

‘FORTEVIOT CHURCH – THE WAY FORWARD’ COMMUNITY MEETING

Sunday 18th January at 2.00pm - Forteviot Village Hall

Purpose. This purpose of this meeting is to have an informed discussion to consider the future of St Andrew’s Church, Forteviot. This follows from a meeting convened by the Rev Allan Wilson at Forteviot Village Hall on Thursday, 20th November. It was agreed that engagement with the wider community in and around Forteviot, including the Friends of Forteviot, was necessary to fully inform and consider a way ahead for the future of the Church. A decision to proceed with the Feasibility Study is required at the end of the meeting.

Factors

- St Andrew’s Church, Forteviot will cease holding regular worship no later than the end of 2028 and quite possibly before. The Church of Scotland General Trustees will then seek the sale of the building but not the graveyard controlled by Perth & Kinross Council. Occasional use of the Church for religious services will be permissible but not on a regular basis.
- The General Trustees are likely to favour a sale to a properly constituted community group; this would require the establishment of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) approved by the Office of Scottish Charitable Regulator. Achieving SCIO status is not automatic and requires significant work to achieve. The General Trustees may allow the community additional time to establish the SCIO and to raise the necessary funds to proceed.
- Before any decision is taken to establish a SCIO, the following will have to be considered:
 - A working group of appropriately 4-6 experienced individuals (eg legal, financial, etc) is required to be established to carry out a detailed feasibility study; they may become the future Trustees.
 - Potential options on the future use of the building will require careful investigation.
 - A fundraising strategy for the purchase of the building from the Church of Scotland General Trustees at current market value will need to be developed. The requirement will probably be £40-60K.
 - The building itself was recently surveyed and is believed to be in sound condition. However, there is a likely requirement to raise additional funds to improve the heating and toilet facilities (a further £40-60K?). A contingency fund will also need to be established to safeguard against the unexpected.
 - If there is a significant change of use of the building (ie conversion to a museum) then this will add very substantially to the cost and complexity of the project (£1/4 – 1/2M). To generate adequate funds, a convincing case for support demonstrating project viability is required.
 - A sound business case will have to be developed to demonstrate that the future use of the Church building can generate sufficient funds to pay its way; this will probably be in the region of £10K pa or more depending on its future use.
 - Who, apart from the Trustees, are going to run the Church day-to-day to make the building available to the public? This will require a team of committed volunteers who need to be managed.
 - How would the addition of the Church to the existing facilities for community use enhance or possibly threaten the viability of the Village Hall? What would be the value added? An impact statement on the Village of Forteviot needs to be prepared (car parking, footfall, etc).
 - There needs to be a clearly identified exit plan should the project prove to be financially unviable (likely resale of the Church to a 3rd party; there can be no guarantee of resale and carries financial risk).
 - What is likely to happen to the Church if the community does not take it over (ie private dwelling, business centre, retail outlet)?

Invitation - If you live in and around Forteviot, you are warmly encouraged to attend this meeting and contribute your thoughts