



3: THE CONGREGATION THAT SECURED THE FUTURE OF ITS CHURCH

Seven years ago, members of the congregation at Howden's Sacred Heart Catholic Church, which has been a place of worship for 165 years, set themselves the ambitious target of raising more than £100,000 to cover the cost of urgent repairs to the roof, guttering, flashing, stonework, flooring and drainage of the listed, gothic revival-style building. We spoke to Susannah Melleney, a member of the congregation who lives in Howden, to find out more...

Q: Tell us about your project?

Our ambitious and lengthy project began in 2012 to secure the future of this historically important place of worship. To that end, the parishioners, supported by our parish priests, set about raising and securing funds for the necessary and urgent refurbishment of the church. We started to see the results of our efforts early last year, when contractors first came on site.

Q: How much money have you raised towards your target?

To date, we have successfully raised a grand total of £124,204. £94,000 was in the form of grants and, thanks to the support of our congregation and the wider community, we surpassed our own target by raising a further £30,000 ourselves!

Q: How did you do this and who was involved?

We are deeply indebted to our sponsors – the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund, the National Churches Trust, Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust, East Riding 4Good Fund, The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom and The Hood Family Trust – and also to our architect, Mike Overton, for his guidance in bid writing and securing the grants.

Of course, we could not have achieved any of this without the hard work of the Sacred Heart fundraising team, which has worked tirelessly for the past seven years, doing everything from baking and holding coffee mornings to arranging draws, raffles and concerts. We are very blessed to have the support of, not only our own parishioners, who contribute on a weekly basis, but also the wider Howden community and members of the town's Anglican and Methodist churches. A recent concert held in our church, where local talent gave their time freely, was a complete sell-out and raised almost £1,000!

Q: How has/will the money be spent?

So far, we have made extensive repairs to the roof, guttering and flashing; replaced all of the external drainage; and repaired the crumbling exterior stonework. We have designed and installed accessible toilet facilities, and made urgent repairs to flooring and walls affected by the leaking roof. We are currently making repairs to the stained glass windows and carrying out further work on the floor.

Q: What does the future hold?

We are optimistic that we will continue to use this historic building for both worship and other community events. Our ongoing programme of improvements will include installing a new heating system, updating our kitchen facilities, improving lighting and other cosmetic finishes.

