



Case STUDY

PARTNERSHIP GRANT St Munda, Ballachulish, Scotland



Address:	Ballachulish PH49 4JG
Designation:	Church of Scotland (Grade II)
NCT grants awarded:	£3,000 Partnership Grant, June 2015 with Scotland's Churches Trust. Work completed October 2015
Setting:	Index of Multiple Deprivation 58%
Architect:	Mr Mike MacGruer, Architect RIBA ARIAS
Contractors:	GCF Joinery Ltd of Fort William
Project cost:	Approximately £23,300
Opening hours:	9am until dusk every day
Visitors in 2015:	Around 10 a week in addition to worshippers
Website:	www.stmundaschurch.co.uk

Set in a lovely but remote rural location St Munda's, built in 1845, is a traditional granite church with a slate roof and battlemented west tower added in 1881.

A damp patch followed by collapsing plaster alerted the parish to problems. Misguided repairs in the past had, it turned out, resulted in the church being repointed in cement rather than traditional lime mortar, which had exacerbated water ingress and led to fabric deterioration. With Glencoe being one of the wettest places in the UK the problem needed to be addressed if the church was to remain in use.

“The contribution from the National Churches Trust added to the other financial support we received and allowed the necessary repairs to be carried out. Without this financial contribution there was the possibility that the church would have had to close due to safety concerns. We now have a safe and secure environment in which to worship... Without them [funders], we could not have resolved the problem.”

Bill Strachan, Treasurer

Project challenges: The cost of the project was initially seen as an insurmountable challenge, but once a team of enthusiastic church members were on board, funders such as the National Churches Trust were identified to support the costs of the repair. The project was kept on track by twice weekly site meetings where any issues, such as the need to replace lead work and sarking on the roof - brought to light in the survey, and cast iron guttering - discovered as works continued, were effectively resolved.

Impact:

- The condition of the building has been secured, repairing the fabric of the church.
- There is increased public engagement with heritage, architecture and history – increased interest in the history of the building and greater interest in the building from the community.
- The project has benefited the congregation – closure on health and safety grounds has been averted.
- The project has benefited the wider community – it has been used as a venue and is better known about and appreciated.

Key lessons learnt: As a result of the work the parish is now more aware of the importance of regular inspections. The community who use the attached church hall is more aware of the importance of having a fully functioning church centre locally and are also now better able to budget for the costs involved. The church is open every day and welcomes many visitors who comment on how pleased they are to find the building open and accessible.