

# **ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH UPDATE 2010**

Dating from 1843 and part of the Parish of Neston, this thriving church had to be closed in 1994 due to its unsafe structure. A trust was formed of local residents in 2001 (launched in 2002) with the Bishop of Chester as Patron, *the Bishop's Trust for the Restoration of St Thomas's Parkgate*. The Trust leased the building to repair, refurbish and reopen it as a community church. To complete the works the Trust has raised just over £250,000. This money has been used to fund the following work.

**Building restoration work completed.** Major structural work has been carried out to secure and stabilise the walls. Eroded stone has been replaced. The roof has been removed and re-laid (using the original slates), insulated and new guttering added. Removal of the old organ from the balcony and the pews (2 of which have been retained) has taken place. The wooden floor has been altered to one level throughout (including removal of the raised area occupied by the altar and infilling of the aisle to the height of the pew area). Some of the floor and joists were renewed. A sloped entrance giving wheelchair access to the main floor has also been constructed. Woodworm treatment has been undertaken throughout the building.

A new gas central heating system with combi boiler has been installed and demolition of the old boiler house has taken place. A complete electrical rewire has taken place, inside and out, including emergency lighting, the exterior illuminated cross and an electrical supply added for the church garden. A ceiling fan has been installed to circulate the hot air. A small kitchen facility with sink, fridge and a water boiler for tea/coffee making has been constructed under the balcony. An accessible W.C. and wash hand basin have been installed in the old vestry. Professional cleaning and repair of the historic church windows and frames has been completed and the re-galvanised protective exterior grills have been installed. The original clock has been restored and replaced in its position on the balcony.

Just before Christmas 2009, the drain connection for the WC to the main sewer in Coastguard Lane was completed via an enormous hole in the road; the main sandstone approach to the front door was re-laid as a gentle slope with a handrail. An antique stain finish was applied to the main floor after mechanical sanding and the fire exit door was altered to suit the new floor level. The steps from the fire exit were replaced with a slope. The interior was repainted with white distemper, with pale grey for some of the

woodwork and black for the exterior doors. All colours designed to be sympathetic to the historic nature of the Grade II listed building.

## **ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH - THIS YEAR**

The final phase of equipping the building and planning the management structure and legal issues is now underway. Recently, we have received a generous grant which has enabled the purchase of chairs, and a kind bequest will enable tables and other equipment to be purchased. An electric organ, some crockery, cutlery and a new fridge have been donated. Some decaying trees overhanging Mostyn Square have been removed. Future work will include the repair of the boundary wall to Coastguard Lane and improvement of the garden.

## **Fundraising 2009**

There have been a number of kind donations in memory of loved ones.

February - **£1300** Bric a brac sale & associated saleroom takings.

July - **£250** Refreshments at the annual Neston Cricket Club charity event.

Money raised by the sale of cards, notelets, and the 2009 Christmas card totalled approx. **£450**, with a further **£50** from the collection tins.

## **Fundraising Planned for 2010**

Bric a Brac Sale to be held in Neston Town Hall on Sat. 27<sup>th</sup> Feb.

## **THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP, SUPPORT & DONATIONS.**

*We are now making plans for the grand opening of the building and the resumption of church services here once more. We are looking forward to using the church building for a variety of community purposes and welcome enquiries for those.*

## **Volunteers**

The trustees meet monthly and a group of fundraisers plan and carry out various events. If you would like to volunteer your help please e-mail.

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Charity no 1090232

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