

St Bride's Renovation

Parish meeting on 29 November 2015

1. **Chairman's welcome by Mary Pirie**
2. **Opening Prayer led by Father Rafal**
3. **Update on Building Works (John Hastings – JH)**

Parish Centre: Construction re-started on Friday 27, after a prolonged delay due to an issue with location of drains. The hole has now been infilled with clinker and we will soon see the erection of the external shell. The hall will continue to be used while external construction takes place. We are still assessing precisely when the fit-out of the extended kitchen and bar area will occur. Although the kitchen and bar refit will have some effect on the use of the Parish Centre, the main hall will be unaffected and available for use throughout.

Church – Minor works: Largely complete. The remaining element of the £91K grant, which has to be taken up by 23 December has been used to buy bricks to repair the building. It was necessary to secure approval for the size, colour and texture from Historic Scotland; for this purpose a panel of the proposed bricks was constructed between the hall and the church. The site officer from Historic Scotland visited on Monday 23 November and approval has now been given, allowing the balance of the grant to be spent on acquiring bricks. Repairs to the internal brickwork can be carried out in tandem with external repairs.

Church – Major works: On schedule.

- The project involves structural strengthening, replacing the roof, repairing the frames of the light canons, new glass, gutter repair, brick and mortar repair, drain repair and new lighting. All work has been tendered and contractors have been appointed.
- External scaffolding will be erected in December to kick start project in first week of January. (This couldn't be done until approval was granted for purchase of bricks.) The scaffolding won't go right up to the roof until work starts. Safe access for the congregation will be preserved until the church closes.
- The Church will remain open during this period – the last Sunday service will be Epiphany Sunday (3 Jan)
- Sunday Masses (and Saturday Vigil) will then be celebrated in the High School from Sat 9 /Sun 10 Jan.
- The same scaffolding will be used for both brickwork and roof repairs.
- The site will be protected by a fence, and there will be no access through the piazza to Platthorn Drive.
- The Parish Library will still be accessible, and the priest will have access to the Sacristy.
- Site offices will be erected on hard standing alongside the car park facing Whitemoss Avenue. This will mean about half the Pastoral Centre Car Park is lost. However, the School carpark will be available for the Saturday evening/ Sunday morning Masses as part of the let.
- The hall forecourt will be used for loading/unloading, but a pathway will be maintained.

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- A hoist for transporting materials and a chute for debris will be installed. Cranes not suitable for this site.
- The Contractor has planned a 30 week project, which would mean completion by end July (although we have generally worked to an expectation of the church re-opening in September).
- In early January, the Contractor will conduct a preliminary survey of the site and services, to ensure that everything is reinstated in good order at the end of the project.
- When the project begins in January, the scaffolding will be completed up to roof level. Then the pews will be removed and internal scaffolding installed, which will allow the removal of the ceiling struts and lights, and the erection of a safety platform for the workforce.
- Once the external scaffolding is in place, new wall ties will be inserted through the mortar (not bricks) to strengthen the walls.
- Avonside Roofing will strip off the roof, working section by section to ensure that no part of the roof is left exposed overnight.
- A new covering will be installed on the roof – the existing covering is 28 years old but only had a predicted 25 year lifespan. The advances in technology since then mean a longer lifespan is predicted for the new roof. This “wrap” will come over the top of the parapet which will help solve the problem of water ingress.
- New wired glass panels will be installed in the existing windows to improve natural light in the building.
- Safety walkways will be created to allow access for maintenance in the roof space and on the roof.
- The light cannons will be renovated by Blakes of Edinburgh. Existing copper will be reused wherever possible, and any scrap metal will be sold to feed revenue back into the project.
- Brickwork repairs will follow on from roofing repairs. Historic Scotland wants any bricks that are structurally sound to be left in situ, even if there is cosmetic damage. Removing one brick can damage half a dozen around it – which adds greatly to the cost.
- Then the ceiling struts will be replaced and new LED lights installed – brighter and with a longer lifespan, allowing a maintenance programme every 5 years or so.
- Finally, there will be another service review to ensure that the church is returned to its original state.
- There is a proposal to install webcams to allow the progress of the work to be viewed.
- The option of underfloor heating was investigated but the additional cost of £81,000 was deemed unaffordable at this stage.

Additional project – the boiler which provides heating and hot water for the chapel house and sacristy is obsolete (parts no longer available) and very inefficient. We will replace this in the next few weeks. The cost is around £10,000 and is an unbudgeted expense with no grants available.

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4. Update on costs and fundraising (JH)

Thank you to all donors.

- The first stage of fundraising was completed in July, because we had to raise £102,000 as the parish's contribution to secure the £1million grant from the Landfill Community Fund through Viridor.
- We are in advanced discussion with the Heritage Lottery Fund and we hope to secure a grant of £250,000 (split between Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund).
- We have applied to five other major grant-funding bodies and expect to hear about progress of our applications soon. If all applications were successful it could mean another £100,000 in grants
- We also anticipate that we will be able to apply for the reclaim of VAT on the project through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Even if we receive the benefit of all of these grants, there will still be further contributions required from the parish – estimated at around £500,000. The Diocese will provide a loan to the parish, but this is limited to a sum the Diocese can afford and that the parish can be expected to repay over time. The Diocesan loan will not be sufficient to meet the full costs of the project, which have increased. We estimate a shortfall of about £100,000 so we need further fundraising in the near term (i.e. before July 2016), which may perhaps be added to by Giftaid, legacies etc. It's also possible there may be minor savings on the costs as the project develops.

In addition, we need to meet the £10,000 cost of the new heating system for the church house. JH mentioned that the government had recently issued notifications of the £200 winter fuel payment. If a number of parishioners in receipt of this payment (and who had no particular need of it to meet their own fuel requirements) were to gift aid this amount to the parish, it would help towards the cost of the new boiler.

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5. Parish services over period of church closure:

- The church will close in the first week in January.
- A parish work party will be needed to remove statues, etc to safe storage before the contractors come on site.
- The sound system will be dismantled
- The hall will be available Mon – Fri for morning Masses
- The Parish Centre has a long-term booking for Saturday morning, so this Mass will probably be suspended – there are 3 other Saturday morning Masses in EK
- We have arranged a let of the High School for the 6pm Vigil Mass (Saturday) and the 9:30 and 11:30 Masses on Sunday.
- Sunday evening Mass will take place in the main hall of the Parish Centre, as will weekday masses.
- The Parish Together Committee is putting plans in place for the management of services in the High School and the Hall – the let is Saturday 5.30-7.30, and Sunday 8.30-1.00. The Committee will visit the school to view seating arrangements etc (janitorial staff will set out chairs each week)
- The Committee will conduct an audit of what tasks need to be done by parishioners to facilitate each Mass – sacristans , welcomers, etc
- A robing room will likely be provided next to the school oratory for clergy and servers
- Storage space is being negotiated within the school
- The cost will be £400 per week, negotiated by Councillor Mitchell.
- Against this can be offset savings on heating of approx. £140 per week
- All three Children's Liturgy groups will take place in the Hall (P1-P2 currently use the library but that will be too close to site works) – there is a 100yd walk from the hall entrance to the school
- Midweek parking may be a problem, as contractors need access. They have already met with School Council to arrange safe delivery times outwith the times of the school run and pupils' lunch breaks.
- Funerals will be held in other parishes in the Deanery
- Sacramental masses, such as First Communions, will be in Our Lady of Lourdes.

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6. Question and Answer Session

Q: There is no disabled access to the chapelhouse and Canon Ryan is housebound. Why is this not part of the project? Why can the Diocese not fund this work?

JH: Control of the project rests with the Diocese of Motherwell, who commissioned the work in 2010-11. The work has only been possible due to the scale of grants that have been available, mainly from Viridor. Grants have been awarded due to the architectural significance of the church. The chapelhouse is part of the listed building complex, which means that any work there needs permission from Historic Scotland. Permission for disabled access was sought from Historic Scotland in September and was granted in November, which means that a planning application can now be submitted. In the meantime, upgrading of the heating is the most urgent priority, since if the boiler fails the chapelhouse will be unusable.

The Trustees of the Diocese of Motherwell own the church building, but its maintenance is the responsibility of the parishioners. The Diocese has no independent funds to disburse for parish repairs – all the parishes contribute what they can to central funds and cross-subsidise each other according to need.

Q: What plans are there to raise the shortfall of £100,000?

JH: We're still not sure how much grant funding we will receive – it could be more (or less) than anticipated. Also, it's not possible to predict at this stage how much the brick repairs will cost. We hope to have a clearer idea of the amount of shortfall as we hear from the funding bodies and as the project progresses. However, once again the onus is on parishioners to raise funds by whatever means they can.

Q: In view of the commitment shown by parishioners in raising the third party contribution to unlock the main grant from Viridor, can the Diocese not support the parish with funding?

JH: The Diocese operates as a kind of mutual institution, with some parishes in surplus in their Diocesan accounts and some in deficit mainly due to building works. Other parishes have repair projects ongoing. The Diocese only has access to whatever money is contributed by parishes in surplus, and has to allocate loans among parishes in need, taking account of each parish's need and its capacity to repay its loan, keeping in mind that no parish should be permanently in debt.

Q: Can we bear in mind the need to build community as part of our fundraising endeavours, as well as raising cash?

JH: The Sportsman's Dinner and Basket Tea were successful fundraisers – however, the recent Ceilidh had to be cancelled due to lack of support. It's hard to know what the community will support, especially the busy 25-50 year olds. All suggestions are welcome.

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It's very important that we try to hold the parish together during this period.

Q: What is the source of the grant for the Hall, and why is this project being undertaken at the same time as the works on the church?

JH: Father Ness applied for a £90,000 grant from Viridor of for this project but Viridor scaled this back to £71,000. The bar enterprise is commercial, something their community-based funding cannot be used for. The grant was awarded in June 2014 and it was hoped that the work would have been completed by October 2014, but there were various earlier delays and unforeseen problems with drainage emerged when the project started.

Q: In view of the attendance of 600 at the recent Sunday Mass Census, do we still need 4 Masses?

JH: Each Mass has its own identity and its own permanent community. However there are concerns over the viability of the Sunday evening Mass.

The plan is to put out 350 seats in the school, so at least 2 Masses would be needed. By cutting out Masses it is more likely that some of our parishioners may drift away.

Fr Rafal added: The Bishop must be consulted about cancellation of any Sunday Masses – Deacon John and Fr Rafal will be meeting with the Bishop in December.

Fr Rafal went on to speak positively about the opportunity being given to the parish now to sort out problems with the building that have existed for many years. There may be problems to be solved, but the only way to avoid problems is to do nothing at all, which offers no solution. This is a short period of inconvenience in the history of the parish.

Fr Rafal closed the meeting with a final prayer.