

Online appeal for help from city gardeners

GARDENERS are being urged to put their allotments, orchards and community gardens on the map by taking part in an online survey.

Europe's largest greenspace initiative, the Central Scotland Green Network, is conducting research to map community growing spaces across the central belt.

Keith Geddes, chairman of the CSGN, said: "This groundbreaking research will support our work in increasing the area of land used by communities for growing plants, fruit and vegetables, and I would encourage locals in Glasgow to take part in the survey."

Encouraging community growing is central to the CSGN vision.

The data will be used to identify the size and distribution of these vital resources and campaign for improvements for the benefit of local communities.

The survey runs until June 30 and only takes a few minutes to complete.

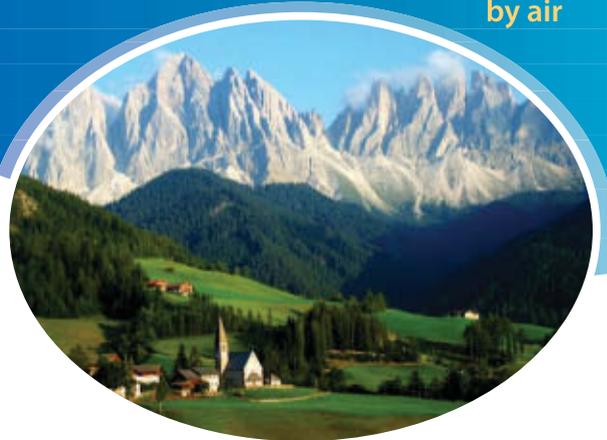
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£5M Lottery cliffhanger for 'last chance' Egyptian Halls



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Owners face anxious wait for decision on Heritage funding

EXCLUSIVE By VICTORIA BRENNAN

THE owners of Glasgow's historic Egyptian Halls are hoping to find out this week if a £5million lottery bid has been successful.

The cash could trigger a £20million restoration of the Union Street building, which has stood empty for more than 30 years.

Glasgow City Council gave permission for a 114-bedroom hotel in 2012, but red tape and funding shortfalls have plagued the renovation project ever since.

Meanwhile, the owners say they are becoming increasingly concerned about the condition of the structure, with eight lumps of masonry tumbling down over the

past year. Now, a re-submitted bid has been lodged with the Heritage Lottery Fund by the Egyptian Halls Building Preservation Trust after a previous attempt last summer was turned down after it was deemed to be 'too risky'.

The building is owned by Dundee-based Derek Souter of Union Street Properties, and investors Kelvin Kerr and Duncan Souter.

Derek Souter claimed they had "de-risked" the bid as much as they could.

"We've given them what they wanted, as much as we can", he said.

"We will do whatever is required to get the funding. We are desperate to save the building."

Even if the cash is approved, further funding would be needed to get the project off the ground.

Mr Souter admitted the biggest challenge "has always been how to unlock funding sources, such as the £1.3 billion Glasgow City

Deal, EU funding, and the HLF funding."

He said: "Nobody knows how long the building can be propped up. It's in the last chance saloon."

Historic Scotland has offered a grant of £1.65 million towards the project, but a time-limited £1 million grant approved by the city council lapsed in March 2011.

Mr Souter added: "The facade is fracturing. We've had three kilo blocks which have crashed to the ground."

So far, around 8000 people have signed a petition calling for the building to be saved.

A Glasgow City Council spokesman said: "We have worked with the developer over a long period with a view to securing a sustainable future for the Egyptian Halls."

"We have provided support and assistance for the project and will continue to discuss the development."



The owners of the Egyptian Halls are concerned about the crumbling masonry on the listed building