

The kirk Session and Orkney Presbytery have agreed for a feasibility study to be undertaken to investigate the possibilities within the following proposal by Rev June Freeth

From: **Freeth, June** <JFreeth@churchofscotland.org.uk>
Date: Sat, Feb 6, 2021 at 7:23 PM
Subject: Outline of Idea for Orphir Kirk.
To: Nicol Sclater <nsclater@googlemail.com>

“Hello Nicol,

... Obviously Covid times haven't changed the plans for changes within Presbytery and the congregation needs to start talking again about our future.

We will almost certainly become a part of Aberdeen Presbytery within the near future. While NO decisions have yet been made Orkney may well become one parish with one Kirk Session. The traditional concept of one church with its own minister may be changed to more of a shared ministry. So while Orphir and Stenness is unlikely to ever have its own minister again we could perhaps have a share of a minister in the future.

...I have come up with an idea, a big project to tackle the whole building which I would like to share. I ran it past 121 and the Presbytery Clerk and Development officer for Presbytery as I wanted to make sure it might be possible before mentioning anything to the Session. I have a tentative approval from all parties to explore my ideas...

...So lets start with Stenness manse. As you know a lot of work has been carried out or is about to be carried out in order that we are complying with our legal obligations as landlords. We have no choice about doing this work. (Electrics/boiler/chimneys/fire safety etc..)

Once these works are completed we can think about the future for the manse. Do we keep it or sell it? If we keep it we will have to carry out a lot more expensive work within a year or two. If we decide to sell the money raised could possibly be channelled into an Orphir and Stenness Kirk project. Presbytery and 121 are willing to discuss converting the kirk into Manse accommodation combined with a comfortable worship room for the congregation. The accommodation could be used for visiting ministers just as Kirkside is in Longhope. This would be a very expensive project but the sale of Stenness manse would provide a lot of the funds which when combined with the monies that Orphir and Stenness already has and possible grants

might make the project feasible. We would end up with a building that would be in really good condition with a comfortable warm worship space etc.. The future of the congregation would be secure for coming generations. Obviously the down side is that the church worship space as we know it would be lost. None of this would happen overnight! We would need a professional feasibility type study and 121 would be involved at every stage. We would need to make sure that planning permission could be obtained etc. etc. before selling the manse. This would all take a couple of years at least. However, it is an opportunity to determine our own future.

So lets discuss the way forward...

God Bless,

June

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