

St Stephen's Church – future now assured



When the former church building in Stockbridge came up for sale earlier in the year a campaign to save it for the community did not manage to secure the building at the time. There has been ongoing speculation regarding the future of St Stephen's Church in Stockbridge since then, but now a resolution has been reached which may be just as good for the community.

It is now confirmed that Edinburgh businessman, Leslie Benzies, has agreed to buy the property in a philanthropic gesture which will preserve the long-term use of the property as a local community venue.

Philip Johnston, spokesperson and consultant for Leslie Benzies, said: – “Mr Benzies has lived in the area for over ten years and recognised the building's importance to the community. This is an entirely philanthropic purchase, which will preserve the building for years to come and we are delighted to have concluded a deal that will ensure the long-term viability of the property as a community centre that benefits all.

“A charitable trust has been created by Mr Benzies to manage the community centre and its Board of Trustees will include representatives of the local community.

“Stockbridge is a busy residential area with a relatively small number of community venues. The preservation of St Stephen's Church as a community centre meets a pressing need as well as protecting an important historical building, which is significant as it was designed by architect William Henry Playfair and has been hailed as one of the most important

Georgian buildings in the area. We are delighted that we can help bring the Church back to its former glory securing its future whilst providing a renovated local and performing arts centre that will benefit the wider community.”

Philip Johnston concluded:- “My client looks forward to completing the sale imminently to secure the plans for the Church’s ongoing use. We will engage with the community as the plans progress and look forward to welcoming local residents and groups back to the Centre in the very near future.”