

Dear

I imagine that you will have been asked by a friend or contact if you would be interested to find out a little more about what might be happening at the Knock Christian Centre (KCC) in Cumbria over the next few years. Perhaps you know of a group that has been there, or a leader who uses the Centre? Maybe you have seen or heard about the difference some time at KCC has made in the life of someone in your church, CU group or youth fellowship? Whether you have been able to come and see KCC, or just heard about it, thank you for taking the time to read at least this far!

My name is Phil Wildsmith and I have the privilege of serving on the Dun Fell Christian Trust which owns KCC. I have also been involved as a leader on LinkUp holidays since 1986, taking a group of teenagers to KCC for a week each Summer since then. This has meant we have seen a lot of great things happening in the lives of hundreds of young people over the years, with many of our current leaders having been guests at our holiday themselves! Our camp is certainly not unique; I know many of our regular, loyal user groups can recount the same blessings too.

The other thing we have seen over the years since the 1970s when the Centre was acquired from the Youth Hostel Association, who themselves bought it from the RAF after the Second World War, is the gradual decline of the basic structure of the building. Many kind Christian people have given so generously to maintain and upgrade the facilities over the years. We have tried hard to decrease the building's carbon footprint, its effect on local water supply and to comply with increasingly demanding building regulations in areas like disability access. The Centre has been able to function at a very low tariff because of this amazing giving, which has meant we have been able to offer it to groups who would find more commercial tariffs impossible to fund. In a number of cases we offer the facilities to groups who are unable to meet even this low tariff, welcoming all irrespective of finance because we know that is what Jesus would do. However, the current situation is not really sustainable, as more significant structural work will need to be completed very soon. Also, our group leaders are telling us that the layout of bedrooms and especially bathrooms is making it hard for them to uphold safeguarding good practice.

For these and many other good reasons, we began a process to evaluate and plan a new build some 3 years ago. We now have finalised plans which were passed by Eden District Council in September 2024. We are now working hard on detailed specifications, costings and tendering for possible building companies. Our best current estimate to complete a rebuild is between **£4-6m**. Fantastic backing and support in prayer has been received from our local MP Tim Farron. I have had a tremendous discussion with him, he has been to visit the Centre to meet our wardens, neighbours and trustees, and he is happy to assist and advise where he can. Tim is a fine Christian brother working hard for the Kingdom in government, and we are so pleased to have his support.

### **So what, specifically, is there that you might be able to do to help at this point?**

- Please pray for wisdom and clarity of thought for all on the Trust, for continuing good relationships with local communities, and that funds will be made available to complete this task.
- Please get involved in whatever way you can to spread the news of our plans as widely as possible. You might arrange a spot in a church service, pass on a leaflet on paper or online to others, send a link to your contacts about the plans or directing people to the website, host a funding roadshow in your area (we will supply the people and the materials), or tell us about a grant body we may not have uncovered. All of these are very helpful.
- Please consider if you are able to partner with us in giving, or if you know others who may be in a position to do so. Advice taken so far suggests that many grant making bodies will be keen to operate on a "match funding" basis, meaning we will need to be able to demonstrate a sum already raised before they are likely to agree a grant. Many are keen to give a sum that means a project will be completed, which means we will need to get near to any projected total using gifts.

We would be so grateful if you feel able to contribute any amount to our fundraising total. We understand that all giving is sacrificial, and we can assure you that every penny will be put to the best possible use. For those paying income tax, the Gift Aid reclaim system makes a very significant increase to the value of your gift, so we urge you, where possible, to allow us to claim back the extra income from HMRC. The generous heart is the main issue for us, not the amount of finance you can contribute. However, there are some sensible practicalities we have put in place to maximise the value of gifts small and larger, and to reduce the burden on our treasurer.

The majority of donations we expect to come in via our Stewardship account [www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/DunFellChristianTrust](http://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/DunFellChristianTrust). However, we would ask that any gifts that someone may consider making of £10,000 or greater should please come direct to the Trust by contacting our treasurer on the following email address: [treasurer@DFCT.org](mailto:treasurer@DFCT.org) This would enable us to retain a greater proportion of your gift within the Trust. We are asking for donations to the overall work of the Trust, which means that we aim to use these funds to demolish and rebuild the Knock Christian Centre. **Thank you.**

### **Whilst this is an exciting project, it is also a bit intimidating when I look at it in our own strength!**

As a Trust we are keenly aware of our need to rely on God's Holy Spirit to guide, strengthen and inspire us. We regularly pray a similar thing for all our group leaders at our Trust meetings. Our goal ultimately is to know Christ and make Him known. If we are able to provide a new Centre, fit for the next 50 years and beyond on the stunning location we are stewards of in the Eden Valley, we will have done it together and the glory will be God's alone.



**Phil Wildsmith**  
On behalf of Dun Fell Christian Trust.