

ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH
HERITAGE LOTTERY BID
UPDATE – AUGUST 2017

Dear All,

In an ongoing effort to keep everyone in the congregation informed, as this project involves all of us, we are again writing a newsletter to let you know where we are in the process at this time. To those of you who have asked us why we have not talked to you, the congregation, in person, we would say that we would have been delighted to have been invited to do so.

As you will have seen, the upper section of scaffold has been taken down as the refurbishment of the main sanctuary roof has been completed. We would have liked to have completely stripped the main sanctuary roof, but the cost of doing so was well beyond the funding that we have available for the project. The contractors have, however, spent a great deal of time and effort ensuring that all deficiencies on the roof have been rectified. They have removed all broken, cracked and chipped slates and have replaced sarking boards and waterproof membrane as necessary. We have not had any leaks into the main sanctuary since they completed this work and, given the recent rainfall, we feel that the roof has been comprehensively water tested!

The contractors are now working on the other sections of roof. They have found considerable amounts of rot in various sections of the sarking boards, but no rot in any of the main beams, apart from two small sections on the roof over the passage between the 'ladies' room and the session house which they have replaced. This work is ongoing.

As you will also have seen, the upper gutters, hoppers and down pipes have been replaced with new, painted, cast iron rainwater goods in keeping with the vintage of the building. The lower ones will be replaced with similar rainwater goods.

All of the leadwork on the church roof has been, or will be, replaced with new. Having seen the quality of the leadwork that has been completed so far, it can only be described as a work of art. We are of the opinion that it is better than the original leadwork.

The roofers are now working on the lower roofs over the side aisles and over the transepts. When the tiles were removed from the side aisle roofs we found that the original stone roofs were still in place, albeit covered in a layer of concrete. This will be left in place as its removal would cause considerable disruption and dirt, not to mention it would cost a considerable amount of money, which we do not have. Battens will be installed over the top of the original stone roof, sarking will then be fixed to these battens, a breathable, waterproof membrane will be installed and the roof re-slatted with original, or reclaimed, Scottish slate as laid down by Heritage Lottery Funding and Historic Environment Scotland.

All of the pointing, except the chimneys, has been completed. As you will have noticed the colour of the new pointing is lighter than the original. Given that the original has been in place for over one hundred years, this is to be expected and the colour of the

new pointing, which is lime based, will tone in with the original over the next few years. Access to the chimney to the rear of the church is difficult and will necessitate the use of a very large 'cherry picker', which will come on site later in the project.

We would suggest that you have a look at the four pieces of stone that have been cut out and replaced with new. Once again the colour of the new stone is brighter than the weathered parts, but the quality of the carving and stone cutting is excellent.

We are very happy with both the quality of work and the relationship that we have with the contractors and our advisers to date.

We have completed the draft copies of our storyboards and they are now with the graphic designer. She has sent us a draft copy of the first of our storyboards which all of your committee agreed was excellent. On your behalf we have therefore asked her to go ahead with the other eight storyboards, which we believe she has almost completed.

The committee who have designed the storyboards were also tasked with devising a system for the increased opening of the church to the public, which was one of the tasks that we agreed with HLF that we would undertake. We are at the initial stages of this element of our funding bid and will keep you in touch with developments and will no doubt call upon you for your help and support in implementing our agreed strategy.

We have also completed the worksheets for visitors to our church from our local schools. These will be made into 'easy access' folders and distributed to the head teachers of our local primary schools, so that when they visit us they can prepare the young people before their visit regarding what to expect and what they might see.

As is to be expected with a project of this scale, there will be some dust in the sanctuary, and whilst we and the contractors are doing everything we can to clean this before each service, we would advise everyone that their clothes might get a wee bit dusty.

We would again like to thank all of you for your patience, forbearance and support during the ongoing works to our church.

Again, as always, we would like to thank everyone who has helped us in whatever way to reach this stage of the project and we look forward to your continuing support.

The Restoration Group - August 2017