

Bishops told to prepare for papal visit

Francis is considering a stopover for the COP26 climate gathering, as **Kaya Burgess and Tom Kington** write

Every time that papal feet have touched down on Scottish soil in the past, tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of people have turned out to attend Mass celebrated by the Pope.

If Francis comes to Glasgow this year his audience will probably be confined to world leaders attending the COP26 climate change conference, but the impact could still be considerable if it encourages them to commit to tougher action in the fight against climate change.

The Times understands that the Pope is considering making his first visit to Scotland for the crucial environmental meeting in November, with discussions taking place “at the highest level”.

The Bishops’ Conference of Scotland is understood to have been told to prepare for the possibility of a papal visit at the time of the COP26 climate gathering.

His political visits, such as to address the European parliament in Strasbourg, have tended to be flying one-day trips, but Catholic bishops in Scotland have said that they “would warmly welcome his presence, however briefly, in this country”.

The fight against climate change is a topic that is close to the Pope’s heart. He has repeatedly urged world leaders to take action. In 2019 he declared a global “climate emergency”, before going on to warn that: “Future generations stand to inherit a greatly spoiled world.”

Francis used his considerable influence before the COP21 conference

Scottish bishops have been told to prepare for a visit by Francis, above

in Paris in 2015, delivering a speech in the UN’s offices in Nairobi just days before the gathering to urge leaders to hammer out an agreement and issuing his famous *Laudato Si’* encyclical, a public letter warning of a “disturbing warming of the climatic system” and calling for a change to the human activities that “produce or aggravate it”.

The Pope has dispatched his senior diplomat, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, to previous COP meetings, but it is understood that the Vatican is considering whether a personal visit from the pontiff would send a stronger signal.

The UK’s ambassador to the Holy See was given a private audience with the Pope last month. Sally Axworthy did not comment on whether the prospect of a papal visit was raised, but she told *The Times*: “Everyone who is a member of the UN framework convention on climate change can attend and that includes the Holy See, which has observer status.”

“It is perfectly possible they will attend but it is up to them to decide the level of representation.”

On a sweltering June day in 1982 an estimated 300,000 worshippers packed into Bellahouston Park for the first UK visit by a Pope.

John Paul II had already kissed the ground on his arrival, addressed 45,000 young people at Murrayfield and had spoken to Scottish bishops before heading to Glasgow on June 1.

He was greeted by seven minutes of applause at the park, at an event that was policed by 6,000 officers and 7,000 stewards. He was offered gifts including a pipe banner with the Pope’s coat of arms, a firkin of whisky and a Scotland football shirt.

It would be almost 30 years before the next papal visit, when Benedict XVI came in 2010.

Between 65,000 and 75,000 people returned to Bellahouston Park to see him lead an open-air Mass on the first day of his UK visit in which he urged



Some 300,000 worshippers turned out for John Paul II in Glasgow in 1982; the Duke of Edinburgh greeted Benedict XVI in 2010

A relationship sanctified with ‘the real holy water’

Scots have travelled to Rome to train to become priests for more than 400 years.

The Pontifical Scots College was established in 1616, four miles from the Vatican, to train men for the priesthood. Last year Pope Francis visited the college and was presented with a

bottle of Oban malt. He said: “Questa e la vera acqua santa” – “This is the real holy water.”

It was announced in December that the college would be sold to allow for a relocation to a more central location.

In 2017 treasures from Rome and the Vatican went on display

at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. In the same year the Right Rev Derek Browning, the moderator of the Church of Scotland, met the pope at the Vatican, where he said the two churches now enjoyed a relationship of “true fraternity”.

people to resist “more aggressive forms of secularism” and warned that some people wanted to paint religious belief as a “threat to equality and liberty”.

It was reported in 2016 that Francis could make his first trip to Scotland to sign a charter against extremism, but the trip never went ahead.

A spokesman for the Scottish Catholic Church said: “While the decision on whether or not the Pope attends the UN climate summit in Glasgow will be a matter entirely for the Holy See, Scotland’s Catholic bishops would warmly welcome his presence, however briefly, in this country.”

Phew, guilt-free oat milk has arrived

Greig Cameron

In a move likely to delight eco-conscious millennials as much as the lactose intolerant, a Scottish company is to begin delivering glass bottles of oat milk to doorsteps.

McQueens Dairies has been supplying the product to homes since the middle of last year in cartons but has been inundated with requests to supply it in reusable glass bottles. It has agreed a supply deal with Oato, a producer based in Lancashire.

The non-dairy alternative is made with British oats and will cost £1.29 for a delivered pint.

The popularity of alternative dairy products has been growing alongside an increasing number of people embracing veganism.

Research by Kantar published in July last year showed sales of oat milk in the UK had almost doubled year on year to £94.3 million.

Coffee shop chains such as Starbucks, Caffè Nero and Costa also now

typically have the alternative on their menus.

Oatly, a Swedish firm which uses oats to make milks, cheeses and other products, has recently hired investment bankers to look at floating on public markets in the United States amid reports it expects to raise \$1 billion of new capital. The brand last year attracted investment from high-profile backers such as Oprah Winfrey, the chat show host, Natalie Portman, the actress, and the Roc Nation business that is overseen by Jay-Z, the rapper.

In December it emerged that the Duchess of Sussex had put money into Clever Blends, a US start-up specialising in instant oat milk lattes.

McQueens said the Oato glass bottles will be delivered from all 12 of its depots to customers across Scotland and the north of England.

Calum McQueen, the operations director, said: “We’ve seen demand for milk supplied in reusable glass bottles, and for oat milk, increasing so we’re pleased to be working with Oato to sup-

ply customers with bottled oat milk.” Carl Hopwood, the founder of Oato, said he was keen to hear feedback from customers who order the milk.

“We’re delighted to supply Oato through McQueens Dairies, we’re aligned with their mission to delight customers everyday whilst reducing plastic waste,” he said.

Reactions on social media to the development were generally positive. On Twitter, Laura Young, an advocate for sustainability, wrote “finally plastic-free local oat milk”.

McQueens has seen a sharp rise in demand for its deliveries since the first lockdown in March last year.

McQueens founded in 1995 by husband and wife team Mick and Meg McQueen, opened a new dairy facility in East Kilbride during November with plans to create up to 100 new jobs.

It has other depots in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Kirkcaldy, Galashiels, Mansfield, Bradford, Warrington, Preston, Stockton on Tees, Carlisle and Sheffield.

Gordonstoun calls chaotic parish council to order

Mike Wade

A Scottish private school that taught three generations of the royal family has offered Handforth parish council training to improve their negotiation skills.

Millions around the world watched clips of a council meeting at which members were insulted, muted or kicked out, shooting Jackie Weaver, the chief officer, to fame.

Lisa Kerr, the principal of Gordonstoun School in Moray, has now stepped in to offer the parish councilors lessons in negotiation.

“Handforth parish council’s meeting revealed an adversarial and unproductive approach to proceedings which is sadly all too common in modern public debate,” she said.

Jackie Weaver, star of the Handforth council clip

“With role models like that, we are in danger of leaving the next generation ill-equipped with the skills for respectful negotiation too.”

“In order for society to advance, the next generation needs to know how to listen and reach the best outcome for all.” Gordonstoun is holding a symposium on online dialogue that reflects how much work is now done digitally.

“We believe this is an important skill which needs to be developed and we would be delighted if the

members of Handforth parish council would join us; I’m sure they would find the workshops very useful,” Kerr said. The school has tweeted an invitation to the

council but is yet to receive a reply.

