



A Message from The Prior

Dear St John friends,

I look forward to seeing many of you at this year's Festival events, being hosted by Ayrshire and Arran, on 25th and 26th June. I am delighted to say that we will be honoured this year by the attendance of our Lord Prior, Professor Mark Compton AM GCStJ of Sydney, who will carry out the Investiture and speak at lunch. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Festival events.

I know that all in St John Scotland will be delighted to hear of the award in the King's Birthday Honours of an OBE to Michael Cook KStJ, our past Receiver-General and the first CEO of the Eye Hospital, for services to St John.

I was very pleased to appoint Elizabeth Roads, LVO, CStJ as Chancellor earlier in the year. Elizabeth is well known to many of us through St John and her other charitable and chivalric activities, and I am delighted to welcome her to our Board.

I would also like to welcome our new Director of Ceremonies, Colin Russell CStJ, who has been part of the ceremonial team for some years and has led the ceremonial arrangements for this year's Festival.

Sadly, a number of people who have given dedicated service to St John have died recently. John Ferguson-Smith, our former Hospitaller, died in February and his very well-attended funeral in Auchterarder was a fitting tribute to his life. A fine memorial service for our late Limner, Mark Dennis CStJ, was held in St Andrews at the end of February. Obituaries of both of



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these significant contributors to St John Scotland will be in this year's handbook. We have also heard of the death of Mrs Katharine Liston, DStJ, at the age of 95 and William Sands Sommerville KStJ.

We are making good progress in refreshing and updating our strategy, building on our existing plans rather than changing direction. This work has been shaped through discussion with our Area Chairs, ensuring their insights and experience are reflected as we strengthen how we deliver our activities and support the communities we serve.

In the meantime, Barri Millar and the staff team continue to play a key role in enabling delivery across the organisation, working alongside our volunteers to ensure that the right systems, guidance and leadership are in place to support our shared work.

Internationally, our friends in the St John Eye Hospital Group work tirelessly in the most demanding of circumstances to deliver sight-saving screening and treatment to a highly vulnerable group of patients. I know how much they appreciate the regular and additional grants which St John Scotland and members provide.

Finally, may I thank all of you for your dedicated and hard work in all the many roles we need to deliver our charitable aims throughout Scotland and within the Order here and abroad.

Simon Mackintosh KStJ

Prior



Recent weeks have provided valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships, promote the work of St John Scotland, and continue building our organisation's future. I was pleased to attend the launch of St Andrew's First Aid's new strategy, which highlighted the shared commitment across our sector to improving health, wellbeing, and community support throughout Scotland. Opportunities like this reinforce the importance of collaboration between organisations with shared values and a common commitment to serving communities.

It was also a privilege to speak with Anne, Princess Royal, whose connection to the wider St John family spans many decades. Having opened the Chancery on St John Street in 1972, her longstanding association with the

Order made the opportunity especially meaningful and provided a welcome chance to reflect on the enduring importance of voluntary service.

Partnership working remains a key priority for us. Most recently, I met with the CEO of Volunteer Scotland to explore how we can further strengthen support for our volunteers and ensure that volunteering with St John Scotland remains a positive and rewarding experience.

Internally, I am delighted that Rachel, our new Communications and Marketing Executive, has settled into the role and is already making a positive impact. Members and supporters will begin to see continued improvements across our social media, digital communications and website as we strengthen how we tell our story and connect with the public.

This is where everyone can help. Every time you like, comment on or share one of our social media posts, you help raise awareness of our work and introduce St John Scotland to new audiences. Public awareness matters because it helps more people understand the services we provide, the difference our volunteers make, and the opportunities to get involved.

Thank you for the part you each play in supporting St John Scotland. By working together and championing our mission, we can continue to grow our impact across Scotland.

Barri Millar

Chief Operating Officer

Blantyre Primary Health Care Project

The Blantyre Primary Health Care (PHC) Project, funded by St John Scotland and delivered by St John Malawi, has continued to deliver strong results, improving health outcomes across multiple communities through a prevention-led approach aligned with Malawi's national health priorities and Sustainable Development Goal 3.

Focusing on community health, family health, nutrition, and first aid training, the project exceeded most of its targets this year. More than 51,000 people were reached through safe motherhood initiatives, while hygiene and sanitation education significantly surpassed expectations. Nutrition campaigns, household visits, and cooking demonstrations also helped improve awareness of balanced diets and child health.

A major strength of the programme has been its trained volunteer network, with door-to-door engagement driving positive behaviour change around sanitation, disease prevention, and early referral of vulnerable groups. In total, 108 integrated outreach clinics were delivered, expanding access to immunisation, family planning, and primary healthcare services.

The project also responded effectively to public health risks, including cholera prevention campaigns delivered alongside local health authorities, while ongoing first aid training in schools and communities continues to build long-term resilience and life-saving skills.

Despite ongoing challenges, including cultural barriers and limited resources, the project demonstrates the significant impact of community-led healthcare and has built a strong foundation for continued success in 2026–2027.



Mountain Safety Instructor Report

The St John Scotland Mountain Safety Instructor project has continued to grow and evolve over the past semester, supporting student mountaineers across Scotland while also helping raise awareness of the wider work of St John Scotland.

A key focus this autumn has been strengthening our social media presence, particularly on Instagram, which continues to be the most effective platform for reaching student-age mountaineers. Posts are regularly shared by university clubs, helping expand our reach and engagement across the student mountaineering community.

The collaborative approach with university clubs, including shared and co-authored posts, has been particularly successful in increasing visibility and encouraging participation in training opportunities.



Scottish Parliament Defib & Training

In March, St John Scotland marked an important milestone in its mission to improve community resilience, with the installation of a new Public Access Defibrillator (PAD) outside the Scottish Parliament.

The initiative was formally recognised during a visit to Holyrood, where representatives from St John Scotland met with The Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, to acknowledge the significance of the installation. The team at the Parliament were also extremely complimentary of the CPR and defib training they received from the Edinburgh area as part of the installation.

PADs play a critical role in responding to out-of-hospital cardiac arrests, where early intervention can dramatically increase survival rates. By placing

lifesaving equipment in highly visible and accessible public spaces, organisations can help ensure that more people are equipped to act in an emergency.

Speaking on the partnership, Barri Millar said: “St John Scotland is proud to support the Scottish Parliament with a new Public Access Defibrillator. We are committed to strengthening community resilience across Scotland and ensuring lifesaving equipment is accessible in every community.”

This latest installation reflects a continued commitment to improving public safety, while reinforcing the importance of collaboration in delivering meaningful, lifesaving impact across Scotland.





St John Scotland expanding access to defibs in Glasgow's highest-need communities

St John Scotland is expanding access to life-saving defibrillators across Glasgow, focusing on communities facing the greatest health inequalities. The initiative will see public access defibrillators (PADs) installed in high-need areas, ensuring more people can access vital equipment in the event of a cardiac arrest. Early defibrillation and CPR significantly increase survival rates, particularly before emergency services arrive.

The first nine PADs are being installed at Queens Cross Housing Association, sponsored by the Lord Provost of Glasgow, Jacqueline McLaren. The project has been made possible through a legacy gift to the Crichton Fund, enabling targeted investment where it can have the greatest impact.

Cabinets were installed free of charge by WrightKerr All Trades Ltd, supporting the project through its partnership with Queens Cross Housing Association.

Alongside the installations, St John Scotland will deliver CPR and defibrillator training to local residents and staff, helping build confidence to respond in an emergency. Training sessions will be announced soon.

Barri Millar, Chief Operating Officer at St John Scotland, said: "Access to defibrillators and the confidence to use them can make a life-saving difference. This initiative ensures equipment is available where it's needed most, while giving communities the skills to act."

Lord Provost Jacqueline McLaren said: "This initiative will bring vital equipment into communities where it can make the greatest difference, while also giving people the confidence and training to use it."

Shona Stephen, Chief Executive of Queens Cross Housing Association, said: "This project shows what's possible when organisations work together to tackle inequality and put people first."

Further installations are planned as the programme expands across the city.

An Update from the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem

Thanks to your generous support, our Jerusalem-based mobile outreach service has continued to provide vital sight-saving care to underserved communities, despite ongoing movement restrictions, insecurity and economic hardship.

Last year, the outreach team reached 15,519 patients across remote villages, schools, refugee camps and community centres – an increase of 16.5% on the previous year. More than half of those treated were children. So far this year, over 3,800 people have been seen by the service, of whom more than 60% are children.

Around 10–15% of patients present with more serious conditions such as cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and squints, and are referred to our Jerusalem Hospital and satellite clinics for further investigation and treatment, helping to prevent avoidable sight loss.

Demand remains particularly high among women and children, with more than 600 children referred from school-based screenings alone. Alongside clinical care, the team also provides eye health education, reaching over 4,500 patients and 2,000 family members last year, helping improve long-term awareness and prevention.

Your support has also enabled the service to expand into new communities in the Jordan Valley, strengthening relationships with local councils, schools and health centres. Patient stories such as Nadia from Jericho (pictured) whose diabetic retinopathy was identified through the mobile clinic and referred for urgent specialist care, demonstrate the life-changing impact of this work. Living with diabetes, Nadia had never been able to access an ophthalmologist due to distance and cost. When our mobile clinic visited her community, she received her first full eye exam, was diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy, and was referred for urgent specialist care.

The retinal laser unit, kindly provided by The Priory of Scotland, remains in use in the West Bank until it can be safely transported into Gaza, where it will provide essential treatment for diabetic retinopathy and help prevent avoidable blindness.



Volunteers Wanted

Are you ready to make a difference in your local community?

St John Scotland is currently seeking volunteers across the country to support our life-saving work in communities nationwide.

We are recruiting for a range of roles, including CPR Leads, Patient Transport Drivers and PAD Volunteers. Each role plays a vital part in helping us deliver CPR awareness and education, support patients and expand access to life-saving equipment where it's needed most.

Whether it's teaching others the skills to respond in an emergency, helping transport patients to vital appointments, or supporting the rollout and maintenance of PADs, our volunteers make a real and lasting difference every day.

You may not be in a position to volunteer yourself, but someone you know might be, so please do help us spread the word.

To apply, email volunteer@stjohnscotland.org.uk



Passing of Janet Knox

It is with deep regret that we share the passing of our former Area Liaison Officer and colleague, Janet Knox.

Janet was a valued member of the St John Scotland team, known for her commitment, professionalism and the genuine care she brought to her role. During her time with us, she played an important part in supporting our work across local communities, building strong relationships and embodying the values that sit at the heart of St John Scotland. Our thoughts are with Janet's family and friends at this difficult time.

Upcoming Events

11am, 26th June 2026

The Festival of St John in Scotland
Alloway Parish Church, KA7 4PQ

