

Galloway Lourdes Hospitalité

Presidents Report 2025

Hello everyone,

Thank you for joining us today, it seems no time since we were here in Ayr for our last World day of Prayer for the Sick Mass and AGM.

The in between year is always a bit quieter for us but don't worry I have still got things to tell you.

In March some of our council members were able to attend the Bishops Ordination, it was wonderful to be able to witness another historic event of the diocese. We look forward to getting to know him better in Lourdes this summer.

Whithorn National Pilgrimage – In August many of our members joined our diocese for the 100th Anniversary of the pilgrimage, it was a bit of a wild day for Mass on the beach, but we managed to pack into the church and catch up with friends during the day.

I was part of the stewarding team at the Carfin National Pilgrimage in September, it was a truly special day, joining the faithful of the country to celebrate Mass with Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Maury Buendia and Bishops of Scotland including our own Bishop, Frank Dougan who was the homilist. It was great to see familiar faces from our diocese and beyond. Bishop Frank assured me we had the best banner in the place.

Treasurer & Secretary roles – This year Myriame Sammons stood down as treasurer, Myriame has been doing the role for a number of years she has kept a tight ship with the finances of the group and her work of the 50/50 club, which has, and continues to offer financial support for those in need who wish to travel to Lourdes, Myriame will continue doing the 50/50 club, so thank you Myriame. Myriame handed the ledgers over to Christine Merrick who has taken on the role, good luck Christine.

Lynsey May also stepped down as secretary this year too when Lynsey first started as secretary, I think she sent the minutes by carrier pigeon so time to hand over the role, she fulfilled the role whilst starting her wee family who we sometimes have had them along as mini committee members, Lynsey will continue in her role as recruitment and safeguarding officer. Thank you, Lynsey, for your years of minute taking for our business meetings and AGM preparations. Lynsey has handed over to Jason McMillan who joined the committee from Youth for Lourdes, so he knows the ropes, good luck Jason.

This year we welcomed 2 new members to the committee – Martin Duffy and Gillian Thomson, both whom have vast experience in Lourdes over the years, and are currently fulfilling their role in the hospitalier team. We thank them both most sincerely for joining us.

Recruitment – We are still recruiting for the current pilgrimage if anyone is interested in signing up in a volunteers role please speak to Lynsey our recruitment and safeguarding officer. Many of us here can confirm that a week spent in Lourdes volunteering is quite unique, you become part of a special community, making friends for life and connections with other diocese too. Working with our assisted pilgrims brings a great sense of joy and you feel a great bond with them during a special week.

On our last pilgrimage our assisted pilgrims resided in the hotel, they all really enjoyed the experience as they were in the thick of it with our general pilgrims around to chat to and forming friendships with. We are carrying out the same model this pilgrimage, this is again due to the size of our medical team and the ability to staff a round the clock service in the Accueil where the assisted pilgrims who require more acute support traditionally reside.

We have been using Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Kilmarnock for our council meetings and we would like to thank them for accommodating us over the year.

I would like to thank Fr Gerald, Fr Jim and all the team on the Galloway Lourdes Hospitalite Council for their continued hard work and commitment over the past year.

As we journey together in this jubilee year we look forward to being Pilgrims of Hope in Lourdes

Thanks for listening!