

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

A Feasibility Study
on the extended use
of
Holy Trinity Church,
Hereford

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1. Executive Summary

- In the Whitecross Road area the percentage of over 60's is higher than the national average. The percentage of young people (under 19) is higher than the Herefordshire average.
- The Whitecross Road area lacks the provision of youth activities. Opportunities exist for Holy Trinity to accommodate or provide a wide range of activities for 13-19 year olds - the government's target "core age group" - to meet the agenda of the Children Act 2004.
- Opportunities to serve young people are offered by the Extended Schools programme and the move of Whitecross School to the edge of the area.
- Provision of services for older people is currently under review by the Social Services department of Herefordshire County Council and nothing will change until the review reports back in December 2006.
- Opportunities to address the needs of the increasing numbers of active over 60's exist. Holy Trinity church could accommodate / provide activities for the "new old" in partnership with other agencies and provide a luncheon club in partnership with a caterer to complement the provision by other churches.
- Opportunities exist across the whole age spectrum for Healthy Living initiatives.
- Holy Trinity could consider becoming an Information Point for services for older people, for leisure and cultural services and events, and for local authority and health services information.
- There are income generation opportunities for Holy Trinity by letting space for performance, exhibitions, meetings and conferences

For these opportunities to be maximised Holy Trinity must

- Draw up an Action Plan to take the findings of the Feasibility study forward
- Build better links with the community
- Draw on the good practice that is around in Hereford, access advice from other agencies and generally learn from the experience of others
- Document the whole of the Lettings procedure.

2. Background

Having successfully completed Phase I of the proposed re-ordering of the church building, Holy Trinity church commissioned a Feasibility study to look at the opportunities, presented by the re-ordering, for the extended use of the church building. The study was to consider the opportunities to:

- generate income
- address the needs of the local community.

In order to do this it would be necessary to look at:

- what sort of space is needed in this area, what already exists and who are the "competitors
- what are the needs of the local community, how the church could address those needs, what is planned for the future by other agencies
- where will the funding for phase II come from in the light of the services it might deliver.

Due to the recent changes in the licensing laws, both performance and the sale of alcohol, the study was to investigate whether / how the church building could be licensed for both.

3. Research

The research has looked at the use of your church building from two different angles:

1. How the space could be used for income generation
2. How the space could be used to serve the local community

Serving the local community does not necessarily generate income. The church must decide which is the most important and which actually meets the mission of the church best. It may be that a mixture of the two is the best answer to provide sustainability of both the church congregation *and* the church building.

3.1 Using the church building for income generation

There are a number of ways in which a big space like Holy Trinity church can be utilised especially now that the nave altar can provide a performance area. The church could accommodate:

- Concerts

- Drama performances
- Art exhibitions
- Craft fairs
- Trade exhibitions
- Information exhibitions, for example, local plans, changes to Health services etc
- Conferences

Whilst the opportunities look extensive it must be remembered that there are other places in Hereford hoping to accommodate these activities as well and Hereford is not a big place.

The Hereford City Manager, Cynthia Spaul, knew about Holy Trinity and was enthusiastic about churches being used for a wide range of activities,

"Any new locations in the City Centre would be welcomed. There is always a need for areas in which to put exhibitions, hold public consultations or hold local events. Great idea and it also means that people familiarise themselves with the church again and feel at ease in there. As well as bringing the church and its activities back to the people and it makes the church a meeting place again which is what it was designed for in the first place. "

Although the response was very positive and there clearly are possibilities, there is a limited number of these events each year and Holy Trinity church would not be suitable for every event.

Angela Jackman of the Herefordshire Farmers Market Group stated that there is no further requirement for space in Hereford for Farmers' markets.

The Leisure and Community department of Herefordshire County Council was contacted with regard to performance and art exhibitions. Clearly there are council owned properties for which they are responsible and are seen as their priority but there is an on-going need for exhibition space for artists - Herefordshire has a higher than average number of artists, attracted by the scenery and the lifestyle. The Leisure and Culture department supports organisations and individuals and has an active role in promoting arts space and could be very useful regarding exhibitions and craft fairs.

Claire Buckland, Arts Liaison Officer (Maternity Leave Cover) was very enthusiastic about the thought of another exhibition venue and offered to put an article about it in *Artery*, a newsletter which is circulated to over 800 people working in creative industries in

Herefordshire and beyond. However, should Holy Trinity go down this route, decisions must first be made about:

- What would and would not be allowed to be exhibited in the church
- The hire out cost of space - a room hire cost? A percentage of takings?
- What exactly was included in the hire cost - just the exhibition space? The use of the kitchen? The hours that the church would be opened? Who insures the works of art?

With regard to conferences, affordable space with car parking is always welcomed but thought needs to be given to what could be offered. The current set-up would work for presentation only conferences, but it may be worth considering creating seminar / workshop spaces using soundproof screens. Catering for other than drinks for a conference is not possible from the kitchen in the church building, but links could be developed with local caterers. Working in partnership with an outside caterer would also help promote Holy Trinity as a venue. Likely takers for conference space are the statutory bodies (for example, Herefordshire County Council and Hereford Primary Care Trust) and maybe diocesan conferences.

Clearly there are opportunities for selling space, they are limited due to the competition and the size of Hereford but they are worth pursuing for income generation. Holy Trinity can choose to be either

- Reactive - place your details with the sort of organisations mentioned, advertise in local publications and on your own website and wait for people to contact you. This approach is quite straightforward, you just need someone available during "office hours" to take bookings, arrange things like caretaking, catering, extra cleaning, invoicing etc.
- Proactive - actively market what is available throughout the Herefordshire area and to performers and craftspeople further afield. This would need someone with sales and marketing skills in addition to the administrator role described above. If the church has these skills (sales and marketing) within its membership and that person is prepared to volunteer these skills then it may be worth doing, if these skills are bought in then the income generated through lettings would have to cover the cost of marketing.

3.2 The Needs of the Community

Having viewed the church building purely as a tool for income generation let us turn to the local community and how the church building could address its needs. Demographically, how does the Holy Trinity parish compare with Herefordshire and the UK? From the 2001 census information:

- 23.9% of Herefordshire's population is under 19, compared to the national average of 25%, but Holy Trinity's under 19 population is nearer the national average at 24.6%
- 24.9% of Herefordshire's population is over 60, compared with the national average of 20.9% and in this case the figures for Holy Trinity reflect the county figure at 24.2%.

Whilst most people would expect Herefordshire to have a much higher than average over 60 population, not many may have guessed at that percentage for the Holy Trinity parish.

However census data by its very nature is a snapshot and things can change quite quickly. If the local plan were to put substantial housing development in the vicinity of the new High School, the percentage of over 60's would drop slightly and the percentage of under 19's would rise. What the 2001 census figures tell us is that the people in this area need access to:

- Youth facilities
- Services for older people.

What currently exists and where is it?

3.2.1 Young people

With regard to young people, there is very little provision in the parish area - a view held by both the county youth officer, Jon Ralph, who gave the "global view", and Ann Hyde, the youth officer for Hereford. In line with government plans, Youth services are moving into Children's Services catering for ages 0-21. Their target is to work with 25% of the "core age group" - the 13-19 year olds - and there is a very strong agenda based on the Children Act 2004. The priority areas are:

- Being healthy - physical, mental, emotional and sexual health
- Staying safe - safe from accident, maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, safe from crime and anti-social behaviour
- Enjoying and achieving - attending and enjoying school, achieving educational standards, personal and social development and enjoying recreation

- Making a positive contribution - engaging in decision making, supporting the community and environment, engaging in positive behaviour, developing positive relationships and self confidence
- Achieving economic well being - engaging in further education and training, being ready for employment.

Whilst some of these areas are school focused, there is the opportunity for other agencies, including Holy Trinity church, to achieve much through young people engaging with activities linked to life skills, confidence building and engaging with the community. Currently Herefordshire is not meeting the 25% engagement level.

Ann Hyde explained that for the last 3 years, sustainability has been a key issue with regard to the delivery of youth services. There are no LA owned youth centres in Hereford so there is **a need to use community buildings**. Youth services will be developed from **youth fora** working alongside schools. Ideas will come from the young people themselves and could be anything - cybercafés, teenage drop-ins for health and relationship information and counselling, sports, music. There have been a lot of projects for young people through the South Wye Regeneration Partnership; these provide examples of good practice.

The focus for youth services will be the 13-19 age group and Youth services will provide youth workers to help *develop* services *but not to run them*. They will train people to be youth leaders but local groups would be expected to raise funding for their own activities. However there will be some funding at county level

- A Youth opportunities fund (£30,000)
- A Youth Capital fund (£155,000), probably more for equipment or small building modifications than large building work.

Geared to the provision of more activities and facilities for young people, the funds will probably administered by the recently formed Youth council.

If Holy Trinity were to respond to this challenge there are examples of good practice which could be visited at the Baptist Church and the Christian Life Centre, both of which have a "God slot" in the proceedings.

If the commitment of weekly youth services sounds too daunting, Holy Trinity may consider running a holiday club or activity weekends and buying in the expertise, for which grant aid may be available. Given the Holy Trinity performance space it may be worth considering drama workshops, music days, circus skills, in fact anything that comes under

the banner of "performing arts". Alternatively the church building could accommodate a mixed activity programme for younger children.

With the Government's emphasis on **Extended Schools** a meeting was held with the Extended Schools officer, Paul Haley, who was previously one of the deputy heads at Whitecross school. He thought that **the move of Whitecross school would provide some opportunities for Holy Trinity**. Involvement in the enrichment programme will probably be more difficult when the school moves due to the distance. However the fact the school is moving but the catchment is not could provide opportunities in two areas:

- The school has identified the need for a Family Support worker - Holy Trinity church could make a good base for this worker and provide a more accessible space than the new school for the families who need help.
- The Teddy bear project, which aims to share the experiences of older members of the community with schoolchildren, could have problems as the elderly participants are local to the existing school not the new one - Holy Trinity is well-placed geographically to accommodate this work.

3.2.2 Older people

Looking at older people, the Social Services department of the County Council was contacted. On Monday 3 April a new worker, Sheila Morgan, joined Social Services to undertake a review of provision of services for older people - this will report in December and until then nothing will change. Although the report will cover all older people, Social Services funded provision is very "needs assessed" and really only hits the oldest, frailest members of the community. It is doubtful that Holy Trinity church could provide a day care centre for this target audience. Nonetheless it would be worth getting a copy of the report when it becomes available.

As this line of enquiry could not be followed at this time, Brian Burrows, the Chief Officer of Age Concern Hereford (ACH) was interviewed. Age Concern are getting more and more involved with "**Active Ageing**", sometimes referred to services for the "new old"; this is a growing market as the baby boomer generation are hitting 60. Targeting younger older people, active ageing focuses on better health, exercise and integration into the community after working lives have finished. ACH see their biggest problems as

- The need to attract more men. Men are a big problem because they do not like asking for help but they often are the ones with the

ones with problems around finding a new life after retirement or bereavement. Men do not like "day centres" but respond to "clubs"

- Low take up of benefits, which is particularly regrettable in a low income area like Hereford.

Age Concern provides a wide range of services delivered by volunteers, many of whom are retired. Volunteers are used for

- Handyman service
- Day care centre
- Fundraising
- Home befriending
- Benefits Advice and Information
- Making up and delivering Christmas hampers

They are always looking for

- Crafts demonstrators
- Flat pack furniture assemblers - elderly people buy flat pack stuff because it is well priced and transportable but then find that they cannot assemble it.

Age Concern Hereford produces a lot of helpful booklets and a directory of services but distribution is very costly. Age Concern Hereford would welcome a meeting with Holy Trinity because there could be common ground. At very least Holy Trinity could become a distribution point for ACH literature, a base for their various campaigns and to signpost people their services.

The Primary Care Trust (PCT) was contacted with regard to the sort of services that are delivered through community venues. The PCT fielded their Healthy Living officer, Penny Harding. Whilst Healthy Living is applicable to all age groups, Healthy Living initiatives tend to focus on young families and older people tying in with the areas already identified. Also there is a degree of overlap between the Healthy Living themes and the priorities of the Children Act. The main themes of healthy living are

- Exercise
- Activity
- Healthy eating
- Access to advice.

Wherever health is concerned the church can offer the complementary service of spiritual well being.

The Lifelong Learning department of Herefordshire County Council was contacted but the response was very disappointing. Sue Cobourne responded

*"We work with organisations/community groups to deliver 'tailor made' courses to meet the needs of the local community / learners. Normally when an organisation approaches us - they have an idea of what course they actually need and have normally located a venue. Unfortunately we have very small budgets and can only work with organisations/groups with learners with less than level two skills. (GCSE A-C grades - 5 in total)
As to the question of gaps in provision - I'm sorry but I can't answer that question"*

This is a very limited approach to "Life Long Learning" and courses for older people, especially in Information Technology and Communications, would be easier to set up through Age Concern.

3.2.3 How other Hereford churches are addressing the needs of their communities

Other churches in Hereford are undertaking community projects and these are included to aid the development of projects that are complementary and not in competition.

- **All Saints** is an outstanding example of a church serving a town centre community of shoppers, workers and visitors with its excellent café. Holy Trinity is not in an area of heavy footfall and is therefore not in the right place for this sort of venture.
- **St Peter's** have plans around the theme of "the civic church", using its location and building on the Close House project for youth. The plans are conceptually quite difficult and require considerable agreement with the commercial organisations surrounding the church. Funding for this project could be difficult and, apart from the youth element, it offers no competition to Holy Trinity.
- **St Martin's** is providing some good community services like the literacy project. The church has been an active partner of the South Wye Regeneration partnership and it is clear that this track record is standing them in good stead with regard to getting further local authority funding to take forward new projects.
Holy Trinity is not a bad enough area to attract this sort of funding. Holy Trinity has no track record in delivering community services and therefore would not attract local authority funding.
Nonetheless St Martin's provides an excellent example of how the church can work with the community and with statutory agencies.
- **St Nicholas'** has a luncheon club for older people as has the **Eign Street United Reformed church**. Holy Trinity could consider a

luncheon club in conjunction with these churches but would have to find a caterer to provide the food. Working in partnership with a caterer would not only enable setting up a luncheon club but could also enhance the "conference " possibilities discussed in 3.1.

3.3 Conclusion

What the research shows is that **there are opportunities for both income generation and serving the community**, some of the opportunities are easy to implement, others require more research and consultation. Luckily **there is a lot of help and advice available in Hereford** from the various departments of Herefordshire County Council, Hereford Voluntary Action, Age Concern, the Hereford diocese.

4. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Congregation comprises both older people with experience and young people.</p> <p>Core of hard workers</p> <p>Enthusiasm and confidence</p> <p>Welcoming when people come into church</p> <p>Tolerant - no "labelling"</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Good facilities</p> <p>Phase I of reordering complete</p> <p>Starting to accommodate community activities and build track record</p> <p>Location recognised</p>	<p>Reluctance to take risks</p> <p>Too reliant on core of hard workers</p> <p>Not connecting with wider community</p> <p>Fragmentation due to leadership style</p> <p>Community links poor</p> <p>Off the beaten track, little "passing trade"</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Exhibition space</p> <p>Migrant workers</p> <p>Increasing number of older people</p> <p>Lack of youth provision in area</p> <p>Single people of all ages</p>	<p>Too many bookings interfering with "core" business</p> <p>Deanery reorganisation</p> <p>Unable to achieve phase II</p> <p>Lack of storage space</p>

4. Recommendations

The SWOT analysis, which was drawn up in conjunction with church members, points to a balance between using the building for income generation and serving the community, for example:

- Hiring the building for performance and exhibitions
- Youth activities which build on the church's music and/or use the performance facilities
- Providing services or a venue for provision of services to older people, single people and migrant workers

Some opportunities can be seized immediately, others require further work.

4.1 Letting the building to others

This has already started and can be built upon *but* decisions must be taken about

- Hire costs especially with commercial users, for example, artists and craftspeople.
- Terms and conditions of hire must be drawn up to show what activities / exhibitions can be held in the church, when and how late is the building available, what facilities are included in the hire cost, what to do in case of breakages / damage to property, when and how hirers will be invoiced etc, etc
- Who will administer lettings / be responsible for opening up before use and locking up afterwards / organise cleaning etc,etc
- Where will the facility be advertised, how much promotion should be done

When all of these decisions have been made a **Lettings policy** can be drawn up, **Bookings forms and Promotional literature** designed, **Terms and Conditions of hire** printed and a Lettings process documented.

This work can be undertaken immediately but, at this stage, it is recommended that the availability of the church building be promoted as

- **A performance and exhibition space**
 - **A space suitable for large meetings and conferences**
- by
- Placing advertisements in the local media
 - Directly targeting Cultural Services and their contact database via their *Artery* newsletter

- Contacting the local authority, the PCT and the diocese offering large meeting / conference space
- Contacting the Hereford City Manager offering exhibition space.

All of this can be achieved at low cost and without having to employ a Marketing expert.

4.2 Promoting services provided by other agencies

An Information Point could be implemented with very little effort or expense.

Age Concern Hereford produce loads of useful information for older people but find distribution very expensive. Holy Trinity church could become a distribution point for this literature, helping both the community and Age Concern Hereford.

Cultural Services will be an important partner in promoting Holy Trinity church as an arts venue. It may be useful to offer Holy Trinity as an information point for Cultural services literature.

Other information which is of general information - council services, health services, even bus timetables - could be held so that local people start to regard the church as their Information point - perhaps the church could be open, say, one morning per week for coffee and information.

4.3 Building links with the community

The SWOT analysis identified "connecting with the community" as a weakness, although when people come to church services they are made very welcome. Until this weakness is overcome it will be very difficult to maximise the opportunities for community service. The answer could be to try to **get members of the community involved in the consultation, planning and implementation of community services and activities**. Other agencies may be able to help you identify and reach suitable parts of the community, for example, Age Concern, Voluntary Action for Hereford, Children's Services. The Westfalling Street Community Association, which meets in the Church Hall on Friar Street, could be a useful organisation to talk to as they are looking at similar issues. Projects are unlikely to be successful unless the target audience is involved and their involvement will improve the chances of funding both the building works and any revenue funding requirement in the future.

The link with Whitecross School is already strong through Brian Chave's position as a school governor. The imminent move to the new High

School building makes this a good time to **discuss with the school the role of the church in the future as a link between the school and the population it serves in the Whitecross Road area.**

4.4 Learning from others

Even before you start to connect with the community it is worth visiting projects similar to those you are considering and learning from the experience of others.

The Youth officer for Hereford cited the **Youth activities** at both the Baptist Church and the Christian Life Centre as examples of good practice. An early meeting with the Youth officer is recommended; if Holy Trinity would like to develop some kind of youth activity, the earlier the Youth officer knows, the more likely she is to be able to give timely help as she schedules activities many months ahead. If Holy Trinity were to accommodate / facilitate a Youth forum, the Youth officer is the person to set this up.

The South Wye Regeneration Project has many projects, across a wide range of needs / interests, which could inspire / inform Holy Trinity - especially in the areas of **Youth provision and Healthy Living** - the contact details are appended to this report.

Age Concern and Help the Aged have a wealth of information around activities and services to **older people** with examples gleaned locally and nationally. The Chief Officer of Age Concern Hereford has said that he would welcome the opportunity of discussing with Holy Trinity the possibility of joint ventures.

There is **a lot of consultative and fact finding work to be undertaken** and, whilst it may appear that valuable time is being lost in terms of achieving Phase II of the reordering, **it is time well spent**, it will

- **Help to overcome identified weaknesses around connecting with the community**
- **Result in activities and services that have been developed in conjunction with the people that need them**
- **Save time and money by learning from the experiences of others**
- **Ensure best practice is built in from the start**
- **Increase the chances of achieving grant aid**
- **Result in a solid base from which the church can continue to grow.**

4.5 Next steps

Recommendations are just that - recommendations - they are not commandments set in stone! So the next steps are

- **Discuss.** The Feasibility study should be discussed by the whole church membership
- **Decide.** The church must decide which, if any, of the recommendations it wishes to pursue
- **Plan.** An Action Plan should be drawn up showing each activity, with the actions - who is responsible for achieving them and the date by which they should be done - to make it happen
- **Implement.** The tasks on the Action plan are undertaken
- **Review.** The Action Plan must be regularly reviewed against the actions taken and amended as necessary. **Always remember, an Action Plan is a "live" document and things may need to change as more work / research is undertaken.**