

TEENS REACH OUT

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BROUGHTON ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH AND THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is that there should be a partnership between Broughton St Mary's Parish Church and the City of Edinburgh Council, through the Children and Families Department, to provide a facility for the Leavers service of Canonmills School and also provide an essential programme for NEET young people. The shared aim is to help young, deprived and excluded people in our city who are in most need of training opportunities so that they can break the cycles of addiction and abuse that have shaped their early years.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

The congregation of Broughton St Mary's Parish Church are in the process of raising the funds to renovate and restore their building in Bellevue Crescent with a view to making it available for community and church use. To this end they have already raised £964,000 of a proposed £3.2million project.

When the work is completed there will be a variety of rooms and spaces with seven day a week opening. Planned activities include a café and provision for families with children along with the current users who range from Brownies to carpet bowlers.

The restoration and renovation drawings were submitted to the City Council and have received planning approval.

SHARED INTERESTS

The congregation have committed themselves to work "Inside Out" – in other words they see the church (people and buildings) as being there for the community. This is their vocation – to give practical expression to the love of Christ and in particular to the most needy members of society.

The renovated church rooms could provide a base for the Leavers' Service and create a new facility to address NEET needs. The planned activities within the building would allow the young people to gain experience and qualifications in areas such as catering, child care, enterprise, IT, citizenship and religious and moral education. They, in turn, would then also be working "Inside Out" allowing them to move from dependency to being contributors to society.

CAPITAL COSTS

The congregation have raised £964,000 through the sale of a redundant building and the pledging of personal gifts totalling £122,000 so far. They are also actively engaged in exploring support from trusts and other grant giving bodies. As stated above, the total cost is projected to be £3.2million on the basis that the work is done all at once. Historic Scotland/Heritage Lottery Fund are expected to contribute around £250,000 to the project for certain external repairs.

Our aim is to reach at least £2M by October so that we can if we get permission from the Church of Scotland progress with the project in one phase. Hitting this target within the timescale is essential for the establishment of the "Teens Reach Out" project. The estimated capital required for creating the education and training facility, within the £3.2M total, is £1,170,000. This cost includes all work related to

the spaces required for the facility including, heating, plumbing, electrical work, the building of the Garden Room Café and the work on the classrooms, office and kitchen.

REVENUE COSTS

Mrs Julianne Jerome is our partner as we progress in our plans. She is currently Head Teacher of Canonmills School which is situated within the parish of Broughton St Mary's. She is intent on making this facility a reality as she is acutely aware of the needs which exist both for the Leavers service and for NEET due to her direct involvement with teenagers for whom this facility would be an essential enabler. Her professional status brings great expertise to our deliberations as well as knowledge of funding available to run the facility. An application is being submitted to the Big Lottery Fund (Life Transitions) for a pilot scheme which, if successful, the City of Edinburgh could then support financially in the longer term. In the application, she will include the number of teaching staff she would require, the funding for set up costs, the funding per student (based on 24 places) and for accommodation costs. Mrs Jerome has suggested that this new facility would cost no more than the current cost of the Leavers Service at Canonmills and yet would provide 33% more places and also cater for NEET. Having vast experience in education and in the procedure to acquire funding makes Mrs Jerome an invaluable partner.

DETAIL

Twenty four pupils would use the meeting rooms as classrooms and would also be trained to work in the kitchen, the café, the playgroup and the office. This would provide facilities for the neighbourhood as well as training young people and giving them actual experience in business enterprise, management, work and citizenship. This would give the teenagers invaluable hands-on experience and would engage young people with low self-esteem in the learning process. In order to successfully work and help manage these enterprises, pupils would need to learn the skills ranging from food preparation to child care. They would also gain competence in areas such as administration and finance as well as improving their basic skills in communication and numeracy. Instead of learning these skills in a theoretical way they would be shown how they make a difference in a practical setting.

As an extension of this, it has been suggested that a small shop selling work produced by the pupils in what is Edinburgh's most racially and culturally mixed community. These products would be sold alongside items from Mrs Jerome's South African connections. The latter idea is already used to great effect in Canonmills.

We would aim to facilitate coffee mornings targeted at minority groups, the elderly and the disabled. We could also support the elderly with, for example, classes in communicating in the 21st century. This would give young people the opportunity to share their knowledge of internet services such as Skype, MSN Messenger, on-line shopping, as well as message texting, using a mobile etc.

With the experience and qualifications gained on the course, a young person could be supported in seeking employment and supported during employment as part of the overall programme.

It remains the case, however, that without the capital funding the space for this facility simply will not exist and a great opportunity will be lost. It is the special nature of the partnership with the Church which creates all the varied opportunities for NEET and the Leaver's Service. This is a chance-in-a-lifetime for young people who have not had many chances up until now. It should not be missed.