



Gorebridge
Parish Church

Here for you because of Jesus!



HILLTOPCOMMUNITYPROJECT

Funding Application Report





*As a Church we commit ourselves to being embedded
in the life of the community, sharing its pains and
triumphs and being community builders,
actively participating in local groups.*

Extract from GPC Mission Strategy



The Hilltop Community Project Executive Summary

At Gorebridge Parish Church (GPC) our key understanding of our church community is that of family, a family that is multi-generational and multi-ethnic. Our regular congregation contains people from four continents. This shapes our understanding of our relationships with one another and our duty of care to our local community. Family speaks of dedication and long-term commitment, where the bonds we share run deep and our vocation to our local community is shaped by a permanence that has lasted for centuries through all of the triumphs and tragedies of our locality.

Over a number of years GPC has established in partnership with others a range of community projects largely centred on the existing Church buildings. These include the Midlothian Foodbank and the Community Recycling Project, both helping people break free from poverty and providing essential goods at affordable prices. They include support groups such as the lunch club, Kinship Carers and Women's Health Group, which provide practical advice and promote positive outcomes in terms of parenting, health, life skills and social inclusion. They include support groups for those with addictions seeking to give people and their families a better quality of life free from the constraints of drug or alcohol misuse. And they include youth projects which give young people the opportunity to meet one another in a safe environment, to form relationships and build trust, and helping them to develop life skills and make good life choices. GPC has also envisioned a wellbeing project (Hope Springs) offering a counselling service to address the mental health challenges facing local people both young and old and the difficulties they can experience accessing appropriate help in a reasonable timescale. The lack of capacity in our buildings operates as a constraint in developing this project effectively.

The growth of these activities and our hopes for the future have been such that the church buildings are no longer adequate to meet the vision which GPC has for its community and the demand which the community places upon it. Our vision is to provide a suite of dedicated community spaces that can encourage and accommodate growth in our existing projects whilst enabling the establishing of others which cannot currently be accommodated. This vision has wide support in our locality. We are committed to continue providing community projects that alleviate poverty, isolation and lack of opportunity, that promote health and wellbeing, that are accessible and encourage people of all backgrounds and ages to share together, providing a meeting place and promoting social cohesion locally and regionally.

GPC has a long track record of envisioning community projects that have filled gaps left in public and third sector provision, projects that have proved sustainable and have benefited the lives of both service users and volunteers. Our key community projects have outgrown the accommodation we can provide. Our hope would be that this growth can be encouraged, sustained and accommodated. The build cost for this project is £467,000 and we are inviting potential funders to partner with us to turn this vision into reality. In doing so many of our most vulnerable neighbours will find the support they need, the relational bonds of our community will be strengthened and volunteer capacity can be focused into meaningful community service.

Introduction

Gorebridge Parish Church (GPC) is the focal point of a vibrant, multi-generational community which meets the needs of a wide range of people in Gorebridge and the surrounding area.

Its activities are largely centred on the existing church hall and facilities. The church buildings have a prominent position on the hill around which Gorebridge is built and both literally and practically speaking the Church occupies a highly visible position in the community which it serves.

With the growth of the Church and the many community focused activities in which it is engaged, the church buildings have become inadequate to meet the vision which the Church has for its community and the demand which the community places upon it.

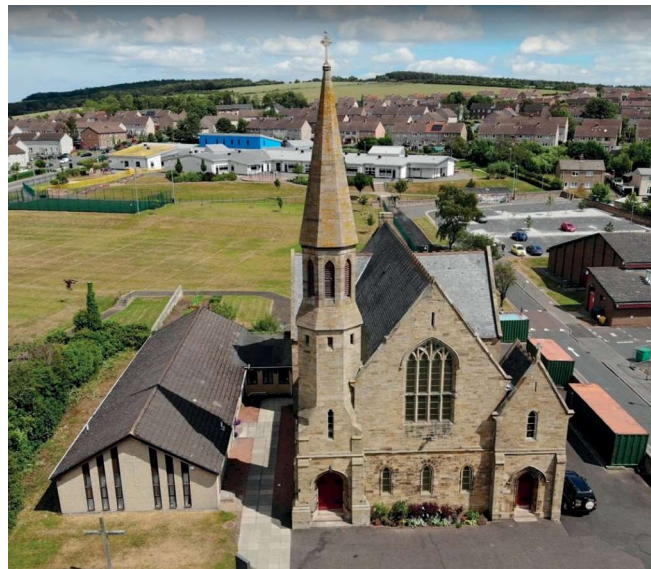
Accordingly, we would like to develop new future proof areas, which will allow all users to maximise their time in the space and be as multi-functional as possible to allow us to facilitate other church and community groups.

Of particular importance is the daily weekday use of the premises by the Midlothian Foodbank, now an independent charity but established and resourced by the Church with whom it maintains a strong connection.

This, as well as the dramatic growth in the use of the hall by church groups, community groups and other organisations means that many compromises are being made in how the halls are being used. With many groups using the halls and sanctuary at the same time, accessing all areas is also an issue.

The ultimate goal is to create a welcoming space that will allow church staff and the congregation to serve the community whilst giving other community leaders much needed flexible space to accommodate their activities. We will increase the size of the footprint of the building with the creation of a new atrium, storage space and dedicated youth room. The redevelopment offers therefore the opportunity to deliver a modern facility which is fit for purpose and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the well-being of the community we serve.

Whilst our vision is Christian-based, the Hilltop Community Project is inclusive and welcoming to all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and economic background, and to people of all faiths and none. The focus is on providing a safe, welcoming and relaxed environment for all our community.



Our Vision & Approach for the Hilltop Community Project

At GPC our key understanding of our church community is that of family, a family that is multi-generational and multi-ethnic. Our regular congregation contains people from four continents. This shapes our understanding of our relationships with one another and our duty of care to our local community. Family speaks of dedication and long-term commitment, where the bonds we share run deep and our vocation to our local community is shaped by a permanence that has lasted for centuries through all of the triumphs and tragedies of our locality. The social capital represented by these relationships is hard to quantify but it reaches out into our local community in families and friendship, through neighbours and our involvement with other community organisations. It is through this network of relationships and involvement that we have identified the needs we have responded to, alongside the more formal engagement presented in the Mission Audit. We have a corporate sense of mission and social responsibility that is deep and enduring. It is from this bedrock of community involvement that the Hilltop Community Project has emerged.

Our vision is to provide a suite of dedicated community spaces that can encourage and accommodate growth in our existing projects whilst enabling the establishing of others which cannot currently be accommodated. We are committed to continue providing community projects that alleviate poverty, isolation and lack of opportunity, that are accessible and encourage people of all backgrounds and ages to share together, providing a meeting place and promoting social cohesion locally and regionally. Our vision is evidence based with input from key community stakeholders and is under regular review through our Mission Strategy on a three-yearly cycle. Through a new initiative, Growing Young, we are beginning a process of audit to shape our church culture in a way that will identify and grow the next generation of leaders and volunteers who will shape and evolve our future community engagement. This will help safeguard and re-envision this work for future generations.

Background

For many centuries Parish Churches have been places that turn people's goodwill and their best aspirations into meaningful community action. The earliest part of Gorebridge Parish Church goes back to 1143. Our current building, Stobhill Parish Church was built in 1837 in response to the request for a church to serve the burgeoning community that was growing with the arrival of the gunpowder factory and the new deep mines, the Emily and the Gore. The three Parishes Temple, St Paul's and Stobhill were brought together in a union in 1975. The small hall was completed in 1888 and the current large hall was built in 1986.

Gorebridge Parish has faced many challenges through the years; the loss of the local coal mining industry; the continued depopulation of rural communities; the pressures of addiction and multigenerational deprivation; the loss of Greenhall High School; new housing greatly increasing our local population without a corresponding increase in community infrastructure.

The opening of the Beacon by Gorebridge Community Development Trust has been welcome and much needed. However, the space they provide is largely booked up (around 80% capacity before additional lets) and the space and storage they offer is limited. None of the major community projects we run could be housed in the Beacon and smaller groups struggle to use the facility as there is no provision of storage nor access to kitchen facilities in contrast to our proposed redevelopment plan. GPC provides hall space that is unavailable anywhere else in Gorebridge.

In June 2014 the Kirk Session agreed to progress the redevelopment of the Church Halls. This decision was made following an in-depth audit of our community and the development of a Mission Strategy intended to meet the needs identified in that audit. (These documents are available on request).

Our strategy to serve the local community is aligned with the Midlothian Council's Neighbourhood priorities¹. It is also in step with the Gorebridge Community Action Plan 2015-2020 which identified community spirit as the most appreciated characteristic of Gorebridge and the lack of facilities its most disliked feature.

Our Local Community

GPC serves a parish that takes in the vast majority of the village of Gorebridge and the previous parish of Temple village and surroundings. Currently the parish covers an area of approximately 126 sq. km (48 sq. miles) ranging from the Dalhousie bridge at 63m above sea level to the top of Blackhope Scar in the Moorfoot Hills at 651m. There are currently plans to extend the parish boundaries to take in the remainder of the village of Gorebridge and new housing on the periphery, which in fact better reflects the geographical area of the Church's ministry. The parish is therefore a mix of urban, peri-urban, rural and agricultural land. Gorebridge forms the main centre within the parish comprising a population of approximately 8500.² There has been a significant growth in new housing but within the range of housing now available in Gorebridge there remain areas of significant deprivation as evidenced by statistics contained in the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2020). The church is located centrally in datazone S01011041 and is within ½ mile of all of the undernoted datazones.

SIMD Code	Location	National datazone rank / %
S01011038	Arniston & Greenhall	1178th / Top 10-20%
S01011044	Birkenside	1198th / Top 10-20%
S01011040	Burnside	1487th / Top 20-30%
S01011037	Gowkshill & New Hunterfield	1737th / Top 20-30%
S01011041	Hunterfield & Newbyres	1834th / Top 20-30%
S01011043	Vogrie, Hillside & Lady Brae	1886th / Top 20-30%

According to Midlothian Council's 2016 Gorebridge Neighbourhood Plan a total of 2,515 new homes have either been built recently or are planned, including the development of the new settlement at Redheugh. In total 1,109 new homes will have been built by 2021, with a further 967 planned. In the Gorebridge Local Plan there is a recognition that if all the new housing planned for Gorebridge comes to fruition there will have been a 70% increase in houses since 2008. This has already and will continue to place a huge strain on existing amenities and community buildings which this project seeks to assist in addressing.

Conclusion

GPC has a long track record of envisioning community projects that have filled gaps left in public and third sector provision, projects that have proved sustainable and have benefited the lives of both service users and volunteers. We have provided a narrative of these projects in the later sections of this report. We have become a hub for the co-operation of many community organisations from both the public and the charitable sector. Our work here also continues to help build capacity in community projects in other localities as we provide support and resourcing in partnership with them. Our key community projects have outgrown the accommodation we can provide. Our hope would be that this growth can be encouraged, sustained and accommodated. The Hilltop Community Project is the realisation of a 10-year process to provide halls that are fit for purpose as a tool for the community work carried out by GPC and the work we do in partnership with the other agencies detailed in this paper.

The build cost for this project is £467,000 and we are inviting potential funders to partner with us to turn this vision into reality. In doing so many of our most vulnerable neighbours will find the support they need, the relational bonds of our community will be strengthened and volunteer capacity can be focused into meaningful community service. We have sought to provide evidence of good practice and governance alongside a willingness to pioneer and establish new community projects as the need and opportunity arises. The Hilltop Community Project enjoys broad support in our locality as evidenced in our supporting documents. Its realisation would represent an important step in the regeneration of Gorebridge and provide a much-needed community asset through which we can continue to expand our service to its people and, more broadly, to the people of Midlothian.

¹ Midlothian Community Planning Partnership – Single Midlothian Plan 2020-21

² This estimate was obtained from Midlothian Council Planning Department

Supporting Evidence:

Section 1 – Hall Users & Statistics

Section 2 – Joint Partner Activities (Church & Communities)

Section 3 – Church Lead Activities

Section 4 – Future Plans

Section 5 – Benefits of a purpose designed main hall(s) & Atrium

Section 6 – Testimonies

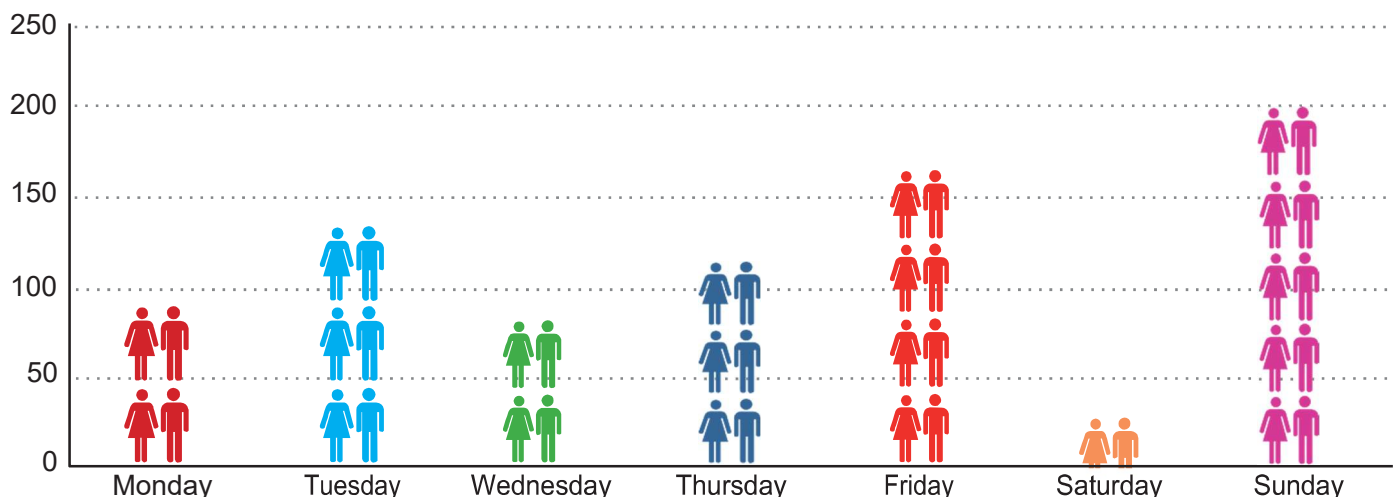


Section 1 - Hall Users & Statistics

The following sections describe our current hall users and our vision for the future following redevelopment of our buildings. The table below will give some detail as to the organisations using the church on a daily basis. Further detail is outlined in the report.

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	Foodbank	Foodbank *CRP set Up Monday Fellowship twice monthly.	Clan/Young life Grandparents parenting again once per month.
Tuesday	Foodbank *CRP sale and cafe	Foodbank Gorebridge over 50's Forum once per month	Youth Leadership Meeting/ Development. Rainbows. Cocaine anonymous
Wednesday	Foodbank *WHO	Foodbank Lunch club	Worship leaders. Girls Brigade *GIFT or *LIFT
Thursday	Foodbank Grandparents parenting again.	Foodbank Growth Matters Lunch	Alpha Cocaine Anonymous Weight watchers
Friday	Foodbank Community Café	Foodbank Bridge to Freedom	*GO
Saturday		Zumba dance	Private hall lets for events such as parties, weddings etc.
Sunday	Morning worship	Church fellowship, tea, coffee etc weekly, lunches once per month Children's story craft sessions.	Evening worship once per month

*Abbreviations - CRP (Community Recycling Project), GO (Gorebridge Opportunities), GIFT (Girls in fellowship together), LIFT (Lads in fellowship together), WHO (Women's Health Organisation)



As can be seen from the above table the halls and church are used every day of the week. In a typical week there will be something of the order of 800 attendances at our buildings to one degree or another.

Throughout this report we will set out to highlight the work we are involved in as a church, how this impacts on the local community and who our partners are. As a growing church we continually monitor our progress in relation to meeting the needs of our community and we are always looking to expand our activities, either by our own efforts or in partnership with other agencies, so that these needs are met to the greatest extent possible. Our approach is a mixture of the proactive, responsive and collaborative.

Section 2 – Joint Partner Activities (Church & Community)



The foodbank is one of our main hall users. This was established in response to the need identified in the Mission Audit, in which 70% of the congregation placed the alleviation of the effects of poverty as their **top priority** for community action. In response to this GPC Kirk Session initiated a discussion in 2012 with Ewan Gurr, then Scottish Director of the Trussell Trust, about the possibility of establishing a Foodbank in Gorebridge to cover the totality of Midlothian to ensure “no-one needs to go to bed hungry in Midlothian”.

Over the next year the Kirk Session formulated a plan that would see the establishing of the Midlothian Foodbank. It was during this time we discovered that Midlothian Council were also seeking to partner with the Trussell Trust. In co-operation with Mrs Louise McShane of the Community Regeneration department we took on the responsibility for the setting up of the Foodbank and, along with representatives from other community organisations, Mrs McShane joined the Steering Group for the Midlothian Foodbank. With the help of funding from GPC, grant funding from bodies such as The National Lottery and the Mustard Seed Foundation we took on Mrs Janice Burns as our Project Co-ordinator. The foodbank now provides employment for 3.5 members of staff and has a number of volunteers. All of these people are local residents.

During the period of its operation the foodbank has seen a significant increase in the need for its services as the table shows. Each referral may include more than one person from a family or household.

Midlothian Foodbank Referrals (reporting period 1st April - 31st March)

Year	Referrals	Adults	Children	Total People
2013-14	744	944	480	1424
2014-15	1126	1426	704	2130
2015-16	918	1165	705	1870
2016-17	948	1320	1037	2357
2017-18	1311	1812	1158	2970
2018-19	1504	2178	1686	3864
2019-20	1647	2307	2090	4397
2020-21	1637	2446	2085	4531



***Purpose:** The food bank provides essential food and provisions, thus helping people break free from poverty by giving support to help them to resolve the crises they're facing.*

***GPC Involvement:** GPC ran the Foodbank from its conception until 2018 when it became a separate charity. Despite the constitutional separation from the Church, GPC members continue to serve as trustees as well as providing administrative and financial support and services. The Foodbank continues to use the Church buildings as their storehouse and office premises and is supported by GPC volunteers who, for example, deliver to those in need fresh food which is fast approaching its sell by date and which would otherwise go to waste.*

***Partners:** Midlothian Council, Trussell Trust, Tesco, Costco, Midlothian Community Payback Team, GPC and Morrison's. In addition to the fore mentioned partners they also work closely with the community hub and pass on perishable items for the community fridge scheme.*

Midlothian Foodbank (Growth Matters)



In response to the evolving strategy of the Scottish Government to direct public resources away from emergency food provision and to promote resilience to food poverty, and in co-operation with the Fair Food Transformation Fund, Midlothian Foodbank, in co-operation with GPC, established the Growth Matters Project. The foodbank works in partnership with Gorebridge Primary school in growing vegetables in the school grounds and leading classes in

which the children can learn about growing vegetables and more generally where their food comes from. This project also provides a weekly lunch free of charge every Thursday to members of the local community. Everyone is welcome and most people get to hear about and use the service through hearing about it via the foodbank team. It is regularly attended by the community payback team who really enjoy taking time out to meet with others. This is an intergenerational lunch which promotes social inclusion.



***Purpose:** To work in partnership with statutory and third sector partners to respond to issues of poverty. This is achieved by providing a weekly community meal, breakfast at schools, provision for people in recovery and food hampers (average 200) for families in need during Christmas, Easter and summer holidays.*

***GPC Involvement:** To provide premises and volunteers to support the Foodbank staff to meet the aims of Growth Matters.*

***Partners:** Midlothian Foodbank & GPC*



Wednesday Lunch Club

For a number of years community members provided a lunch for senior residents. Unfortunately, when the main organiser died there was no one to take this on and consequently the foodbank staff stepped in with church volunteers and made sure that this group did not fold. The foodbank staff now provides an onsite cooked meal and fellowship for around 20 people each week every Wednesday.



Gorebridge Opportunities Ltd (GO)



Founded in 2002 GO was set up by the Youth Group of GPC to provide “life enhancing and accessible opportunities to young people living in the Gorebridge area.” In order to give the project autonomy it was given constitutional independence from GPC but it has always retained a very close relationship with GPC and without the support of members as trustees the project would not be viable.

The GO youth project provides a safe place for young people to meet every week. There are around 35 volunteers of which 80-85 % are former service users who support the work of the youth group. There is some evidence that the interventions are tackling issues such as teenage pregnancy, unemployment and well-being through sport and leisure. This is the largest youth project in Gorebridge and is a place where young people from very different backgrounds are able to meet and build relationships between each other and the leaders. Many of the children who attend go onto access the church youth activities such as summer activities, attendance at church etc.



Purpose: To provide a meeting place for children and youth from P7 to S6. To give opportunities for them to meet and be with one another in a safe environment, to give them experiences of different sporting activities as well as craft, games and cooking. This includes developing life skills and making life choices. Weekly attendance is around 120. GO is vital in the continued development and support of the many young people in the community who have regular or even semi regular contact with the project. GO also provides break time sports and coaching at three of the local primary schools twice weekly. This provides a place where children in P7 can transition to S1 by getting to know those who are already in High School.

GPC Involvement: The project uses the church premises. The majority of volunteers and paid staff are Church members who have a heart for working with the young people in Gorebridge.

Partners: GPC, Midlothian Council Community Life Long Learning and Development & Education Dept.



Bridge to Freedom

This project is run by Bethany Christian Trust which aims to see people set free from addictions in our communities. The programme is supported by and run locally in collaboration with GPC.



Purpose: To provide a meeting place with support for people with addictions and who are in recovery from addictions. To give people and their families a better quality of life free from the constraints of drug or alcohol misuse.

GPC Involvement: The Church premises are used to meet and around five of our members assist at the group sessions in a supporting role and providing a listening ear. They also do street work by serving tea and coffee at the local chemist when one to one engagement can take place.

Partners: Bethany Christian Trust, GPC and other local Churches in Midlothian

Grandparents Parenting Again and Kinship Carers (Midlothian)



This group meets weekly to support over 60 families; to date it has seen around 300 children benefit from its existence. It was established in 2005 and has been based at GPC since shortly after it was formed. The group came into being after a 10 week pilot scheme initiated by Midlothian Council as they sought to establish what was required from them by grandparents. The group has grown in numbers and in strength and worked tirelessly throughout the years. Over the years the group has established a recognised referral system with Social Work and an excellent peer support service. In addition to this they have campaigned to secure adequate financial support for all. In recognition of all of their efforts they were awarded The Queens Volunteers Award.

The group fund raise all year round to ensure children don't miss out on activities and days out.



***Purpose:** To provide practical advice and advocacy work on behalf of grandparents and carers who are parenting children of other family members. This promotes positive inclusion. To ensure continuous training and awareness for all members to make sure that all the children involved have the best possible outcomes.*

***GPC Involvement:** The Church premises are used and members of the church have supported the running of the group since its conception.*

***Partners:** GPC, Midlothian Council.*



WHO (Women's Health Organisation) Group

This group was set up 18 years ago. Its aim is to "combat isolation in all women." It still has founder members who are committed to providing a place for women to meet and discuss issues that are relevant to promoting well-being. In addition to crafting each week they plan and organise fund raising activities and each year they donate the money raised between Women's Aid and the teenage cancer unit at the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh. One of the fund-raising activities is a Christmas "Fair" which is enjoyed by the local community.



***Purpose:** The purpose of this group is for women of all ages to come together to discuss life skills, health matters and to promote social interaction.*

***GPC Involvement:** The founder members are active church members who have a desire to serve the local community by ensuring that support and inclusiveness are available to all. They also use the church halls and last year partnered with the CRP to raise funds for their chosen charities.*

SECTION 3 - Church Lead Activities



GPC Mission



Gorebridge
Parish Church

Here for you because of Jesus!

Vision

To commit ourselves to being embedded in the life of the community, sharing its pains and triumphs, to be community builders, and to actively participate in local groups.

Purpose

To provide love, friendship, support and be a living Church to all within Gorebridge, Temple and surrounding area. To work in partnership with others in a shared vision.

Scope of activities

Worship: We provide weekly praise worship services; this is live streamed during Covid restrictions but there are plans that it should continue when restrictions are lifted.

Alpha: this is a ten-week course run once per year and is open to anyone exploring Christianity, normally around 25-35 people attend each year.

Adult discipleship: is a bible-based meeting which runs weekly to encourage fellowship, build relationships and reduce social isolation.

Pastoral Care: we have a dedicated pastoral care support team who visit and support our elderly members and vulnerable adults.

Safe Families: we help recruit volunteers for this project which supports families on the brink of crisis.

Newbyres Village: we provide monthly worship sessions within the residential care home to those who cannot attend the local Church and our halls are a key part of their emergency evacuation plan, providing temporary accommodation for residents.

Redwoods Care Foundation: We maintain a good relationship with this local organisation that provides residential care to adults with additional needs. We work in partnership with staff to involve residents in our activities.



Gorebridge Parish Church *Community Recycling Project*

Community Recycling Project

The Community Recycling Project (CRP) is a church lead outreach project which has been running since 2012. It was set up initially to raise funds to support the work of a debt counsellor in the Midlothian area but has since

extended its reach in support of other local causes. The project is staffed by around 26 volunteers who nearly all stay locally. The volunteers are multi-generational and comprise of those who have retired, students, people undertaking therapeutic work and those in full time work who give of their leisure time to serve. There is a mixture of Church members and those who are not. The following table is an abbreviated summary of the aims and vision of the project.

Vision - Love in Action

Recognising God's compassion for the poor, we commit ourselves to show Christian love in action locally.

Purpose

To develop and run a Community Project to provide a café and the recycling of essential goods (such as clothing and small household items) to people at affordable prices and to generate funds for community projects*

Scope and Benefit of Activities

The once weekly sale/café has an average of 50 – 60 visitors. People meet one another and share time together. There are some distinct groups of people who benefit from this project and these are: parents who call in after dropping their children into school, more senior members of the community who often live alone and call in for some chat and fellowship; the residents from Newbyres care home who are brought in with their carers and/or family members. Those who attend are often socially isolated and by attending and/or volunteering this project meets an important need for connection and relationship. The team of volunteers are always available to take time to listen, support and encourage customers and each other. On average funds raised (approx. £14,000 per year) are used to support local organisations*.

Scope for Growth

It is anticipated that, should we be successful in bringing the Hilltop Community Project to fruition, we would be able to provide this service more than once per week. At present all goods are stored in two thirty-foot containers and these require to be emptied and refilled every week. Increased space would facilitate a more efficient and effective operation which could more readily be sustained on more than a single day in the week.

It is also envisaged that a designated purpose-built café area would be operational more frequently thus increasing the time available to provide fellowship to local residents and offering an environment conducive to community engagement and the sign-posting of available services. We currently provide space alongside us on a Tuesday morning for other local projects who provide free school uniforms and information sessions giving free advice and guidance on a range of subjects such as well-being, smoking cessation, benefits information etc. This has been a successful model which we would like to extend to respond to any unmet need and in this regard we would look to develop a referral system with local NHS partners, Social Work and Midlothian Foodbank. In the event that the project was able to grow as envisaged it may be that there would be an opportunity for paid employment to be made available.

Beneficiaries

The following is a selection of Projects/Groups that have received funding from funds raised by the Community Recycling Project.

Women's Aid – Every year Women's Aid is gifted just over £2000 from the CRP funds, this money is used to provide summer activities and a Christmas party for the mothers and children who have witnessed or been subjected to domestic violence. In addition to this every woman who gets her new accommodation after leaving one of the units is given brand new bedding packs. It is understood that the women are also given some cash from these funds in order to allow them to purchase essential items. We also supply small pieces of furniture, kitchen utensils, carpets etc.

Grandparents Parenting Again – Each year this group is awarded around £1500 towards their project, the money provided helps families to be together during trips out and also helps fund an advocacy worker who will act on behalf of the families. More especially this group support one another through shared experiences.

Birkenside Fun Day – The local community are given around £500 per year to help support a day of fun for the local community residents.

Newtongrange Youth Silver Band – A one off payment was made totalling £1,500 to purchase instruments to give local children the opportunity to learn music thus helping build their confidence and in turn make them more resilient.

Gorebridge Opportunities – A yearly payment of £1,500 is made to support the work of this organisation. Further detail about what they do is found above.

Summer Camp – A payment of £1000 is normally made to provide transport and help local children attend a summer camp at Newton Stewart. Some of the children who benefit from this opportunity have never had a holiday in the past. At this camp children have an opportunity to build friendships which are essential to their well-being. GPC partners with the Faith Mission at Newton Stewart to make this happen.

CHAS – A payment of £500 is made each year to support the work of the children's hospice

Gorebridge Cares – This project has been given funds to set up a local homework club for high school children. Children from Gorebridge in their senior years have to travel to school by bus and cannot stay at school to access additional support classes as there is no transport home. This homework club gives children an opportunity to learn in a safe supportive environment.

GPC Fun Day

Every year GPC opens its doors and provides a fun day for all of the community. The cost is underwritten by the Church with a grant from CRP so that this day can be offered to the community free of charge. There is a number of rides, face painting, henna tattoos, bouncy castles, bbq, teas, coffees etc. This is very much welcomed especially as families can attend without any financial outlay.

This is not exhaustive of the projects that have benefited over the years.

Monday Fellowship



The Monday Fellowship group runs in the church and is open to everyone though it is mainly attended by the more senior members of the community. There are a variety of activities and speakers. They provide a good support network via the pastoral care team and individual friendships.



***Vision** - The fellowship replaced the Women's Guild some years ago and its vision was to be inclusive to all who would like to attend and share fellowship by having afternoon tea, along with entertainment and prayer. Both males and females attend.*

***Purpose** - To provide a meeting place where all are welcome to enjoy company and friendship, helping isolation and loneliness. To give a place where people can access services which are relevant by sign posting. To provide the opportunity to have a day trip away from the local area and have a meal together.*

***Scope of activities** - Around 18 - 24 people attend each week, most of the attendees live alone and this is often their only time to meet with others. The meetings have a planned schedule of speakers and entertainment.*



Girls Brigade

The GB is open to school aged girls from P1 to S6 and meets weekly. It is part of an International organisation. This is an affordable weekly meeting place for young girls and because of this it is accessible to anyone who wants to attend.

***Purpose:** To provide a meeting space for young girls to meet and learn life skills. This is a faith-based organisation.*

***GPC Involvement:** The Kirk Session is the governing body for this organisation locally and as well as that the majority of the leaders are Church members.*

Christmas Lunch

Six years ago on Christmas day a member of the congregation recognised that so many members of the local community would be alone having lunch and made a pledge that as a community church family we would reach out and invite them in on this special day. We reached out to people who were on their own, those struggling to cope with the pressures of life to come and join with us. Since this time on Christmas day GPC continues to identify and reach out to local people who are alone, socially isolated or without family and invite them to join with us for lunch. A full traditional lunch and afternoon of fellowship and Christmas festivities are enjoyed by all. This is normally attended by around 50-60 people. We partner with social work, the foodbank, and other churches to ensure we reach as many people as possible



GPC Children's Ministry

Young people form a big part of the church family at GPC with provision made for every age.

Our vision

For the children to experience the fullness of life spoken about in John 10v10:

'I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.'

Our aims- are the 3 L's

- *We want the children to feel **L**oved*
- *We want the children to have **L**ots of fun in their groups*
- *We want the children to know that **J**esus is a**L**ive- we want them to come to a living faith*

Scope of activities

We have a crèche for age 0-4, Sunday club for age 4 years to P7, children leave for their groups after family worship, then we learn about God together through looking at the bible, discussion, crafts, games, and prayer. Every year we try to have at least two family outings to enjoy time with each other either at the beach, ski slopes or Country park. Currently we have around 50 children registered from 27 families.



Youth Work

Vision

To be part of a multigenerational Church which reaches out to the young people within our community, to provide a safe place to form relationships and build trust. To develop leaders for the future and give life enhancing opportunities.

Purpose

To provide age-appropriate relational teaching and a place to strengthen and explore Christianity. To be an open welcoming place to all within Gorebridge, Temple and surrounding area. To work in partnership with others in a shared vision.

Scope of Activities

Weekly worship, during non-pandemic times we provide a tailored programme of youth ministry, which is normally regularly attended by around 30 young people aged 12-18 years.

Youth Alpha – Youth Alpha is a course which runs once a year and is aimed at Young people from 12-25. The course is available to anyone who wants to explore Christianity for the first time, or to anyone wanting to develop their knowledge and faith in Christianity. The group is run and led by members of the youth church and runs for 10 weeks. Every attendee is given a hot meal from local take-aways, or homemade meals by the youth volunteers on alternating weeks.

Clan – Clan is a group that runs on a Monday evening for the youth in our community; it is a space where those looking to grow or explore their faith can attend. There is a teaching, worship and praise element to the evening and those who attend particularly enjoy the fellowship with people their own age.

Tuesday Leadership – The youth leadership group runs every Tuesday for the young leaders in the church. This comprises of worship and teaching to deepen their knowledge and to support them with their leading responsibilities. Many of these leaders are high school and further education students who also volunteer at the Youth led activities such as GO, Clan etc.

GIFT & LIFT (Girls or Lads in Fellowship Together) - These two groups meet on alternate weeks. The groups are open to all youth and are attended by both church family and community young people.

Schools Work – The youth staff and students contribute to the lives of 3 local primary schools in Gorebridge. Attending during breaks and lunch times, we organise and facilitate football, basketball and other activities for the pupils, primarily working with P6s and 7s. The schools also have us for assemblies where we lead games and talks sharing the Gospel of Jesus occasionally hosting the schools at the Church. We also provide support to pupils struggling with mental health, social isolation and other issues, working with the staff.

Youth Summer Activities – during the summer GPC partners with Liberton Church in Edinburgh and Young Life International and for one week there is a local non-residential activity camp which provides a range of activities for around 120 young people of high school age. This is a particularly popular event as it only costs around £15 per week to attend and the young people enjoy meeting volunteer leaders from America.

GPC also hosts a week's summer activities for the same age group and this is attended by over 100 young people. It runs similar activities such as American football, dance classes, craft activities etc. Following the daytime activities, the young people are given an evening meal and they can then enjoy fellowship, music and talks until around 8pm each evening. This is all free of charge to ensure that it is accessible to all.

Summer Camps – Year after year around 50 young people from the church and local community travel to central Scotland to enjoy a residential camp. We partner with Young Life International to make this happen. This has a cost implication and to ensure that any young person that wants to attend is not prevented on the grounds of finance we fund raise to help support those who require it. There is also the opportunity for our older youth to volunteer and serve at these camps which enables them to develop leadership and vocational skills.

Students - At GPC we partner with For Mission College and Reign Ministries which provides the opportunity to study for a degree in Mission and Theology with specialisation in Youth Ministry. Currently at GPC we have two fulltime students on placement with us and we provide mentoring and support for a further two students who are in placement at other local churches.



Growing Young

GPC is participating in a project called Growing Young; we are participating along with a number of other churches in Scotland. The programme was developed by the Fuller Youth Institute in the US and is intended to help churches engage with young people and their families. The programme was developed following research which they had carried out into prevailing churches to try and identify the key indicators of truly inter-generational churches. This led them to identify six core commitments as follows:

- a) Unlock keychain leadership – instead of centralising authority, empower others, especially young people.
- b) Empathise with today's young people – instead of judging or criticising, step into the shoes of this generation.
- c) Take Jesus' message seriously – instead of asserting formulaic gospel claims, welcome young people into a Jesus-centred way of life.
- d) Fuel a warm community – instead of focusing on cool worship or programmes, aim for warm peer and intergenerational friendships.
- e) Prioritise young people (and families) everywhere – instead of giving lip service to how much young people matter, look for creative ways tangibly to support, resource and involve them in all facets of the congregation.
- f) Be the best neighbour – instead of condemning the world outside your walls, enable young people to neighbour well locally and globally.

Growing Young offers some very practical tools which help congregations assess their culture and create pathways to begin changing that culture towards a truly inter-generational church.

In practical terms, adopting this programme to look at our Church we are effectively reflecting, analysing and planning how we as a church keep growing for the benefit of the local community and young people in particular. This programme will give us additional tools to reach out and support the most vulnerable and have a range of projects and activities for all ages. We recognise that people are emotionally and physically healthier when engaged together. It is anticipated that this project will give us the tools to achieve this thus reducing social isolation and building capacity.

Projected Growth - In the future, we aim to see the youth work continue to grow.

Youth Ministry Students – The past 7 years have seen 7 Youth Ministry students come and study with us with one becoming our second full time youth minister. This trajectory would have us continue to train youth ministry students, fully expecting us to have at least one student training at any time, eventually resourcing other churches with trained youth ministers.

Schools Work – We aim to offer the fourth primary school in Gorebridge our services, offering services and support.

Weekly Activities – Whilst we believe that our current offering of programs is effective, we are not beholden to them. If in the future, we hear from the young people that the current crop of work is not meeting their needs then we will change. Our values are what determine what activities we offer as stated in the "Vision" and "Purpose" sections. Aiming to increase the number of young people we work with means larger spaces, giving a wider scope on potential growth.

Youth Leadership – To facilitate the increase in numbers, our youth team must continue to grow as well. Being the backbone of the work, our youth team is necessary for the running, delivering and building effective and lasting relationships with the young people.

Summer Activities – As we develop our summer activities, a problem we are already facing is having adequate facilities. Gorebridge does not have many indoor areas accessible to us for the running of activities, so we rely on the unpredictable weather. We hope to have larger facilities to cater to more of Gorebridge's young people.

Section 4 - Future Plans



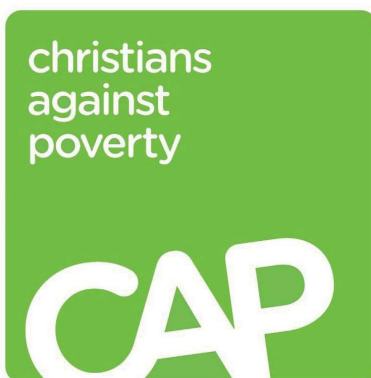
Hope Springs

Hope Springs is a vision that we have had for a number of years for a wellbeing project. The plan would be to have a counselling service based in the church halls, the rooms for which form part of the Hilltop Community Project. This service would be open to anyone in need and would not be based on their ability to afford it. Currently we have four trained counsellors ready to start volunteering with another three who have commenced their training to become accredited practitioners. One of the counsellors has been

volunteering with Holy Trinity Wester Hailes Parish Church helping us envisage the scope of assistance Hope Springs could provide and how best to structure the project. In running this service we would hope to promote health and well-being and equip people to have a fulfilled and meaningful life. This is especially true given the mental health challenges facing local people and the difficulties they can experience accessing appropriate help in a reasonable timescale for both adults and young people. We are aware that the waiting list for the NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Midlothian is substantial and that Midlothian Council are actively seeking projects to work in partnership with to help address this ongoing need.

Family Activities

At GPC we employ a Children's and Family worker for 4 hours per week to engage with our families. It is our vision that we would expand this role to carry out activities that bring parents and children together from the wider community. During lockdown when permitted we piloted Sunday afternoon family craft and storytelling sessions. These were very successful and were booked out. The purpose of these sessions would be to come alongside parents, building relationships and mentoring where appropriate. We would also like to start a group on Friday afternoons where families can cook and eat together. We would look at partnering with local schools, social work and NHS for referrals and Growth matters project to help reduce food poverty, do early intervention work and reduce social isolation.



Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

The Kirk Session have expressed a desire to respond constructively to the closure of the Midlothian CAP Centre which provided debt counselling and consolidation services to people throughout Midlothian. Through the CRP we helped resource the Midlothian CAP Centre. We have stated our intention to assist in its re-opening. The Hilltop Community Project would provide a potential home for such a project.

Section 5 - Benefits of a purpose designed

Halls & Atrium

The current facilities are no longer fit for purpose. Due to the dramatic increase in house building and subsequent population increase in Gorebridge the redevelopment will give us the opportunity to serve the community, creating an inclusive space and facility for all demographic groups and help us communicate what it means to live in the reality of Jesus' love. It will provide a safe environment for all users and help the Church participate more actively in the life of the community. Illustrative drawings are included here but detailed plans are available on request. The overall build cost is £467,000.

The Hilltop Project will focus on key improvements to enhance the church's facilities and support both its ministries and the wider community. A new, flexible hall will be constructed, providing much-needed space for Gorebridge Parish Church's growing ministries and offering an affordable venue for local groups. This hall will enable a nursery space which will provide a safe and nurturing environment for children, enabling parents to fully participate in church activities. Additionally, suspended ceilings will be installed to improve thermal efficiency, reducing energy costs and creating a more comfortable environment. The kitchen will be refurbished and extended, enabling the church to expand ministries that utilise hospitality to build a sense of community and support vulnerable members in the local area. Furthermore, a storage extension will extend the existing hall space allowing key ministries such as the Midlothian Foodbank and the Community Recycling Project to increase the number of people supported.



Section 6 – Testimonies

“As a local Councillor representing the Gorebridge area, I am delighted to support Gorebridge Parish Church in their project to extend and improve the facilities available at their extremely well used church hall. The hall is already used to provide a range of activities and services that have become vital to our community. The extension and refurbishment would allow the user groups to do so much more. The church is situated in a location which is rapidly becoming the heart of the community with the primary school on one side and the Beacon Community Building on the other.

Councillor Jim Muirhead, Midlothian Councillor and Secretary of the Arniston Improvement Trust.

The Community Recycling Project not only provides affordable clothes and other essential items, it puts back into the community the funds it raises. Gorebridge Community Cares received two amounts of funding towards the Homework/Study Club, which before lockdown was held in the library. This money bought pencils, papers, books, a snack for the children and also for the bus for our visit to Newbattle Abbey Ranger Service workshop. There is still a lack of provision for young teenagers and the GO Project is about the only one in Gorebridge at the moment. Gorebridge has areas identified in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and is the ideal place for the Foodbank, which is used by many other local towns and villages. Gorebridge Parish Church Hall has been a tremendous asset to Gorebridge. Gorebridge suffered a severe space shortage for community and other groups over many years. Mark and his Church welcomed everyone in the community into the halls and it was literally bursting at the seams. We all work together, there is a great community spirit - this plan to improve the hall can only be a tremendous benefit to the local groups, as Gorebridge is set to grow by 70% in the next few years.”

Councillor Ellen Scott, Midlothian Councillor and Chair of Gorebridge Community Cares.

“In my sixth year at high school I volunteered to serve in the café at the Tuesday CRP, I loved it meeting and chatting with the customers and other volunteers. Doing this helped me secure a customer service job at a garden centre during my gap year and gave me confidence to talk to new people at University. I am studying English Lit and foreign languages it was so good helping at the café as one of the ladies who was there was from Korea and she helped me learn Korean. I also volunteered on a Friday evening at GO, and helped with the summer youth events. These opportunities have helped shape who I am today. There is something for everyone at GPC.”

Stephanie Hartley (19).

“Women’s aid East and Midlothian receive a cash donation of £2000, £1000 in the summer and £1000 at Christmas. This is used to provide family outings and the Children’s Christmas party the left over money is kept in a different pot which provides help to women who are fleeing, moving into new tenancy, to buy school uniforms, to buy basic underwear and nightwear for themselves and their children. It is also used towards washing machines, cookers etc. Each woman has a budget of £80.00 so this is really useful for them to have some independence. During the pandemic the money has been a life saver literally by allowing us to pay for van’s so that women and children can escape safely. Pre pandemic if a woman needed clothing or items for her home I contacted the project and asked if they could support them to do this. The recycling group would hand her money at the door very discreetly so that she did not feel embarrassed which allowed the women to obtain items and feel dignified. The recycling group also donate new duvets, and covers and pillows for women and children when requested which unfortunately can be a lot but it shows the difference that the recycling group makes to these very vulnerable families and what we would have done without them I have no idea. The recycling group has been a life saver over the last few years and I am very proud that they have chosen Women’s aid East and Midlothian to support.”

Yvonne Irvine, Service manager (East Lothian).

“Midlothian Foodbank is undoubtedly one of the most important charities in Midlothian offering food to our most vulnerable people on a daily basis. The staff works in partnership with multiple agencies to ensure those in most need across Midlothian are provided with food in a non-judgmental and dignified way. Their services are of paramount importance to all the agencies and the wider population of Midlothian.”

Lorraine Chapman, Early Intervention & Prevention Development Officer, Children & Families Midlothian Council.

“We work in close partnership with Gorebridge Foodbank since its beginning. In 2020 we referred approximately 250 clients to the foodbank. We have a robust process in place to ensure all clients are dealt with dignity and respect. Referrals are reciprocal with both agencies having a solid understanding of each other’s objectives.”

Ms. Julie Podet, Dalkeith Citizens’ Advice Bureau.

The community Payback team in Midlothian have a very positive working relationship with Janice and her team at the foodbank. Over the last number of years they have provided our service with a great number of projects that allow our clients to pay back to not only their community but also the individuals and families of their communities through truly purposeful and meaningful work.”

Stuart Pratt, Community Payback Case Manager, Justice Services, Midlothian Council.

“The Hilltop Community Project will provide so much more than Christian fellowship; the opportunity to improve lives positively in Gorebridge and the wider community. We all need a safe haven and Hilltop Community Project will provide one.”

Councillor Catherine Johnstone, Midlothian Councillor.

“Gorebridge Parish Church has a long-established track record of reaching out and providing support to the most vulnerable members of the community of Gorebridge and also the wider Midlothian area, via the various support groups, activities and services it provides. The upgraded facilities which the Hilltop Community Project will deliver will further enhance the effectiveness of these groups and services and in turn will, I believe, significantly enhance the opportunities and life chances for local people, particularly in relation to their social, economic, physical and emotional well-being.”

Ms. Audrey McLaren, Community Outreach Co-ordinator, Loanhead Parish Church

When Midlothian had an Education Scotland inspection of Community Learning and Development we were delighted they acknowledged the work going on and the effect it is having. The following quote was made: “Gorebridge Parish Church is making a significant contribution to the lives of local people. The community re-cycling project, café and food-bank is helping to reduce social isolation.”

Education Scotland, Inspection of Community Learning and Development in Midlothian Council, 13.12.16, p2

“Gorebridge Parish Church community has been at the heart of efforts to reduce poverty and inequality in Gorebridge, and across East Midlothian for a number of years. The Church has provided practical support to a range of volunteered initiatives most notably the Midlothian Foodbank; GO, Bridge to Freedom and the CRP. Without the support of the Church membership and the use of the halls these important pieces of work would never have been possible. The Church has been a central player in the Midlothian Faith Communities Partnership, working closely with all other community planning partners to pursue the shared goals of the CPP -reducing inequalities in health, learning and economic circumstances.”

Mr Alasdair Mathers, Community Planning Manager (retired), Midlothian Council

“I attended GO as a youth, in my fifth year at school they ran a careers evening and I was introduced to a member of staff from a recruitment agency. I had hopes of becoming a joiner. Within 4 weeks from this meeting I had secured an apprenticeship as a bench hand joiner. That was over four years ago and I am now employed fulltime with the company who employed me. Throughout this time I received encouragement and praise from the GO leaders - they even bought me some of my tools! Fantastic project that welcomes and accepts everyone as they come.”

Libby Renton

I was one of the founder members of Grandparents Parenting Again (Kinship Carers) and I recall after the pilot came to its end discussing with the minister at GPC how we had nowhere to meet as a group and he said “why don’t you meet here at the church “and that’s what we did and we have been meeting there ever since.

Alice Drever

I remember being taken to meet with one of the members of the grandparents group at GPC. After speaking with them about what I was experiencing with my family I slept properly for the first time in two years. I felt like I was the only person going through what I was. I have received such tremendous support and love being part of this group.

Grandparents Parenting Again service user

The Gorebridge Parish Church team have been a fabulous support to the school. They provide brilliant input through assemblies and church services. The team are dynamic, humorous and fun. The children are very engaged with the work they do. In addition to this the team have taken groups for sport activities at breaks and lunch times, such as football. The children enjoy these sessions. We very much appreciate the positivity the team give to the life of the school.

Steve Wood, Head Teacher, Gorebridge Primary School

“Gorebridge Parish Church is a lifeline in the Gorebridge community and in our Stobhill community as they are always there for us whether it is through the foodbank, through school assemblies, church services, coming into school to play basketball or through the Youth Club. The pupils know that there is a connection between school and the church and know we all work together to help each other. Our pupils feel supported and loved by the Church Youth Team and the Youthie is a fantastic resource. The opportunity to have more space to offer more clubs would be amazing - there is a definite need for this in the Gorebridge community.”

Margaret Sykes, Head Teacher, Stobhill Primary School



HILLTOP COMMUNITY PROJECT

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