

## COMMUNITY CONTENT

# Former chapel sells for more than three times its £40,000 guide price

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AN idyllic detached stone built former church in a Gwent village attracted almost 200 bids at auction.

The former Mount Zion Methodist Church, on Gellihaf Road, Fleur de Lys, near Blackwood, only recently closed, was listed for sale by Newport-based Paul Fosh Auctions with a guide price of £40,000.

Sean Roper, of the auction firm, said: "The property turned out to be the real star of what was a very successful auction. We had bids in for the church almost as soon as we opened for business and there was a real competition to win the property at the end.

"The church, which really seemed to have grabbed people's imagination, eventually sold for three times its estimate at £126,250 after we received a total of 196 bids.

"It's not surprising that there was so much interest as it's a truly wonderful building. It's probably the best chapel or church that I have sold over the very many years I have been

selling properties like this, and that's saying something. The church was closed recently due to dwindling congregation with just some 17 or 18 regularly attending services.

"The structure of the building itself appears very solid. It would provide the basis for a number of potential alternative uses including residential subject to planning. It would be suitable for one of two bed conversion.

"The former church is flanked by some lovely properties so any residential conversion would most likely fit right in with the neighbourhood. The garden has well planted borders with flowers, shrubs and trees.

"It's a really wonderful detached stone built church, situated in the sought after village of Fleur de Lys and I'm intrigued to see how it is transformed under new ownership."

A total of 72 per cent of the 94 properties listed sold at the auction realising £3.8m sales. There were 1,015 registrations for the sale with 498 registered bidders, 2,909 bids were placed from bidders located in 95 different countries.



Ripe for conversion: The former Mount Zion Methodist church in Fleur de Lys, near Blackwood, is being sold by Paul Fosh Auctions in its December sale

# MP meets children with sight loss at virtual event

NEWPORT West MP Ruth Jones has met with children with sight loss and their families to hear about their experiences of education and specialist support at a virtual event hosted by the charity Guide Dogs.

New research from Guide Dogs has found a decrease in happiness, independence and confidence in children with sight loss over the last 12 years.

It also found that more than two thirds of parents felt that there was not enough support to help parents and guardians at the point of their child's sight loss diagnosis.

A child who can see will typically learn through watching and imitating, but a child with a vision impairment instead needs to learn strategies to gain everyday skills such as walking, dressing and navigating.

Guide Dogs knows that with the right support, children and young people with sight loss can achieve anything.

Rachel, the mother of five-year-old Nell who spoke at the event, said: "The early support is going to help Nell grow up to be an independent adult who



Ruth Jones MP

is blind, and ultimately I think that is a goal for every parent."

After hearing from Nell and other young people with sight loss and their parents about the difficulties they have faced in accessing the right support, Ruth Jones has pledged to

support Guide Dogs' work on ensuring all children have the support they need to live an independent and active life.

Blanche Shackleton, head of policy, public affairs and campaigns at Guide Dogs, said: "Guide Dogs is best known

for our work providing life changing dog partnerships, but we also work with children and young people with sight loss to support their development and education. We know more needs to be done to better support children and young people with

sight loss.

"This is why next year we will set up a commission made up of young people, parents, professionals and experts to explore the best support for children and young people with sight loss."



Guide Dogs MPs virtual roundtable  
#MakingChildhoodEqual