BUNYAN MEETING, BEDFORD: AN APPEAL

Bunyan Meeting in Mill Street, Bedford is one of the most important Nonconformist churches in the UK. Its origins go back to 1650, when a group of men and women began worshipping in Bedford outside the confines of the Church of England. In 1672, shortly after John Bunyan was elected pastor, the congregation purchased an orchard in Mill Lane (now Mill Street), and a barn in the orchard was licensed for preaching.

And so began the history of Bunyan Meeting. The Reverend Christopher Damp, the present minister, is the twenty-first minister of the church. The building that stands today is the third purpose-built church on the site. It was opened in 1849 and the schoolrooms which back onto Castle Lane were added in 1866.

Today, Bunyan Meeting is a thriving town-centre Church, which as well as still holding two services on a Sunday, is open throughout the week, Tuesday–Saturday, and is ‘home’ to various community groups as diverse as Sight Concern and Bedford Town Band.

Why this appeal?
Unfortunately, time and the elements have caught up with the buildings and today’s congregation and trustees find themselves facing a repair bill of over £660,000. The roof over the schoolrooms, which was only re-slated about 30 years ago, has to be replaced as the Spanish slates which were used have reacted with our environment and climate and holes have appeared in as many as 60% of them.

The roof will be replaced using Welsh slate and will cost just over £133,000 including associated lead-work. The balance of the £660,000 will be taken up with stonework repairs and replacement of sections of stone, some of which have actually fallen off.
Can you help us to raise the money?
The Trustees of Bunyan Meeting have already agreed to release funds from investments towards the cost, are applying for grants from various bodies. In addition, we are planning to launch a 'buy a slate' campaign. We need 14,400 slates for the roof, and would sell them at £5.00 each. If we sold all of them it would raise £72,000. But more money is needed, and every donation will be gratefully received.

Why should you help us?
Bunyan Meeting, as a historic centre of nonconformity holds an important place in Bedford’s history, and it has become an iconic Bedford landmark. People from across the world visit the church and the adjoining John Bunyan Museum & Library. Many of these visitors find the experience an emotional and deeply rewarding one, as they achieve what is often a lifetime’s ambition, to stand in John Bunyan’s Church.

How can you contribute?
There is a donations tab on the church website: [http://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk/church/Donations1.html](http://www.bunyanmeeting.co.uk/church/Donations1.html)

Alternatively, cheques payable to Trustees of Bunyan Meeting may be sent to:

Brian Cornish,
Bunyan Meeting Appeal,
c/o 3 Glamis Walk,
Bedford,
MK41 8LG,
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Thank you most warmly, in anticipation.

Brian Cornish, Secretary, Bunyan Meeting Trustees