

In 2007 The Presbytery of Glasgow conducted a survey of the use being made of church buildings within the Presbytery in order to draw up a Plan for the more efficient use of these buildings. As a result, in 2008 the Kirk Session of Milton of Campsie Parish Church was informed that 'within the lifetime of the Presbytery Plan', i.e. by 2018, the church was to be sold. The assumption appears to have been that worship would transfer to the Stirling Hall (the church hall) located about 200 m away from the church.

An appeal against this decision was immediately lodged. The result of this was three-fold;

- a) clarification. Presbytery wanted us to operate from a single site, but would allow us to decide whether that site was based on the church or the Hall.
- b) a 'stay of execution' for 12 months, i.e. the decision would not be put to Presbytery for ratification until 2009.
- c) Presbytery would pay for a feasibility study to consider the options.

A Steering Group, to consider the way forward, was established by asking for volunteers from the Kirk Session and Congregational Board. The resulting Group, of fourteen, consisted of some who were adamant that the church should not be sold, some who saw a move to the Hall site as an opportunity for development and some who would prefer the church to remain open but were prepared to look at alternatives.

An architect was engaged to draw up plans showing how the church could be adapted to suit the existing needs of the congregation with, ideally, scope for future development. Over the next few months three such plans were submitted, but each was rejected on the grounds that it didn't provide for the existing needs, far less allow for development. What this feasibility study showed was that any development at the church site using the church as the basis would be unable to satisfy the needs of the congregation. The idea of demolishing the church and building a new structure wasn't considered - the whole idea of developing at the church site was to retain the existing building. If that wasn't possible, as the study showed, then the Stirling Hall site, with easier access, more space and its own car park was the better option.

And so it was agreed (in some cases reluctantly) that worship should transfer to the Stirling Hall site and the church put up for sale - as Presbytery had told us a year earlier. At this point it was agreed, with few objections, that, while the Hall had served the needs of the congregation admirably over the years, it was not a suitable place for worship. The main 'room' was, essentially, a games hall with the atmosphere you would expect in a gymnasium. The sound of birds walking on the metal roof was somewhat distracting (!) and in heavy rain conversation could be impossible.

Since then we've considered four sets of plans - the final choice is shown on another page.