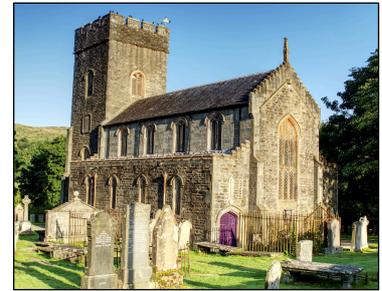


DUNADD COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

SHALL WE BUY KILMARTIN CHURCH?

BRIEFING PAPER



The *Dunadd Community Council* (DCC) is a group of elected representatives from the local area. Consultation with local residents led to a *Dunadd Community Action Plan* focused on six themes: *Organisation; Tourism development; Enterprise development; Ownership of community assets and investing in existing groups; Activities for younger residents; and Infrastructure.*

Dunadd Community Enterprise (DCE) was founded to work for and on behalf of the local community. A company limited by guarantee and seeking charitable status, DCE has *ordinary members, associate members, and junior members.* If you are not already a member, you are welcome to apply to join.

DCE has a Board of unpaid directors (between three and nine). Currently there are six:

<i>David Bracken</i> (chair)	<i>Gary Linstead</i>
<i>Stephen Carter</i>	<i>Allan McLean</i>
<i>Chris Carr</i>	<i>Di Roberts</i>

This letter is from the Board to all members.

KILMARTIN CHURCH

Kilmartin Church is an important local asset. At present it is privately owned, and the owner has generously invited the local community to make the first offer to buy the church and convert it for new uses.

To help explore ways of implementing the Dunadd Community Plan, DCE commissioned a *Conservation Report*, a *Shop Study*, several alternative *Architectural Plans*, a *Feasibility Study*, and a *Business Plan*.

The architect showed how the present church building could be converted to allow various kinds of use.

Of the four options presented, the directors believe

that only Option 4

would be financially viable. Fortunately, we also believe that Option 4 meets most of the priorities identified by our community.

Energy conservation Dividing the building into small spaces would make it easier to heat. Energy usage would be minimised and eco-friendly, and ideally there would be energy-production and energy-recovery schemes.

Kitchen The kitchen would need to meet Environmental Health hygiene standards. It would be used only to prepare refreshments to be consumed in the open activity space – we would not set up a café, and would not compete with local businesses such as Kilmartin Museum café or Kilmartin Hotel.

Toilets These would be easily accessible. There are also public toilets across the road.

Accessibility The building would be designed to make it accessible to as many people as possible.

Activity space The consultations identified a clear wish for a space in which to hold community events and activities such as meetings, exhibitions, talks, plays, concerts, and children's parties. While meeting fire regulations, this area would need to be as flexible and open as possible, with movable seating (perhaps 60 seats) and with lighting and sound equipment.

Rentable rooms Rooms on the upper floor ('hubs') could be offered as artists' studios, therapy rooms, or private office space for small local businesses.

Viewing area An area at the top of the tower would offer a fine view of Kilmartin Glen.

Community shop In the consultations, many people said they would welcome a shop. Although the *Shop Study* showed that regrettably a post office would not be commercially viable, it also showed that a community shop could likely break even, while at the same time positively helping our

community. In the summer especially, the shop would benefit from visitors coming to see the Kilmartin Crosses and the view from the tower.

Genealogy/learning centre An exhibition could show everyday life in the Glen over the past 300 years or so. This would complement presentations in Kilmartin Museum, but not compete with them.

Kilmartin Crosses The Crosses would remain inside, positioned in negotiation with Historic Environment Scotland.

Graveyard Like its owners, Argyll & Bute Council, we are concerned that changed use of the building should respect the graveyard. As one contribution we could map the graveyard so that visitors could easily locate the graves of family members.

BUYING KILMARTIN CHURCH

If we went ahead, the church would be owned and maintained by Dunadd Community Enterprise on behalf of the community. Even once we owned the building, though, it would still take several years to put it into full use.

Our reuse of the church building would aim to serve the local community, to support the local economy, to encourage social and economic development, and to avoid creating any financial burden for future generations.

To be viable, the converted church building would need to generate income to cover maintenance and running costs. The *Business Plan* shows how the project could become financially self-supporting.

The church is in a conservation area; it is also a listed building in need of repair. We would need approval and planning permission from organisations such as Argyll & Bute Council and Historic Environment Scotland. If permission were granted, they might also set conditions. Local residents would also be able to express their views.

As well as employing builders, we would need specialist advice to take full advantage of modern technology and to make the building as energy-efficient as possible. We would have

FURTHER INFORMATION

You are welcome to discuss the decision with the Directors, and the following documents are available on the website:

www.dunadd.scot/church

Dunadd Community Action Plan

Kilmartin Church conversion options

Dunadd Community Enterprise Articles of Association

Dunadd Community Enterprise Business Plan

to find funding. We estimate that about £25,000 might be raised by selling refundable *Community Shares* (at about £100 each).

NOT BUYING KILMARTIN CHURCH

If we made no offer, or if our offer were declined by the present owner, the building would probably go onto the open market: we would then have little control over who bought it and how it was used. This would also be the outcome if we bought the church but the project later failed for some reason.

IT'S TIME TO DECIDE ...

Clearly this would be a challenging project. Nevertheless, the Board strongly believes that purchasing the church is a crucial step in giving life to the community's vision. We believe that this project is feasible, and that the whole community would benefit, both socially and economically.

We have received funding from the Scottish Land Fund. The next stage has a deadline in August 2020, with a decision in November: it is not clear whether that funding would continue beyond this round of applications.

We are now inviting full members of DCE to vote on this proposal. The outcome will be reported on our website.

Our discussions have given us a shared vision for the life of our community. As a core resource in living that vision, shall we buy Kilmartin Church?