St Chad’s Church, Bensham
Regeneration Report

Cover image: St Chad’s external view looking south east

Prepared by: The Churches Conservation Trust
August 2019
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Appendix I Stage 1 Way Forward Report Executive Summary
Regeneration Report for St Chad’s, Bensham

1 Executive summary

St Chad’s church, Bensham, has participated in the three year Inspired Futures (IF) project to develop opportunities for heritage conservation, improvements to facilities and access, and explore potential for wider community use.

The church was selected for specific regeneration support in order to progress their plans to find an extended use through addressing fabric issues and repairs management, engagement and consultation with wider stakeholders on potential social outcomes, a review of the options and feasibility of extended use and the trail and testing of events and activity in the church to engage with a wider audience.

This report outlines the progress the church group have made throughout the IF project, acknowledging the key challenges and successes and the type of work undertaken.

Overall, as a result of the IF project regeneration support, the church group are now in a stronger position to develop their project, via the outputs achieved as outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
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<td>Garfield Weston Bid</td>
<td>As the bid required all permissions to be in place, although not successful, it resulted in completion of architect designs and faculty for phase 1.</td>
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To carry on the work achieved by St Chad’s participation in the IF project, the key areas of work agreed for the next 12-18 months for the group include:

- Meet with NLHF to discuss the project and how it can be developed to address challenges and opportunities within the community and more strongly achieve NLHF’s mandatory inclusion outcome.
- Update costs for repair and improvement works to the church with the church architect
- Develop a final case for support and fundraising campaign that looks both at NLHF and beyond to other funding sources in the event that NLHF do not invite an application.
- Prepare major funding applications either to NLHF and/or to other funders
- Continue to pilot and evaluate community social enterprise and engagement activities at the church and in the community through the Best of Bensham Collaborative
- Review operational and governance framework to support the community operation at the church
Regeneration Report for St Chad’s, Bensham

2 Introduction

Inspired Futures is a three-year programme working with a number of churches in the North East of England to develop opportunities for heritage conservation, improvements to facilities and access, and explore potential for wider community use. As part of the project, six churches received priority regeneration support from a team of consultants. This report outlines the support provided to St Chad’s church in Bensham by the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) Regeneration Team.

2.1 Objectives of regeneration consultancy

For Stage 1 of Inspired Futures (IF) the project development stage, 18 Way Forward reports were produced to support local church congregations as they consider or embark upon church development projects.

Based on these reports and on a structured review of needs, opportunities and capacity, six sites out of the 18 were identified as priorities for detailed project activities. The 12 other churches would continue to benefit from the project through mentoring and advisory support throughout the Inspired Futures project. See Group 2 Churches Final Reports.

The aim of the CCT regeneration team support was to deliver a programme of activities that help develop sustainable futures for a number of vulnerable historic church buildings with identified heritage and wider community engagement opportunities, and where there was a demonstrable demand from the church community to develop and change. Through providing a high quality blend of expert input, experience sharing, capacity building and project planning know-how, the project aims to help manoeuvre the churches into a stronger and more sustainable position for the future.

Working with the local volunteer groups, it was envisioned that the regeneration support would provide a suite of co-developed project documents tailored to each church to progress their plans for change and sustainability. This included:

- A range of developmental actions for regeneration and investment at all 6 sites e.g. outline concept designs, initial assessment of potential, wider public consultation.
- Assessing income generation options, and governance and management models to support new and ongoing operations.
- Develop stakeholder and partnership plans and help broker relationships with key partners.
- Assess marketing needs and recommend ways to improve marketing offers of each church.
- Implement heritage management recommendations.
- Encourage best practice for all 6 sites, including developing effective briefs, asset maintenance planning, community engagement and consultation, and using heritage to engage audiences.
- Facilitate volunteer development from the community – project activities will be designed to draw volunteers into the project.

2.2 Methodology

The project and consultants were in place to support the action of the church groups. How and when that support would be best used, was to become more apparent as the project developed, and therefore goals/objectives were set at three to six month intervals.

At the commencement of the IF project, the regeneration consultants had an inception meeting with each of the churches. The purpose of the meeting was to:
Regeneration Report for St Chad’s, Bensham

- Review recommendations outlined in the Way Forward reports and update on what has been achieved
- Review the vision of the group for the church and any changes that have taken place since the close of Inspired North East and the beginning on Inspired Futures (period of 18 months),
- Discuss a set of key priorities for the next 6 months for the group to work towards to start off the three-year programme.

A plan for these priorities was set out and work programme established for each church. Face to face meetings were arranged three-six months (depending on church) to set, review or progress these priority areas. In between there were email/phone correspondence available, document sharing (via Dropbox) and other in-person opportunities for mentoring at IF training events.

2.3 Limitations

Two members of the CCT Regeneration Team were assigned to the commission, with approximately 15 days of consultancy allocated to each group 1 church over a period of three years. The travel to each church was substantial, meaning the consultants needed to utilise face to face meetings as much as possible. There were a number of external factors (such as those discussed in section 5.1 below) that influenced the progress and output of the regeneration work.

3 Acknowledgements

The project relied on the co-ordination and joined-up expertise of the Inspired Futures delivery team, providing an experienced resource which all churches could benefit from.

Thanks must go to all members of the St Chad’s church group for their dedication, enthusiasm and vision to work towards a more sustainable future for their place of worship.

4 Property Overview

4.1 Site description

St Chad’s Church is located within the inner-city ‘Central Area’ of Gateshead. Dating from 1903, this is one of the largest and most ambitious churches designed by William Searle Hicks, in which his particular penchant for the late Gothic style was given full rein. The church is notable for the quality and elaboration of its contemporary furnishings and fittings, including much carved woodwork, and for some of its stained glass. In 1990 the west end of the nave was partitioned off and subdivided vertically and horizontally to create meeting rooms and ancillary accommodation on two levels for community use. St Chad’s is an extensive and accomplished town church, and key features include:

- 14th century style cruciform with aisles and an octagonal crossing tower with battlements, a corona of crocketed pinnacles and narrow fleche with vane.
- Much tracery, some flamboyant, some early Perpendicular
- Elaborate carved surround to North door has symbols of Evangelists and three niches above it with figures of saints
4.2 Selection process of Group 1 churches

The selection process to establish the six group 1 churches took place at the close of the project development phase in stage 1.

It was agreed that St Chad’s would benefit from the regeneration support. There was already great work happening in partnership with the St Chad’s Community Project which offers childcare and family support services to local Gateshead families which aligned with the Diocese’s priorities around growth, poverty and engaging young people. This supported the need to improve the building and address community needs and deprivation in the area. However, the Incumbent was at capacity with a major roof repair project pending and required the support of a project officer or someone to manage the project.

Areas of support therefore would concentrate on:

- Fabric issues and repairs management
- Detailed options appraisal on the best use for the building and benefit for the community
- Trial/test activities to engage with a wider audience
- Stakeholder consultation and wider understanding on potential social outcomes

5 Progress against key areas of work

From the Way forward report, the recommendations for St Cuthbert’s were provided based on the churches current circumstance, and broken down into short term (6 six to 9 months) medium term (9 to 18 months) and long term (18 months plus). See Appendix I for full executive summary.

During the gap between Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the IF project, the groups had done a great deal of work in improving the lighting system in the main body of the church, holding community consultation days, and developing community activity partnership opportunities. There had also been two sub groups formed to focus on website and heritage for the church.

The short to medium term recommendations were reviewed at the IF stage 2 inception meeting, taking into account the changes in situation since the Way Forward reports were completed, and items of work were prioritised and planned for delivery over the IF three-year programme.

The table below outlines the recommendations which were identified as priorities by the church group at the start of the IF (2015), and the status of each at the end of the support programme (2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Way forward recommendation 2015</th>
<th>Status of recommendation at project conclusion 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project resourcing.</strong> Need for additional project resourcing; Need for a community co-ordinator role, to work across several sites including the church - expand discussions held to date with local community projects on a potential consortium bid for a Bensham wide community co-ordinator.</td>
<td>The St Chad’s Community Project officer was extended, and is partially also working on developing the church project. This post will continue until 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Develop Income generation. Begin to map out prospective funders and develop an outline fundraising; explore with Linden Homes - Trilogy whether there is funding or in kind support measures they could offer to project; review hire policy, apply for a single Faculty to permit church filming across a trial 2-year period; explore alternative share options

A detailed options appraisal was produced for St Chad’s Church to help the church explore a number of extended use options and to make recommendations for a preferred option. The recommendation was for the church to focus on being a community, events and enterprise centre.

The document included a 5 year income and expenditure model for the site and informed the design and cost for the changes required, and potential sources of project funding.

The group did apply for a Garfield Weston Anniversary Grant but were not successful. Taking on feedback, the group are looking to apply to the NLHF.

Repair funding - Roof Grants for Listed Places of Worship Roof Phase 1: Work to begin on re-roofing nave and tower.

Phase 1 Complete but remainder of roof to be replaced as part of main project funding

Infrastructure of Church – Need to undertake a review of infrastructure in particular heating/ sound/ broadband

Capacity Building Fund enabled the setting up of the church as a broadband hub and wi-fi hotspot

Prepare for a consultation process on the project - inviting existing user groups, ecumenical partners, community partners;

An Enterprise day looking at consulting on the churches enterprise and mentoring offer, and a partnership/community meeting on the opportunities/needs in the area were held to add evidence and information to the church project. This also informed an outline activity plan to strengthen the bid to the NLHF.

Table 1 Key recommendations from Stage 1 Way Forward report

5.1 Key challenges

Capacity – Throughout the project there were lots of opportunities to work in collaboration, however, it was a challenge to find time and resource to co-ordinate these working relationships.

Unsuccessful funding applications – efforts were made twice to apply to NLHF for a GPOW grant, which were not successful, knocking the confidence and motivation of the group. The church also applied unsuccessfully to the Garfield Weston Anniversary Fund, but this was highly competitive. The group were successful with a Listed Places of Worship grant to repair nave and tower roofs.

5.2 Key successes

Review of income streams (shares, rent from MIND) – this was a core piece of work that was found useful to review early on in the project, providing a clear baseline to work from. It is something that can be repeated on annually.

Options appraisal work – this provided an informed decision as to the direction and scope of the project. Income and expenditure template is now being used and adapted by the group.
Stakeholder consultation – This event raised awareness of the project at the church and cultivated local relationship for ongoing support.

Appointment of a Project development officer part time – this has been the biggest single success in enabling planning and piloting of potential community and social enterprise activities

## 6 Programme of work

The table below provides a summary of the support and work undertaken to help deliver the key recommendations for St Chad’s church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Outcome/output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Inception meeting</td>
<td>• Agreed areas of priority and action plan developed for the next six months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>IF workshop – volunteer and heritage activity training</td>
<td>• Church group members attended workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>IF workshop - Informed change and consultant appointment</td>
<td>• Church group members attended workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>IF meeting – progress review</td>
<td>• Project Co-ordinator role produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fund managers approached (advise on shares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• GPOW submitted Grant unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>Logic Model workshop</td>
<td>• Logic model developed ahead of ABCD based Options Appraisal with Trevor and Jayne Hopkins facilitating June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>IF workshop - Options Appraisal &amp; Business Planning</td>
<td>• Church group members attended workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>IF workshop - Fundraising &amp; Consultation</td>
<td>• Church group members attended workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>Second GPOW application submitted</td>
<td>• Supported the co-ordination of the application. Grant unsuccessful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>IF partnership meeting</td>
<td>• Partners operating in Bensham outline challenges and opportunities for working in the area, to help St Chad understand areas they could develop to address need and complement existing services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>IF moving forwards meeting</td>
<td>• Options appraisal reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Capacity building fund approached for church to be a wifi hot spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Architect approached to work up sketch proposals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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March 2018
Enterprise open day
• Consulting on St Chad’s enterprise and mentoring offer

March-April 2018
IF Garfield Weston bid support
• Application for GW produced

May 2018
Partnership meetings
• Community partnership meeting to consult on the needs and opportunities of the area

June 2018
Final options appraisal produced
• Document finalised and use for funding applications. Garfield Weston bid submitted (not successful)

July 2019
IF final meeting
• Meeting focused on the next steps for a major funding bid and support to developing a fundraising strategy (including a case for support)

Table 2 Summary of regeneration support and work

7 Key Project Outputs

The table below lists the outputs achieved by the St Chad’s, church group and what the benefits of each of these outputs has or will be.

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<td>To map and understand if the changes the group are proposing will have the impact that they envision for the church. An exercise that has helped to define the project options for consideration</td>
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<td>Options appraisal</td>
<td>Detailed analysis into the options under consideration and defined recommendations on what would be feasible for the church to pursue. Evidence to demonstrate there has been a process to inform the project direction of the project. Also highlighted the predicted operational costs involved post project.</td>
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<td>Draft Activity plan</td>
<td>A populated template of agreed activities which can be used and adapted again when approaching the NLHCH</td>
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Table 3 Outputs and benefits of the regeneration support

8 Summary position

St Chad’s work over the IF period has strengthened the project in terms of its evidence base, justification and support. Although the lack of success with funding applications has been a challenge, it has also provide valuable feedback with which their project can be improved further. The church are very clear on what changes and activities they want to
carry out, and will be submitting a EOI to the NLHF (now with new strategy) to seek a major project funding. The church also have some funds to improve some of the facilities in the church to support current activity.

To carry on the work achieved by St Cuthbert’s participation in the IF project, the key areas of work agreed for the next 12-18 months for the group include:

- Meet with NLHF to discuss the project and how it can be developed to address challenges and opportunities within the community and more strongly achieve NLHF’s mandatory inclusion outcome. As part of this it will be important to engage with GMBC and David Andrew to ensure there is a strategic fit with what else is going on in Gateshead.

- Update costs for repair and improvement works to the church with the church architect

- Develop a final case for support and fundraising campaign that looks both at NLHF and beyond to other funding sources in the event that NLHF do not invite an application.

- Prepare major funding applications either to NLHF and/or to other funders

- Continue to pilot and evaluate community social enterprise and engagement activities at the church and in the community through the Best of Bensham Collaborative, a local initiative involving a range of local organisations and residents.

- Review operational and governance framework to support the community operation at the church
St Chad’s Church, Bensham, Gateshead

Inspired Futures Project:

Way Forward Report

Inspired North East

THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

LOTTERY FUNDED
Inspired Futures Project:
Way Forward Report for St Chad’s Church, Bensham, Gateshead

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Appendix A:
St Chad’s Church, Bensham Background Research Notes

Appendix B:
Further Guidance and Examples
Executive summary

St Chad’s Church is a Grade II* listed church in Bensham, Gateshead. A Project Group has been recently formed which has begun to explore extended use options for the church. The Group wish to put St Chad’s firmly at the heart of the community by expanding the support services the church currently provides and creating a place of heritage interest and hospitality for the local community. The Project Group is now at a point where they need to develop an evidence base of need through external consultation (to begin September 2015) and requires support to help maintain momentum and take the project forward. The project has huge potential to deliver long term health and wellbeing outcomes for local people. The Project Group have the skills, connections and drive to take this forward - with support – and recognise that recruiting new volunteers to support the development and delivery of the project is a key priority.

The executive summary provides a view on the priority actions for the church and PCC. These have been summarised into short, medium and long term actions. They should be read alongside the full report and ideally the actions recommended within the document should all be addressed through an action plan – but the following are seen as the most important priorities.

The PCC is encouraged to discuss these recommendations and come to an agreed view on the priorities. An important outcome should be the implementation of the actions in this executive summary. Actions are more defined in the short and medium term, because as the project evolves different actions will arise from the earlier work.

Short term

- Prepare for a consultation process on the project, inviting existing user groups, ecumenical partners, community partners;
- Heritage Open Day 12 September – use the opportunity to promote the church to visitors and seek their views about using the church building better;
- Consultation event 18 September, using an appreciative inquiry process to better understand what new services are needed and what physical changes would be required to make the site more user friendly; seek possible partners who could be part of the project group;
- Review existing use of space in the church to better understand asset use and identify underused areas;
- Start to prepare a plan for consulting the local community to understand how else St Chad’s could engage with the community. Ensure activities and events proposed are fun and will get new people through the doors;
- Roof Phase 1: Work to begin on re-roofing nave and tower.

The Church also wish to add:
- 24/3 Prayer event 10-13 September, to pray about Gateshead, Bensham, and listen to what God wants for the area and for the church;
- Lighting: Obtain DAC approval and Faculty for replacing lights in church with LED fittings that enhance the heritage features.

Medium term

- Establish the governance for the project group, identifying people/organisational roles, defining offers of support, identifying skills gaps and a clear terms of reference for the project;
- Recruit new members and/or advisor to the project group based on identified skills gaps;
• Begin to map out prospective funders and develop an outline fundraising strategy for the project;
• Seek development funding from Gateshead’s Capacity Building Fund and/or the Church and Community Fund for revenue support to employ a project co-ordinator;
• Continue community consultation activity and use feedback to inform and develop project offer and define project outputs and outcomes;
• Continue to test out new activities and undertake market research to produce an outline business case for investment which outlines how the site will be financially sustainable;
• Define scope of project with clearly defined objectives;
• Seek funding to support the development of an outline business plan for the site (e.g. project development grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund);
• Establish a plan for developing interpretation tools and materials to help people understand the building;
• Develop a Statement of Need which outlines what physical changes are required to meet these objectives;
• Develop a communications plan for the project;
• Embark on Roof and Other Outside Work, Phase 2: set out work to be done; seek funding.

The Church also wish to add:
• Lighting: install new lights.

Longer-term

• Seek funding (e.g. HLF Start up Grant) to commission an Assessment of Significance for the building and after completion, funding to develop concept designs for the site based on the outline business plan and Statement of Need;
• Consider also applying for funds to pay for specialist support that can help the project group review its existing governance arrangements and recommend alternative options for the group to consider based on current project group membership, project scale and direction;
• Continue to review community offer and income generation opportunities for St Chad’s;
• Begin to prepare funding applications for initial development work (e.g. potential application to the Heritage Lottery Fund).
• Roof and Outside Work, Phase 2: implement re-roofing, pointing, repair of crocketed finials etc.