

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 2026)

Mauchline Holy Fair



"The queen of Mauchline Holy Fair is grand an' haur in daft!"

‘MAUCHLINE HOLY FAIR SET FOR BEST YEAR YET’

Saturday 30th May 2026 will see the unassuming East Ayrshire town of Mauchline come to life history and music for the historic ‘Holy Fair’ – the biggest and best

The unique event embraces all the elements of the traditional fairs that the national Bard – Robert Burns – would have attended, and fuses this with modern music, fun and games for the perfect family day out!

The free event traditionally opens with the traditional lone piper at the top of the church tower – followed by the beloved parade which returned in 2025 – with participants dressed on the theme of ‘Keeping Burns Alive’. Bagpipes lead the procession of local people in traditional dress and uniformed groups round to Loudoun Street Car Park, where the event is officially opened.

This year, visitors will be able to explore 5 free live music stages – with the return of the two newest performance spaces: ‘Burn’s Howf’ hosted by Sundancer, and the ‘Jean Armour Stage’

As always, Mauchline Parish Church have collated an amazing lineup of local talent, including the pupils of Mauchline Primary School, the Dunaskin and Doon Brass Band, as well as the musical stylings of Coast Harmony.

The ‘Nanse Tinnock Stage’ is now a staple of the event, and will return to Castle Street, hosted by friends of the fair – The Burns Bachelors Performers. This talented group showcase their amazing membership of local Burnsians, musicians, poets and storytellers! The National Trust property across the road, the Burns House Museum, will also open with fascinating exhibits to explore.

The Main Stage Lineup brings a feast of energy and joy this year, with upbeat fan favourites for all tastes. This year we will travel through various genres of music including the classic pop sound of Voyage – The ABBA Tribute, iconic soul tracks from The Divas Soul Band, as well as the rockabilly stylings of Ayrshire legends – The Peas. We return to our roots with traditional Scottish music from Ken O’Hara and Burness, and the amazing dancers of Sophie Oliver School of Highland Dancing. The dancing continues with DCB Dance Co. and a special ceilidh hosted by the fantastic Borland Ceilidh Band! The 2026 lineup brings a great selection of acts with music for all tastes.

Elsewhere on site, the ‘weans’ can explore our Children’s area – where they can learn with UnderSky, be entertained by the legendary Uncle Billy and his ‘Magical Fantastic Show’. By the church, families can admire the ingenuity of the Ayr Model Railway Club at the Church Halls before stopping for tea and cake! They may even meet some feathered friends with Own Magic in the grounds! All the talented entrants to the Mauchline Holy Fair Art Competition will be available to view, and you may even be mesmerised by professional artists doing live paintings! Nearby, on High Street towards the school, visitors can enjoy exploring a variety of vintage vehicles on display – including several fire engines!

Mauchline Holy Fair 2026

Oscar, Primary 7 at Mauchline Primary School told us: “My favourite thing about the Holy Fair is getting to go out with my pals, getting to do loads of stuff and having my family around. I’m most looking forward to getting outside, getting to see a community coming together, and see all the stuff that makes Mauchline, Mauchline!”

There will be more than 100 market stalls, offering a variety of local makers, bakers, crafters, vendors and local groups. In addition, a small selection of craft stalls within the Centre Stane, where the ever-popular team from the Mauchline Masonic will be hosting Teas and Coffees, making a welcome return having been missed for a number of years. The Cowgate will once again host the funfair with activities and rides to suit all the family!

Visitors to Mauchline report a magical feeling of walking the streets once walked by Robert Burns himself, seeing everyone in traditional dress while enjoying Scots tunes and local foods.

Oscar added: “Robert Burns is really good because he brings a strong heritage to Mauchline, he’s from Scotland and is really successful! Mauchline Primary do loads of learning on it and have lots of opportunities to do stuff like his poems, art and fun activities.”

The Mauchline Holy Fair truly is a unique event which perfectly highlights the heritage and culture of our area in a contemporary celebration which offered something for everyone.

Holy Fair Chairman High McLanachan, said: “The feedback from 2025 was so positive. We are working hard to continue to grow the event and wish to expand - including more stalls, more music areas, more living historians, grow our popular Art Competitions, and continue to develop the events wonderful reputation. We are determined to put the town on the map and establish Mauchline Holy Fair as an internationally the significant event that it has all the potential to become. It’s fantastic to see the community get behind the event every year and to see everything come together on the day. It makes all the hard work throughout the year worthwhile.”

Local Councillor William Lennox said: “I feel enormously privileged to have such an incredible and unique event in my hometown. I’m extremely grateful to the dedicated group of volunteers who organise such a unique spectacle year on year, not only for the benefit of locals, but for people from across East Ayrshire and beyond.

Mauchline Holy Fair is one of the largest public events in East Ayrshire and I see firsthand the positive impact the event week has on our local economy, and the excitement and sense of well-being that it brings to the town. The benefits that heritage events like this have for local pride, tourism and community spirit are immeasurable.

I give my full and wholehearted support to the Holy Fair team in their commendable aspirations to develop and grow this historic community event.”

The Mauchline Holy Fair is delivered each year by a small team of passionate volunteers. Without the support of local people, businesses and funders; the event would not be possible.

The team would like to thank this year’s funders thus far, including Event Scotland, The National Lottery Community Fund, The Jean Armour Trust, and the Corra Foundation.

Rebecca Edser, Head of EventScotland, said: “I’m thrilled that Mauchline Holy Fair 2026 is being supported through EventScotland’s National Funding Programme. This funding is aimed at encouraging visitors from outside the area to join the festivities in Robert Burns hometown, boosting the local and Scottish economy and showcasing our world-class tourism and events offering. I’m sure everyone will be met with a warm Ayrshire welcome as people from inside and outside of the community come together to celebrate the National Bard.”

If you would like to support the 2026 event or get involved in the planning of this unique celebration, please contact the team on hello@mauchlinehollyfair.com.

Sponsorship options for 2026 event available now!

See you there! – Saturday 30th May 2026!

NOTES TO EDITOR

For further information please contact Claire Bryan on admin@mauchlinehollyfair.com

Logos attached to email.

PHOTOS:

1. AYR MODEL RAILWAY GROUP
2. BY THE CHURCH HALLS
3. CHILDRENS ART COMP
4. LIVE ARTIST
5. MAIN STAGE MUSIC
6. MAUCHLINE PARISH CHURCH
7. PARADE 1
8. PIPE BAND
9. SOPHIE OLIVER SCHOOL OF HIGHLAND DANCE
10. TEAS IN THE CHURCH HALL

Background info:

Mauchline Holy Fair is one of the oldest village fairs in Scotland, dating back to at least the 1700s and immortalised in Robert Burns' poem of the same name. It is a unique community-run event catering to 12,000+ visitors each year. It's open to all and celebrates local heritage by bringing history to life for both residents and visitors to the area. The fair takes place on the last Saturday in May, and is a very important date for the town, as well as visitors who travel from across Ayrshire and beyond. It takes place across the town centre, with every inch of available space in use on event day. Part of the charm of this event is that it winds its way throughout the cobbled streets once walked by Robert Burns himself – as well as taking over the car parks, church and halls, Centre Stane, local shops, grounds of the castle, and of course the road closures to facilitate the safe movement of visitors. The parade travels through the town, starting from the fire station, with all the businesses on the route getting involved – as well as the participants from the local schools. The children also pack out the church every year with their poetry recitals and musical stylings. The unique event embraces all the elements of the traditional fairs, and fuses this with modern music, community involvement, fun and games for the perfect family day out! Local businesses report increased sales around the fair weekend, and the accommodation providers are always booked up way in advance, showing the positive impact on local trade.