

St Goran Church Community Project

Background

The vision for the St Goran Church Community Project started in 2001 by the vicar at the time, and was subsequently supported by three further vicars, and all the PCCs for the duration. The project was eventually completed in March 2016 and formally opened and blessed by the Bishop of Truro in September 2016. John Woodbridge, Chairman of the Planning & Fundraising Committee from 2007, stated that the main reason for the success of the project was that the original vision was right for the buildings and the community. The vision here was to sell the nearby Church owned flats and school rooms and to invest the proceeds to reorder the West End of the Church. In doing so the aim was to become a welcoming accessible church building, with amenities under one roof eg toilets, kitchen and meeting spaces, and also to provide affordable housing in the centre of the small village of Goran.

Prior to this vision Goran Church was too large for present day use and disabled access was difficult. There was also a problem regarding damp and dangerous pews in the Lady Chapel. The Church school rooms and flats required renovation and repairs and the small amount of income gained from them nowhere near covered the cost of their upkeep. There was no water at the west of the church which necessitated carrying water the length of the church (from behind the organ), to the back of the church to provide refreshments after services. The toilets were in a bad state of repair were only available in the adjoining Church Rooms with poor disabled access.

The Vision in practice

Progress was slow at the beginning of the project as the deeds for the two properties to be sold had been lost and the solicitors advised that the Charity Commission had to be involved which took time, together with the difficulty in finding a buyer. Eventually in 2013 the St Goran Community Land Trust acquired the properties for affordable housing. The price of the sale was low at approximately £105,000 as the properties were being sold for affordable housing. However the work inside the Church was happening at a pace. In 2011 the dangerous pews in the Lady Chapel were replaced with comfortable chairs, followed in 2012 with the movement of the font from the back of the Church to the front of the Lady Chapel where it is much admired. This made the space for the new facilities. Also during this time discussions took place with the bell ringers because the ringing chamber was to be raised from ground level to make space for the kitchen.



Funding

The cost of the project was £273,000 + VAT (the majority of the VAT was recovered). The sale of the church flats and church rooms amounted to £105,000. The PCC only had sufficient reserves for the day to day running of the church and there was the need to fund raise and seek grant funding. A fund raising committee was formed in 2013, together with a separate Project Management Team. From this time onwards tremendous local fund raising events were held, and this was the first time John and other representatives from the project were introduced to Transformation Cornwall's Meet the Funders Events. They attended the major annual Meet the Funders event where they were able to meet funders from national funding streams and to talk to them face to face about their grant proposals. Following on from this they attended smaller workshops on

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topics such as finding evidence for your project, where to look for potential funding and running a project. John confirmed that these workshops were a helpful lead in the fund raising plans.

Completion

After 7 years of resolving numerous challenges, difficult sales and DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) approval and 18 months of hard work fundraising, the building work was completed in April 2016. The sale of the Church Flats and Church School Rooms for affordable housing contributed just over a third of the cost of the project. The balance was raised by generous donations from church members, the local community, visitors and 15 grant funds including from Garfield Weston Foundation, Allchurches Trust, The Rank Foundation, Cornwall Community Foundation and Cornwall Historic Churches Trust.



In September 2016 a special thanksgiving service led by the Bishop for the new facilities was held. The parish could now boast the provision of a new church room, a smaller meeting room, two toilets, disabled access to the church, a large kitchen which links onto the church room and a new gallery area with a breath-taking view of the church from above. The Bishop also blessed the new ringing chamber and the ten bells which include two new bells anonymously donated.

The new and improved west wing of the church now provides facilities that the church has never had before as well as offering the option to close off the end of the church to make a more intimate setting when needed. This new flexible space is an exciting move for the parish which has also attracted use by groups within the community. It will prove to be a legacy for the parish and is due to the committed parishioners who had the vision to make a welcoming church building for the whole community for the present and future

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Photos courtesy of Paul Richards, PR4Photos 07783 448 552

