

MOTHERWELL SOUTH PARISH CHURCH: The Keystone Project

Motherwell South came into existence on 1st January 2007, the result of a union between two neighbouring congregations on the south side of the town. The choice of buildings was decided by arbitration and one set of buildings was subsequently sold. After a difficult start to the union, the congregation gradually began to look to the future and in particular to enhancing our buildings.

From the start, the vision of the congregation was to transform ourselves and our buildings into a full community church looking outward into the community to provide a focal point and meeting place for our parish. We visited many examples of such buildings and congregations around the country, most designed by our appointed architect, and came away from each visit more convinced than ever that this was the way forward for our own congregation. Thus the Keystone Project was born. The Kirk Session and the congregation gave the project their full and enthusiastic backing and we moved forward to the design stage.

As often happens with such projects, the design proved to be much too expensive to be completed in one go, and, as well as trimming back our expectations, we had to phase the project. Phase 1, the new-build section, has just been completed, including a new sanctuary, community coffee bar, full catering kitchen, office and ancillary accommodation and has been warmly received by the congregation. The next step, Phase 1A, will be to transform our current sanctuary into a large hall, a smaller meeting room and storage. This will largely be achieved by volunteer labour and completed by summer 2016. Phase 2, probably some years down the line, will renovate the remaining parts of our existing buildings to complete a complex which will satisfy the needs of the congregation and community and provide us with excellent 21st century accommodation from which to carry out our work of mission and service in our parish.

The cost of Phase 1 will be around £910,000. Much of the finance, around £610,000, has been or will be provided by the congregation, £295,000 of this by direct giving, and almost £300,000 has been raised through grants from various funders.

The General Trustees have contributed to the project in a number of ways. They gave excellent advice at the various meetings we held with them, they contributed directly to the funding via a no-strings grant and they have provided two loans. The first of these was interest-free and was intended to cover the cash-flow difficulty which existed when many of the funders providing larger grants would only pay in arrears against contractor invoices. The second, interest-bearing, grant covers the

future income from fund-raising and payment of pledges agreed with the congregation as part of our Business Plan and is repayable over 5 years. This second loan unlocked the full financial package which allowed us to proceed with the project. The Church of Scotland VAT consultant also assisted us by confirming that we could proceed with construction of the new buildings VAT-free, a huge saving without which the project was probably unaffordable.

The Congregation is greatly looking forward to the Dedication Service for our new sanctuary in February 2016, not least because it will also be the Induction Service for our new minister, Rev Alan Gibson. We are also looking forward to the launch of the full Keystone Project in late summer 2016 as we open our doors to full usage by the local community. Even prior to any publicity taking place, a number of organisations are showing an interest in using our premises for a variety of uses. These are exciting times for our congregation as our vision turns into reality after six years of hard work.

John Maddock
Convener of the Development Committee
Motherwell South Parish Church



The new church



The new community bar, office and ancillary accommodations



The chancel



Awaiting the induction of Rev Alan Gibson and a celebration of the opening of the new facilities



A new beginning