

Bolton Council

Report to: Executive Member Strategy and External Relationships

Date: Wednesday 13th August 2008

Report of: Carol James, Assistant Director of Partnerships & Neighbourhood Renewal

Report No:

Contact Officer: Jennifer Roe, Principal Policy Officer

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Report Title: Bolton Parish Parochial Church

Confidential / Non Confidential:
(delete as approp)

(Non-Confidential) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to request the Executive Member to consider a financial contribution towards the organ refurbishment at Bolton Parish Church

Recommendations:

The Executive Member is requested to:

- Approve a contribution of £25,000 or more towards the Organ refurbishment at Bolton Parish Church

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

(for use on Exec Rep)

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

Bolton Parish Parochial Church is requesting the Council to make a donation of £25,000 or more towards the cost of the organ refurbishment at Bolton Parish Church. The Church fulfils an important Civic as well as congregational function and acts as host to large Services, Concerts and Exhibitions.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request the Executive Member to consider the possibility of a contribution towards the organ refurbishment at Bolton Parish Parochial Church.

2. Background

- 2.1 Bolton Parish Church is Bolton's only Town Centre Parish. The Church fulfils an important Civic as well as congregational function and acts as host to large Services, Concerts and exhibitions including the Mayor's inauguration, the Holocaust Memorial Day Musical evening, the Town and Police Carol service, Bolton Hospice Light up a Life service as well as a number of other events including the Parish Church Organ Appeal.
- 2.2 The Church began its appeal in May 2007 to repair and restore its historic organ. The last major rebuild of the organ took place in 1953 and the electro-pneumatic action which was installed then to link the keyboards to the pipes is now worn out and unreliable and needs replacing with a modern solid-state system. Faults, such as notes sounding when they should not or not sounding when they should, often occur and without action the organ will become totally unplayable during the current year.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The Chief Executive has received a letter from the Bolton Parish Parochial Church Council seeking a contribution from the Council of £25,000 or more towards the cost of the organ refurbishment at the Church. The organ will require a thorough refurbishment and modernisation to eliminate faults and improve the pitch, tonal improvements and protection of sound so that it is in excellent order and can serve the church and the Bolton community for the next fifty years
- 3.2 In May 2007, the Church began its organ appeal by holding a variety of events and appeals to gain support and attract donations large or small for the restoration of the organ. Some of the events organised by the church have so far included the organ marathon, which was held in May 2007 and involved musicians from Bolton who played the organ for a period of 12 hours in order to gain sponsorship. Also, in June 2008 as part of Bolton's Churchgate medieval festival, the Parish Church held for one week a range of musical events which involved Schools, Brass bands and many other musicians who played in concert to raise the profile of the church and gain support for the appeal.
- 3.3 Once the refurbishment is complete, which the church is hopeful will be in the next few weeks the organ will be available for the whole community to enjoy. Orchestras for the first time will be able to perform in tandem as will other music groups. The Bolton Music Service will be able to make use of it and young organists will be encouraged to use it for practising and further developing their music skills. The Church will be able, once again to become a venue for national and local concerts and recitals.
- 3.4 The total project costs are expected to be in the region of £250,000 and so far the Church has been successful in raising £200,000. The members of Bolton Parish Church are proud of its civic connections which have been built up with both the Council and its partners in the Town and hope that the Council will recognise the importance of the Church's position and feel it able to support this cause.
- 3.5 Should the Executive Member wish to approve a contribution to the refurbishment, this could be met from existing resources with the Chief Executives Department budget.

4 Recommendation

4.1 The Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships is asked to consider a contribution towards the organ refurbishment at Bolton Parish Church.