

Tom Gordon
Swallow's Nest, 22 Gosford Road
Port Seton, Prestonpans
East Lothian. EH32 0HF

Tel: 01875 812 262 E-mail: tom.swallowsnest@gmail.com

8th August 2019

To my colleagues in Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplaincy

Dear friend

Iona Abbey

Please forgive this intrusion into your daily routine, but, as a former chaplain in Palliative Care and president of the AHPCC in my time, I am writing to you to ask for your help. As a member of the Iona Community I am, with others, utilising my current and past contacts to help the Iona Community with the final stage of our Capital Appeal for the redevelopment of our work on Iona and elsewhere.

Iona Abbey is an iconic building, not just in the history of Christianity but also in the development of the ecumenical movement. When the Duke of Argyll donated the ruined Abbey buildings in 1899, he took the very unusual step of specifying that ecumenical worship should be allowed on Iona. This ecumenical mantle was further developed by the Iona Community after it restored, and started occupying, the Abbey's living and community spaces in the first half of the 20th century.

The Community's world-wide fame for inclusive and innovative worship is rooted in its ministry of work and worship in Iona Abbey. This ministry was, however, shown to be under severe threat five years ago, when professional building surveys revealed the outdated facilities were no longer fit for purpose. The Iona Community has since embraced the challenges of what has subsequently become a £3.7 million capital project, with building work starting in 2017. The good news is that work is on schedule and the Abbey living spaces are due to re-open to guests during 2020 with:

- access for people of all abilities
- comfortable, insulated, up-dated accommodation with re-furbished utilities
- a renewable energy heating system

The Appeal is also supporting two new initiatives:

1. A Priority Area Networker post which will help ensure that people living with situations of deprivation are able to participate in community life at the Abbey.
2. A Digitisation initiative which will make the story of Iona and the ministry of the Community more widely accessible and inter-active.

The Appeal is currently on the brink of reaching its £3.7 target, with a staggering £3.5 million having been donated to date. The stories of generosity are astounding, with the smallest recorded donation at £1 and the largest an unexpected 'miracle' donation of over £880,000. Given the ecumenical nature of both the Abbey and the Iona Community, we are now appealing to the wider ecumenical constituency in which we operate, trusting that the Church will help us to 'cross the line'. Fuller information about the work, the appeal and how to donate can be accessed at

<https://iona.org.uk/capital-appeal-information/>

Consequently, I am asking for help from you in three ways:

Firstly, given the ecumenical dimension of the AHPCC, can you give me an idea of who might be a specific person within one or more of the dominations represented to whom I/we might make a direct approach?

Secondly, who might be a key individual, including yourself, within your organisational structure who might 'open a door' to that specific person – ie who might 'endorse' my approach to a denominational contact?

Thirdly, might you be prepared to disseminate this information and be willing to donate yourself?

I hope this all makes sense and that you, and others, might see both the urgency and importance of this stage of our Capital Appeal.

If you need more personal information, please don't hesitate to be in touch with me at the email address above.

Thank you for reading this, and I wish you every blessing in the work you do, the importance of which I know so well.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Revd Tom Gordon