



Clincarthill Parish Church

SEALING A UNION

Alison Moore outlines how a refurbishment has turned an old church into a community asset.

COMPLETION of a £600,000 refurbishment at Clincarthill Parish Church on the south side of Glasgow has sealed the union of the two congregations that make up the parish.

Battlefield East and Mount Florida churches were brought together back in June 2010, with the congregation moving to the Battlefield East buildings at Cathcart Road and becoming known as Clincarthill, a historic name for the location.

Clincarthill consists of the two former Battlefield East B Listed buildings which required major improvements following the union. Thomas Robinson Architects were appointed after impressing with their proposals which respected the architecture of the existing buildings whilst modernising the look and function of the interior spaces.

Parish minister, the Rev Mike Gargrave, is delighted with the end result which includes a refurbished sanctuary with extended chancel to make it suitable for their popular puppet ministry, dramas and concert performances, creation of a small chapel and meeting room, new lighting and an audio visual system.

The vestibule has been remodelled with new windows which allow more natural light to flood the sanctuary, the smaller of the two halls has been refitted and the leaded glass windows in the main hall replaced. A kitchen which can cater for 200 people has been created and a new central heating system installed throughout the

building. Toilets have been totally refitted, including a new wheelchair accessible facility and baby changing area.

Members of the congregation were involved at every stage of the process and the Rev Gargrave said: "In the summer of 2010 our aim was to bring two congregations together to form the people of Clincarthill and now, thanks to the hard work of Robinsons and members of our congregation, we have transformed our buildings into Clincarthill. Our next plan is to use the buildings God has blessed us with to reach out and serve our community."

Natasha Houchin, of Thomas Robinson, outlined the architects' approach to the challenges the project presented. She said: "The aim was to create an architecture that reflects the beliefs of the ministry and reaches out into the community to bring more people in to use the church and be a part of the congregation.

"Initial discussions related to how existing spaces were used and who used them. To design church spaces economically (and maximise revenue), the spaces should allow for as much usage of the spaces all through the day and all through the week by as many groups as possible.

"In tandem with this design process, analysis was carried out of the building fabric and services to assess where and how much would need to be spent to maintain the fabric."

The completed works were on display at a community fair held on September 21 and a "New Beginnings" dedication service was held the following day.

Clincarthill is already a hub of community activities and the aim is to use the new facilities to build on the initiatives already under way.

Mr Gargrave added: "Our Mission and Development plan places emphasis on Clincarthill as a community church and our refurbishment has been designed with that focus.

"In addition to Sunday morning and evening worship services, the sanctuary is used for other events, including training courses and fundraising concerts. The small meeting room is used by the local community council and housing association.

"Our halls are used to capacity by church organisations and community groups. The grounds are utilised for community fairs, Holiday Club activities and providing refreshments during football matches and other events at Hampden Park. We are also working with Queen's Park Football club to develop a club for over 50s in our community.

"Clincarthill Church has a Befriending Service that celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and we are also taking part in the More than Gold initiative which will enable churches to build mission initiatives around the 2014 Commonwealth Games activities." ■