

ST STEPHEN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH BLAIRGOWRIE

CONSERVATION AND RENEWAL PROJECT

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT AS AT 4th AUGUST 2108

The public relations campaign carried out during the reparation works, and for the formal re-opening and solemn dedication of the church and beyond, comprised a number of elements with a range of objectives. This report identifies, and details progress made, according to those objectives.

1. A 16 page full colour booklet outlining the history of this historically significant building, accompanied by an illustrated account of the conservation and renewal works.

This was made available in time for the solemn dedication Mass and continues to be a resource for parishioners and visitors to the church. Its front page and inside back page bear the Heritage Lottery Fund logo, and the Bishop's introduction includes a formal thank you to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the generosity of the grant, which helped make this massive project for a small community indeed possible. Bookended by an introduction by Bishop Robson, and a message of thanks and acknowledgement from Father Gregory Umunna, the booklet contains a brief history of St Stephen's, an account of the conservation and renewal work carried out, a short biography of E W Pugin and 29 photographs.

2. A tri-fold one sheet full colour leaflet to act as a direct mail item to generate interest from selected groups to tour the church, containing a brief history of the church, its association with EW Pugin and the reparation programme.

This leaflet now available both in print and on the church website, contains summarised information from the full colour booklet, details of where to get more information and a tear-off booking form for anyone wishing to visit the church. It also acknowledges the vital role played by Heritage Lottery Fund and other major grant awarding bodies.

3. An updated parish website to adequately reflect the image of the church community, provide details of church activities including mass times, inform parishioners and other interested parties of the progress of the restoration works and advertise any fund-raising activities and events where attendance by the wider public was sought. It would include information from the 16 page booklet, the tri-fold leaflet and the audio visual presentation.

The new website is indeed a colourful reflection of parish life, kept up to date, topical and modern in appearance. It acknowledges on the home page the support given by The Heritage Lottery Fund with a prominent logo, and a photograph incorporating the Lottery fund banner.

It currently carries photographs of the restoration work and the final restored building and a video of the solemn dedication mass, as well as archive material reflecting some of the press coverage of the project. The Pugin Lecture by Professor Gerard Hyland which will take place in the church on 5th October 2018 (see item 5) is advertised in the News section.

For any further information please contact Marion Duffy, m.c.duffy@crathiebridge.demon.co.uk

4. An Audio Visual Presentation to include a history of St Stephen's Church in Blairgowrie, background information on E W Pugin and his architectural style and the reparation programme completed with help from Heritage Lottery Fund.

This seven minute video is currently in production and will be available for visiting groups and individuals shortly. Tour volunteers are in training. The video, with its reference to HLF, is advertised on the one page leaflet and will also be highlighted on the website

5. Annual Pugin Lecture

Professor Gerard Hyland, President of the British Pugin Society, will deliver the inaugural Pugin Lecture on 5th October 2018 in St Stephen's. The lecture has been advertised locally and nationally by email, press and poster, as well as on the church website. A healthy turnout is expected from local students, civic societies and those interested in ecclesiastical history, heritage and the built environment, in addition to parishioners. All advertising material has incorporated the HLF logo. Further annual Pugin lectures will be planned in the future.

6. Commemorative brass plaque

An exterior plaque has been placed at the entrance to the Church highlighting the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Solemn Dedication by the Bishop of Dunkeld

7. Press information campaign

A productive relationship between the church and both local and regional newspapers has developed during the project. The Courier (one of the UK's largest morning newspapers) has reported at several stages of the project – grant award, commencement of works, completion of works, fund raising events, the upcoming Pugin Lecture, the solemn dedication mass. The Blairgowrie Advertiser and the Perthshire Advertiser have carried similar pieces. The Tayside Evening Telegraph also reported. On all occasions the support of HLF was included in the copy.

More locally, the Alyth Voice free newspaper and One Voice website have advertised events connected with the restoration fund raising and continue to promote The Pugin Lecture. The local Diocesan News and The Scottish Catholic Observer have both covered the solemn dedication mass.

There are plans to approach local television for coverage of the Pugin Lecture now that works are complete and supporting resources in place.

Overall, the public relations strategy has kept parishioners and local people informed of the grant awards, the project objectives and progress, the re-opening and solemn dedication following completion of the works. It has helped establish and cement good relationships with local journalists and other information outlets. The wider public has been also been appraised of events and will continue to be targeted via the Pugin Lecture and the Church Tours programme.



Marion C Duffy
4th August 2018

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