

Quick Guide...

Commissioning a New Window

Prepared by the Committee on Church Art and Architecture's Stained Glass Group

The function of a window

A newly commissioned window may be in place for generations, if not centuries, so choosing the design is a great responsibility. A church window is not just for letting in the light; it also has the functions of giving glory to God and moving people to worship. It must therefore be well designed and crafted. This applies to plain windows as well as to stained or engraved glass.

Preparation

Before agreement in principle is sought to put in a new window, a number of aspects should be considered:

- Why do you want a new window? To mark a special anniversary; help people focus during worship; as a memorial; to soften harsh light; to remind worshippers of the demands of mission and service today; or some other reason?
- What sort of glass will be used? It could be clear leaded, etched or coloured stained glass.
- What is the theme and why was this chosen?

The answers to these questions will help you prepare a brief for the stained glass artist(s).

Approaching an artist

With agreement in principle from the Stained Glass Group that both the building and the location are suitable for the installation of a new window, you are encouraged to consider the list of approved artists. Not every stained glass firm will have the experience or the capability of providing windows for churches, although the Group will consider

designs from any stained glass artist. Don't feel that you have to ask the most local artist; choose who you think will be the right one for the commission.

Looking at a few examples of different stained glass artists' work can help you to decide who to approach.

An early and potentially lengthy stage of the process is the discussion between artist, donor (if there is one) and congregation about themes for the window.

Alternatively, a few stained glass artists could be asked to submit designs (they are usually paid a fee). It is important to create a clear brief for the artists so that a good comparison may be made between the submitted designs.

The theme should be selected from the symbols and stories of the Christian faith and local references can be incorporated appropriately. The resulting 'cartoon' created by the artist should then be considered by both the congregation and the Stained Glass Group. The Group will send their comments to the congregation, which, if necessary, may help them to continue their discussions with the artist over the details of the design. A good design will introduce something new, but should also 'wear well', as it will be installed for several generations.

How the Stained Glass Group is involved

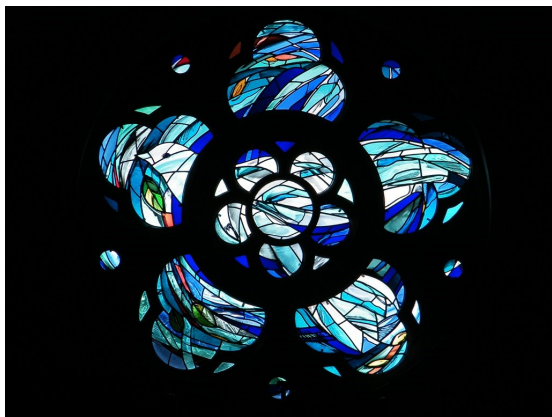
[Contact](#) the Stained Glass Group at an early stage to seek approval in principle to install a window.

Representatives from the Group may then pay a visit to the church if they think it will be helpful.

Once an artist has been selected, forward the artist's brief to the Group and keep them informed of progress, seeking advice at any point if required.

Send a copy of the artist's 'cartoon', photographs and other supporting information (e.g. theme or theological/biblical thinking behind the design) to the Group for their comments.

Seek final approval from the Group for the commission to go ahead.



Installation of the new window at Broxburn Parish Church

About the Author

Allan McCafferty has served in Parish Ministry for over 20 years. He has an interest in Stained Glass and has devoted study leave to learning more about its design and manufacture. He has led and managed a congregation during a period of transition from one place of worship to a newly refurbished and upgraded sanctuary and community hall facility.

In Summary

Apply to the Stained Glass Group for initial advice and approval in principle by filling in a [General Application Form](#) on the Resourcing Mission website and emailing it to gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk.

Consider artists; discuss your ideas with them; present them with a brief (or prepare a brief and ask for designs to be submitted); choose an artist and enter into discussion with them.

Keep the Stained Glass Group fully informed of progress and send in the 'cartoon' (with accompanying papers) for comment.

Discuss the brief further with the artist (if necessary).

The Stained Glass Group will agree the final design.

The work can continue to completion.

Start enjoying the new window!

Contact us

For more information, email [Mission & Discipleship](#), putting CARTA - Stained Glass Group in the subject line

OR telephone 0131 225 5722 and ask to speak to someone in CARTA

CARTA Quick Guides

Other Quick Guides include advice on lighting, audio visual, equipment; stained glass; communion ware.

These can be found on the [Resourcing Mission](#) website.



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