

The Methodist Church

Bangor and Holyhead circuit

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To the members and supporters of
St John's Methodist Church Bangor.

Dear Friends,

By now you may well have heard that the entire heating system in the church building has been condemned as unsafe. Until the warmer weather arrives, we will be worshipping in the hall where fortunately, after the recent renovations, the building is in good condition.

The assessment that the heating is now unsafe is not entirely unexpected. For many years the church has been trying to modernise and renovate the church. After the failure of the last scheme the Church Council has formed a Building Development Group (BDG) and, as they developed proposals, heating professionals advised us that work needed to be carried out on the system. Some provision for modernising the heating was therefore planned into the scheme being developed. It is now clear that the work on the heating will need to be much more extensive, replacing the whole system, and include the removal of some asbestos in the boiler room. I am glad to say that the work undertaken by the BDG means that we are better placed to cope with the present situation than we otherwise might have been.

At the last Church Council approval was given to the plans being developed by the BDG and to the extensive work being done to raise the finance needed from trusts and funds. It was agreed that the Annual General Church Meeting - to be held on 12th May - should primarily be used to present the scheme to the church. The concept is to convert the church building into a flexible facility available for community use, when we are not using it for church purposes. The condemnation of the heating system means that the cost of the scheme will increase and the urgency to complete the specification of the scheme and raise the funds for it, has grown considerably.

I am writing this letter to you for two purposes.

Firstly, I want to ensure that there is a wide understanding of the challenge now facing us as a church. After many attempts to modernise the church we now face the reality that it is now or never for this building. If we cannot put together the details of a feasible scheme - and fund it - the condition of the building will deteriorate beyond our capability to restore it. We need to pull together to rise to this challenge, and to do so rapidly. If we achieve this then the prospect is for us to create a modern flexible building in the heart of Bangor. A positive development is that, after many years of effort, the land below the hall is now in our ownership and so we have the potential to create better access to the site than could ever be achieved in the past.

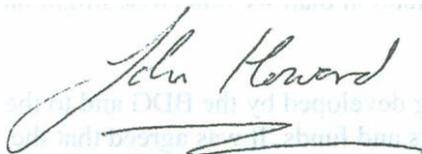
Secondly, I want to ask for the commencement of fund raising for this work as a matter of urgency. Everyone can contribute - to large or small degrees. We have decided to hold a gift day on the weekend of 15th/16th June. A letter about this will be sent after Easter. In it we will ask both for

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money towards the renovation and the giving of gifts and skills in kind. What we need in addition is an extensive fund raising programme to raise funds from people only distantly attached to the church. The more we can draw in funds from people around the church the quicker we can obtain the funds we need. Perhaps a sponsored walk would be good, or perhaps an auction of talents, or perhaps a sale of work, or other events that might raise funds. Can you volunteer to help? What ideas do you have to raise funds? What skills and interests do you have that can be utilised to raise funds? We cannot raise all the funds we need ourselves, but it is already clear that other trusts and funds will support us if we can match their contributions. The more we raise the more others will support us. Please let the Church Stewards know what you are willing and able to do.

It has been something of a shock to find that we cannot proceed with the building development at the relaxed pace we had hoped for. Your prayers for the future of our church are needed now as we cope with the implications of this situation. I believe that if we pull together in this challenge then it will not be too long before we can return to a building transformed for contemporary use.

Yours in Christ, your minister,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Howard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

John Howard.