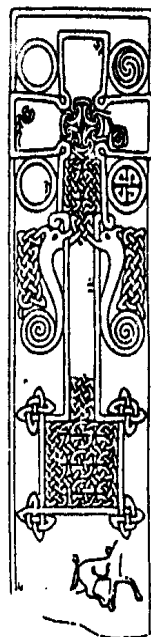
Alicia S.	Oct. 28th and Dec. 2nd
Derek R.	Oct. 7th, Nov. 4th and 11th
Tom and Ian M.	Oct. 14th and Nov. 18th
Bob McL	Oct. 21st and Nov. 25th

### Cleaning Rota

Fiona and Jean	Oct. 21st and Dec. 2nd
Lynnette	Oct. 21st
Eveline	Nov. 4th
Finella and Jean	Nov. 11th
Iona and Mary	Oct. 7th and Nov. 18th
Margaret and Robert	Oct. 14th and Nov. 25th

### Flowers

J.M.	Nov. 18th and Nov. 25th
E.MacP	Oct. 7th and Oct. 14th
P.D.	Oct. 21st and Oct. 21st
F.S.	Nov. 4th and Nov. 11th.



No flowers from December 2nd till December 24th.



## **Growth Strategy Supplement by Jim Biddulph**

Over the past few months the vestry has been preparing a profile of the church and congregation for the Diocesan Growth Strategy. This profile will be slightly reworked with added information and used along with a job description the vestry will prepare for the Dean and Bishop to determine what is appropriate for the ministry of St Mungo's in the way of a Priest in charge or shared charge.

This supplement shows the document prepared for the Growth Strategy and is reproduced here in a smaller format to fit the magazine for you to comment on. It is hoped to send the revised document in advance of our next meeting with the Dean for comment and decisions from the Diocese.

So as not to raise hopes of a priest in charge in the immediate future we have been informed that the process takes up to a year. Other factors will have to be taken into account such as the Rectory and how much it will cost to do work on the building exterior and interior.

The Dean advised the vestry at an earlier meeting not to let the church and grounds look as if they were not being used. Various suggestions were made at a vestry meeting and it was decided to remove some trees from the curtilage to open up the view of the church from the road. You can see the difference this has made in the following photos. The rectory trees to the front of the building have been removed also to open up the building after been hidden for years behind the foliage. The vestry will continue to work towards getting a priest in charge be it part time or otherwise.



What a difference a day makes.



Scottish Charity No. SC011770



## St Mungo's Episcopal Church, Alexandria

Interim Priest-in-Charge: The Rev. David Cook

Vestry Chair: Pauline Dow

Growth Strategy Facilitator: Gill Reynolds

Website— [www.stmungoalexandria.org.uk](http://www.stmungoalexandria.org.uk)

### Introduction

The Diocesan Growth Strategy came into being, to help congregations reach out in a variety of ways, and share the fullness of life with others who are not yet aware of God's abundant grace and love for all Creation.

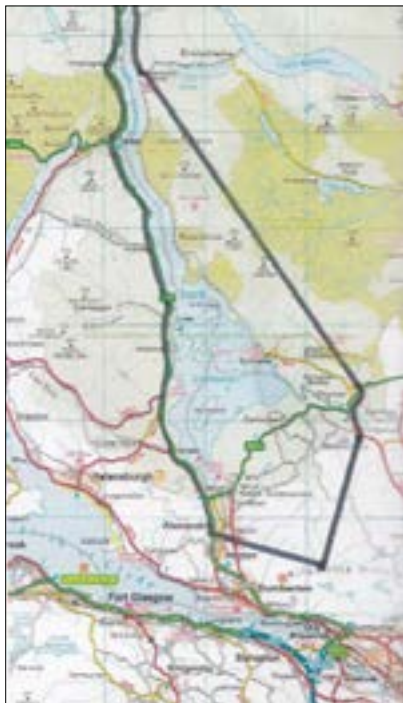
Six areas of potential growth have been identified:

- Prayer and Spirituality,
- Learning and Discipleship,
- Missional Leadership,
- Numerical Growth,
- Children and Young People,
- Imaginative Outreach.

Congregations were not asked to address all of these themes at once, but to focus initially on two areas of growth. Congregations would be supported by specially trained facilitators.

Growth Strategy Launch Services, with Bishop Gregor presiding and preaching at each one were held in each region of the Diocese in June 2011. Vestries were then asked to make arrangements for embarking on Mission Action Planning (MAP). A Facilitator was assigned to us in October of last year and work began as we at St. Mungo's decided together which two areas of growth to concentrate on to start with. MAP is covered in a separate report prepared by the facilitator.

Part of the Growth Strategy process asks the Vestry to produce a Profile of St Mungo's and its congregation; the area the church covers and some aspects of the social characteristics of the area. A survey on peoples likes and dislikes in Alexandria is also part of the process and the following pages cover this with statistics from church and other community records. At present we have no permanent Priest in Charge.





St Mungo's catchment boundary

Our congregation area covers the urban areas of the Vale of Leven, Alexandria being the centre of activity where most of the shops and health centres are. The boundary heads northward to Tarbet and to the head of Loch Lomond and the rural communities there, then across to the east side of Loch Lomond to Drymen and Gartocharn, down to the border with Renton and Dumbarton in the South, which is back to urban communities. People do attend from further afield.

## St Mungo's in the heart of the Vale of Leven



### Where we are:

-  Rectory grounds
-  St Mungo's



## Congregation profile

St Mungo's has a congregational list of 140 people who have an interest in St Mungo's. The communicants roll is 85 people.

An average of 10 to 14 attend the 9.00am service, usually 10 are the same people each week. The 11.00am service attracts about 23 to 30 people with various members of the congregation attending weekly. About half the congregation attend 6 to 12 times a year. Six attend the Wednesday 10.00am service. Christenings and funerals can see up to 60 attending but not all church members.

The Rite used at St Mungo's is usually the 1982 'Blue Book' with readings from the Revised Common Lectionary. At the 9.00am Sunday Eucharist, however, the 1970 'Grey Book' rite is used, with readings from the Revised Common Lectionary.

The congregational list shows that:

42% of the congregation appear to be single, this includes widowed and divorced.

30% have partners/family who are of a different denomination (or none).

28% are couples, both attending.

Gender: 66% female and 34% male.

Residence:

23% come from Dumbarton & beyond.

13% come from Gartocharn.

5% come from Cardross/Helensburgh/ Arrochar.

59% are from Alexandria/Jamestown/ Balloch/Bonhill/Renton.

There are 39 young people who attend occasionally with parents or grandparents.

About 75% of the congregation are over 60.

The Vale of Leven comprises a number of towns and villages. Balloch to the north; Jamestown, Bonhill and New Bonhill east of river Leven. Alexandria is the main town with Renton to the south of the valley, west of the river.

## The Early Church

St Mungo's Church Alexandria was dedicated and opened for worship on December 8th 1894. The picture opposite was taken about this time.

A congregation was first gathered together in 1873 by the Rev. William Stephen the Rector of Dumbarton who walked the eight mile return journey every Sunday to conduct services from shop premises in Bank Street, Alexandria, but no administration of the sacraments. Some 15 years later Dalmonach Hall, Bonhill was rented and used for Sunday Worship. Worship continued there until St Mungo's was built.

The main building was, and still is, as it was built, only the interior decoration changing over the years with a side aisle being added in 1903.



St Mungo's circa 1900.

A short history of St. Mungo's' was written by the Rev. J. Wilding in 1983 and a copy is in the church's small library.

## Where we are now

Since our last vacancy just over 11 years ago the congregation has declined. St Mungo's has an ageing congregation and although 'Back to church Sunday' did encourage a few members to come back, numbers have not kept up with deaths and people leaving the area.

In the last few years there has been no Sunday school or evening social events. The lunch club and weekly bingo night both came to an end some 10 years ago.

Sunday lunches are now a regular event where everyone has a chance to socialise. Four Sunday breakfasts are also organised per annum after the 9.00am Sunday Eucharist.

Fund-raising events take place three or four times a year in the form of Craft Days, Art Exhibition, Summer Fair and Winter Fair. Monday mornings from 10 to 12 noon is a drop in day in the church hall for those who wish to socialize and/or pursue crafts.



There is a quilt show annually in the area and our church is one of many that is decked out with quilts for 4 days.

St Mungo's congregation has a core of loyal members and a friendly attitude to visitors. Services lean towards the traditional/catholic side of the service, with robes worn for all occasions.

The church is not a rich church and like many others struggle at times to meet emergencies, but we get there in the end. At present St Mungo's could afford a part-time Priest in Charge.

St Mungo's needs a leader (priest in charge). The congregation will rally round any new priest and give all the support required.

## Choir

The choir is robed for services but small in numbers (4). We have a permanent organist who started with us in May. Sung Eucharist is held each Sunday with the choir leading the singing. The choir takes part in ecumenical services.

## **An outward looking church**

We are regularly represented at North West Regional Council of the Diocese, at the annual Diocesan Synod and one of our members is a member of the Diocesan council. Members attend Diocesan educational events.

St Mungo's is twinned with All Saints – Sharon Chapel, Alexandria, Virginia, USA. Members from their congregation have visited us over the years.



Ecumenical services are held throughout the area, e.g. Carol Service, Christian Aid, World day of Prayer, Walk of Witness (Good

Friday). St Mungo's is represented at ACTION OF CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THE VALE. There are also informal friendships and relationships amongst the churches.

St Mungo's Priest-in-Charge has traditionally been chaplain to a local primary school in Alexandria, taking services there and inviting classes to visit our church.

Currently in the vacancy we are supported by an Interim Priest-in-charge. We have a Lay Reader and Pastorial Assistant who make house calls and administer the reserve sacrament.

A member of the church has been a Community Councillor for the Balloch & Haldane area for over 10 years. Another member is involved with Senior Citizens organizations. Members of the church are active in many Trusts, community organizations and charities.

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## **Church Property Profile—Church and Hall**

The Church is on Main Street, Alexandria with ramp access. Street frontage has ample car parking for up to 20 cars. Parking is available within the curtilage but seldom used. The church is wind and watertight. Bus service to Balloch and Dumbarton stops outside the church, but service is unreliable on a Sunday.



Within the curtilage of the church is a Hall. There is a large expanse of grass area in front of the hall. The Hall is used by various organizations. These include: Dancing group, Mothers and Toddlers, Painting group, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides and local councillor for his Surgery. Saturdays and Sundays are for church use. The hall has had a major refit and additional area added to accommodate two toilets to meet the needs of both abled and disabled people. The kitchen is completely refurbished and meets all health and safety, hygiene regulations. The roof has been re-slatted in the last 2 years.

## **Rectory**

The Rectory is a substantial building just 20 metres from the church's back gate. It has 10 rooms and stands on a substantial curtilage. The building is wind and watertight and has had an inspection recently. A substantial amount of interior redecoration and upgrading is required and this will be done during the current vacancy.

A large tree to the front of the building may have to be removed or cut down in size in the coming months and the garden plots maintained. It is planned to have the rectory grounds cleared of some bushes and trees which have overgrown in the area of the house. Apple and Plum trees give a plentiful harvest in October and a large open grass area covers the back area of the house.

There is parking for 2 cars within the curtilage of the property and parking to the front of the house on the street.

## **St. Mungo's and the Community**

Although the 'parish' boundaries include very rural areas, some of which are in the administrative areas of Argyll and Bute and Stirlingshire, the majority of the population live in West Dunbartonshire (which also includes Dumbarton and Clydebank).

Like St Mungo's, West Dunbartonshire has an ageing population, with 18.8% aged 16 – 29 yrs and 22.7% aged 60+. There is a small net migration out of the area (mainly to other areas in Scotland). For every 100 women, there are 91 men. The black and minority ethnic population is less than 1%.

## **Environment**

Encompassing Loch Lomond, West Dunbartonshire has the highest proportion of fresh water in Scotland, most of which is high quality. Forty per cent of the land is classified as open countryside and a considerable amount of St. Mungo's environs sits within the National Park. Most of the regeneration in West Dunbartonshire is in Clydebank and Dumbarton though there is an Alexandria Town Centre Master Plan.

## **Health**

The Vale of Leven Hospital is situated in Alexandria. It was a general hospital but now has no Accident and Emergency Dept. and a number of other services have been withdrawn or down graded. This has been a loss to the community and travelling to Paisley is difficult for many. However, a new Centre for Health and Care is under construction within the grounds of the hospital and is due to open in 2013. This will provide accommodation for local GPs and other health and social services.

Life expectancy in West Dunbartonshire is lower than the Scottish average.

## **Education**

There is a recently built High School in Alexandria (though some pupils attend schools in Dumbarton) and numerous primary schools throughout the area covered by St Mungo's, including Gartocharn and Tarbet. Pupils from local primaries and the Vale of Leven High School attend Rainbows, Brownies and Guides at St Mungo's.

## **Child Poverty**

In May 2010, 7,000 children in West Dunbartonshire were living in households where either no-one was working or the family were working but in receipt of Working Tax Credit above the family element. This means that 43% of children could be considered poor (a 1% increase on the previous year).

## **Crime**

There was a 10% increase in reported crime in West Dunbartonshire from 2009 to 2010, most of which related to driving offences. The largest numbers of non driving offences are breach of the peace and vandalism/fire-raising. There is a Police Station in Alexandria.

## **Housing**

The housing stock in West Dunbartonshire consists of 58% owner occupied and 42% rented (mainly social). There were 215 homeless applications in the Vale of Leven in 2010/11. St Mungo's welcomes homeless visitors with food, warmth and companionship.

## **Employment**

At the end of August 2011, 66.7% of the local working age population were employed. This is 4.3% lower than the Scottish average and indicates the impact of the recession on the local economy. In the previous year, 4,000 jobs were lost. Glasgow is important to the local workforce because it has a higher jobs density. The Vale of Leven has a rich industrial history but now tourism is predominant.

## **Transport**

There are three railway stations in the vicinity of St Mungo's Church, Alexandria, Renton and Balloch with trains to Glasgow and beyond. There are a number of local bus services and Citylink services to Campbeltown, Oban and Uig from the A82 near Balloch. Taxi services are easily accessible at stances in Alexandria and Balloch as well as via the offices. More rural areas have less access to public transport.

## **Shops**

Alexandria has a variety of shops, including chemists, post office, two small supermarkets, butchers, bakers, fishmonger, cobbler, ironmonger, cafés and fast food.

Renton has a mini market and post office and a fairly new florist.

Gartocharn has a village shop and post office, also a new retail outlet with clothing, gifts and food together with a licensed coffee shop.

Drymen has a butcher, mini market, art gallery, post office delicatessen, coffee shop.

Balloch has a department store, clothing and shoe shops, small supermarket, antiques centre, post office, chemist, gift shop, newsagents, numerous cafes and restaurants.

### **Libraries and Leisure**

There are libraries in Alexandria, Balloch and Drymen. The Vale of Leven Swimming Pool has a small gym and there are private health

clubs at Cameron House Hotel, the Carrick and Buchanan Arms in Drymen. Alexandria and Renton have community centres and the Millenium Hall at Gartocharn hosts many interesting events including a well attended weekly craft and coffee morning. There are a number of parks in the area and Angling and Rowing clubs are based on the River Leven.

### **Summary**

St Mungo's is situated in an area of great beauty with warm people who have experienced much change. There are some obvious challenges but great opportunities to play an active part in the future of the Vale and Loch Lomondside.

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## **Appendix: Responses to questionnaire**

### **LIKES and DISLIKES**

Most of the people who responded to the questionnaire cited the beautiful surroundings and the parks in the area as the aspects that they most valued. Two specifically mentioned Balloch as being 'nice and quiet' though two others were concerned about the dilapidation of Balloch Castle.

'People' were high on the list of likes although 'swearing' and alcohol related behaviour was disliked by young and old alike. Two people in their 60s disliked the drug culture but interestingly, only the youngest group mentioned a dislike of smoking habits. Three people in their 70s disliked 'lack of respect' also chewing gum on the pavement.

Correspondents were enthusiastic about the libraries and two of the youngest age group would like to see bigger libraries with study space for high school pupils. Transport links and the swimming pool were highly valued, though one person would like to see a more integrated transport system. The hospital, schools and churches were mentioned positively by a third of the correspondents but there was concern about the removal of services from the Vale of Leven Hospital, especially Accident and Emergency.

Considering the high unemployment rate in the area, it was somewhat surprising that 'lack of jobs' was only mentioned by two people. Litter was cited most often as an aspect that was disliked about the area and a number of people said that 'the Vale' appeared run down, although one person did mention 'fine buildings' as an aspect that they really liked.

Although a few people said that they liked the shops, twice as many disliked them (or lack of them) particularly older people – one of whom said there were 'too many pubs and betting shops'. Two drivers mentioned the poor state of the roads.

Almost half of all correspondents use the transport links and a similar number are involved in some form of physical exercise – swimming being the most popular.

In terms of aspirations, high school pupils would like bigger libraries, a better swimming pool, a better hospital and an outdoor centre. Two people aged 70 plus would like a tennis court in the Kilmarnock area. Other aspirations include a cinema (the nearest one is in Clydebank), a big supermarket and to see the 'Maid of the Loch' operational on Loch Lomond.