

Christ Church, Shieldfield

Regeneration Report



Cover image: Christ Church internal facing south east

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Regeneration Report for Christ Church, Shieldfield

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Appendix I Stage 1 Way Forward Report Executive Summary

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1 Executive summary

Christ Church, Shieldfield 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 and review of the churches statement of need with current users of the building, engagement and consultation with wider stakeholders to explore partnerships, a review of the options and feasibility of extended use and models of operation and governance to support extended use.

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:

Output	Benefit
Logic Model exercise	A clear trajectory for the project development process
MOU with partners	Clarify relationship between partners
Community consultation and report	A useful insight into thoughts and ideas represented by the community. With the work undertaken and evidence gathered to date, the could define the vision for Christ Church.
Church interior concept design work	Has allowed a realistic preferred option for detailed development of the church interior
Church electrical and heating upgrade works	Has made church building safe, fit for purpose for interim use and future-proofed in relation to future improvement works
Funding application to NCT linked to the hall refurbishment project	Hall refurbished creating interim space for community activities and to maintain facilities for the circus project
Funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund for main church refurbishment	Although unsuccessful, the application served to sharpen the business planning for the project, and in relation to the feedback from the HLF/NLHF, to improve confidence and vision for the further application which is now in preparation, and to explore necessary permissions (DAC) for the proposed development works
Heritage activity development work	Has helped to engage new audiences in the Shieldfield community, lay the groundwork for the for the 'heritage hub' concept potentially including a local archive, and provide a permanent heritage display for use in the church (and potentially other contexts)

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To carry on the work achieved by Christ Church during the IF project, the key suggested areas of work for the next 12-18 months for the group include:

- Development of NLHF funding application for the church refurbishment project, with increased emphasis on activity planning and direct people benefits
- Further development work on the 'heritage hub' concept, including scoping on what this might look like in more detail
- Additional partnership development (e.g. wider community groups) to help increase management and practical capacity for the facilities the revamped church will offer

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 Christ Church Shieldfield by the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) Regeneration Team.

2.1 Objectives of regeneration consultancy

For the Stage 1 of Inspired Future (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 Church 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.

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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:

- 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 Christ 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

Christ Church and the attached church hall is situated on the eastern fringe of Newcastle city centre in the mixed-use urban area of Shieldfield, close to the University of Northumbria, and sits adjacent to Christ Church Church of England primary school.

The Grade II* Christ Church was built in 1859-61 by architect A B Higham and is the only landmark heritage building in Shieldfield. It retains most of its significant architectural features from this mid Victorian period. Some of its key interior features include:

- Arch-braced roof with high collar and queen posts. Quatrefoil piers with crocket capitals to moulded 2-centred arches of nave and 2-bay chancel arcades; flower or head-stopped drip moulds
- Tall chamfered tower arch contains door and boarded screen
- medieval-style floor tiles
- Gothic-panelled wood reredos

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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 Christ Church would benefit from the regeneration support. Alongside solving major fabric problems, the church and its partners are nurturing a circus/ educational/ community project unique in the north. Demands of developing this project are complex and severe, and require significant support which IF could help to provide. The Church and Circus Central (currently using the space) is a great partnership to deliver the project. It is a unique project in the area and already has good social support.

Areas of support therefore would concentrate on:

- Statement of need – building on the current users activities, and those of other stakeholders, have an justified statement as to why the changes to the church are needed.
- Business planning and governance review – looking to define the needs and new opportunities for income generation, reviewing local market research, and outlining a funding strategy.
- Explore partnership for heritage project – exploring the community heritage potential linking to circus project, and getting more people engaged with the site.

5 Progress against key areas of work

From the Way Forward report, the recommendations for Christ Church 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 X for full executive summary.

During the gap between Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the IF project, the groups had done significant work in completing an outline skills audit of the existing Partners Group and established an informal memorandum of understanding between the PCC and North East Circus Training (NECDT). Work had also commenced on progressing the refurbishment of the Church hall, which was a key facility in terms of the continuing hosting of the Circus Project, and the potential to continue to provide facilities for Circus in tandem with the development cycle for the refurbishment of the main church building.

The short to medium term recommendations were reviewed at the IF stage 2 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).

Way forward recommendation 2015	Status of recommendation at project conclusion 2019
Funding – develop a plan and liaise with HLF (as was) to better understand funding opportunities.	The church group have applied to a range of funders including the National Churches Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund and SUEZ (landfill tax). The 2017 NCT application was successful,

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	and together with funds from the church, enabled the refurbishment of the Church Hall. Unfortunately, a subsequent 2018 application to the HLF (Resilience Fund, final round) to enable the main church refurbishment project was not successful. A new application under the NLHF framework is now being prepared following the advice received following the earlier HLF application.
<p>Project support and partnerships - roles and responsibilities across project team and set out Memorandum of Understanding (which exists but is not set out in writing).</p> <p>Approach AHF development funding to pay for cost of business plan review and project co-ordinator time.</p>	A consultation event was held to promote interest and support for the project plans. Feedback from attendees contributed to the applications made to funders.
<p>Needs assessment – completed a theory of change exercise to understand the best direction of the project and options available</p>	A theory of change exercise was undertaken with the project team, and this contributed to the subsequent project development trajectory.
<p>Heritage Activity Planning – develop the heritage offer of Christ Church as a key route to engage new audiences</p>	Significant heritage engagement work was undertaken, with additional assistance and input from Jo Scott (IF heritage consultant). A heritage display about the history of Shieldfield was prepared, and this was the focus of a successful open weekend in October 2017 which also included other community activities. A similar heritage and public engagement event was repeated in 2018 as part of the HLF application development process. A permanent heritage/welcome display was produced at the conclusion of the Inspired Futures project which is now available for display in Christ Church. The heritage work was also used as a focus for community consultation which has fed back into the wider project development process.

Table 1 Key recommendations from Stage 1 Way Forward report

5.1 Key challenges

Christ Church had already had a long process (and past funding failures) coming into Inspired Futures, and this meant that there was an element of fatigue with further development work, and a desire to make rapid process. This was also driven by urgency over the relationship with NECDT and a significant concern that the circus project (which was the main development focus/idea for the church) might ultimately look for other residency options if the plans for Christ Church could not be delivered.

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This concern came to a head in early 2018 when the church felt that the IF led process was hampering their development timescale, and that they were at a more advanced stage of development than the proposed regeneration programme suggested. As a consequence, there was subsequently more limited engagement with IF in terms of completing the regeneration development process which the Regeneration Consultant had proposed, although they continued to independently push forward with their development plans with continued IF input via the Project Officer.

The partnerships underlying the proposed circus related business model were complex, and also included the Church of England school which adjoins Christ Church. This again sometimes led to problems of coordinating development activities, especially given the different pressures all the participating organisations were under, and the different ambitions and objectives they had. One issue which linked to this was a strong desire to take forward the circus partnership for its social and wider benefits even if the business case in specific income generation and sustainability terms was not clearly mapped out.

Capacity was an ongoing issue, with the incumbent and the project team under significant pressure in terms of their wide range of duties. This resulted in difficulties in progressing key work areas, and also heavy workload on particular individuals. For example, this led to management issues during the delivery of the Church Hall refurbishment project, and this then became a significant (and entirely understandable) distraction from the wider strategic development process which IF was aiming to support.

A tension within the project was also around expectations of what Inspired Futures could deliver. Although IF was conceived as a 'light touch' support initiative (even at Group 1 level), the feeling was sometimes expressed by Christ Church that they expected more than that (e.g. more direct support with Project Management during the hall refurbishment project), and that Inspired Futures was not ultimately giving them what they needed in this respect.

These issues also generally fed into uncertainty about the best funding strategy to adopt. Christ Church had access to a trust fund resource which potentially gave significant match funding for project applications, but there was increasing pressure to use this as a 'stand alone' pot to enable more immediate progress. Again, this led to differences in terms of how to move forward, especially in relation to the extended business planning process advocated by the regeneration consultant. The stated reasons for the failure of the subsequent HLF applications were around the value for money of the project and in relation to the balance of activity and capital elements, and this did again flag up the need for a rigorous business planning approach.

Key successes

The delivery of the church hall refurbishment project was a key success for Christ Church. This included both the fundraising phase and the subsequent delivery of the project, and while neither part of these was straightforward, the fact that this project was completed was both a much needed 'win' for the project team, and a significant step in maintaining the relationship with NECDT and other church users. Without this, it may not have been possible to go to the next stage of developing the full project design and funding application for the church itself.

The relationship with NECDT had sometimes been uncertain, and another unquestionable achievement over the last three years is that this is now on a more secure footing with NECDT committed to the future development process with the church.

The heritage engagement and community consultation strand of the project has been a key tool for building not only robust input into wider project development work, but the specific

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agenda to make the church a key repository for the history of Shieldfield. The creation of the heritage display is a notable step towards this wider goal, and the wider demonstration of the capacity of local heritage to attract people to the church has been a notable success of the project.

Overall, Christ Church at the end of the three year period has a much clearer 'road map' towards the delivery of its objectives (most crucially, a sustainable future for the church within its community) than it had at the outset of the Inspired Futures project. That success is as much vested in confidence and belief of the team as it is in the hard planning work and outputs, but this is nevertheless a notable achievement.

6 Programme of work

The table below provides a summary of the support and work undertaken to help deliver the key recommendations for Christ Church.

Date	Event	Outcome/output
September 2016	Inception meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed areas of priority and action plan developed for the next six months
October 2016	IF workshop – volunteer and heritage activity training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church group members attended workshop
November 2016	IF workshop - Informed change and consultant appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church group members attended workshop
January 2017	IF meeting – progress with heritage and evaluation consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan actions for next three months
March 2017	Logic model workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logic model
March 2017	IF workshop - Options Appraisal & Business Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church group members attended workshop
April 2017	IF workshop - Fundraising & Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church group members attended workshop
June 2017	IF progress meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan update Options appraisal exercise Summer event planning
July 2017	IF Governance meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance options paper
September 2017	Community consultation/heritage event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising and feedback and data on project
December 2017	IF site visit with architect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline discussion of design appraisal for the church interior
March 2018	IF site visit with the architect and the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement of brief for the Church interior concept design development work

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April 2018	Workshop to review proposed architectural design options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team agree their preferred option
September 2018	Heritage display event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public engagement and consultation
June 2018 to November 2018	IF Project Officer meetings with HLF application project lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory input on the HLF application Development of heritage display
April 2019	IF Project Officer meeting with NLHF Project Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory input following failure of initial HLF application towards helping to shape new NLHF application following NLHF advice
June 2019	IF facilitated meeting with heritage display designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed design for the Christ Church heritage display
July 2019	Christ Church presentation at IF closing conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Presentation of Christ Church experience and achievements linked to the project

Table 2 Summary of regeneration support and work

7 Key Project Outputs

The table below lists the outputs achieved by the Christ Church, Shieldfield church group and what the benefits of each of these outputs has or will be.

Output	Benefit
Logic Model exercise	A clear trajectory for the project development process
MOU with partners	Clarify relationship between partners
Community consultation and report	A useful insight into thoughts and ideas represented by the community. With the work undertaken and evidence gathered to date, helps to define the vision for Christ Church.
Church interior concept design work	Has allowed a realistic preferred option for detailed development of the church interior
Church electrical and heating upgrade works	Has made church building safe, fit for purpose for interim use and future-proofed in relation to future improvement works
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Funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund for main church refurbishment	Although unsuccessful, the application served to sharpen the business planning for the project, and in relation to the feedback from the HLF/NLHF, to improve confidence and vision for the further application which is now in preparation, and to explore necessary permissions for the proposed development works

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Heritage activity development work	Has helped to engage new audiences in the Shieldfield community, lay the groundwork for the for the 'heritage hub' concept potentially including a local archive, and provide a permanent heritage display for use in the church (and potentially other contexts)

Table 3 Outputs and benefits of the regeneration support

8 Summary position

Christ Church has made considerable progress over the period of Inspired Futures, although it was not always been an easy development process, and there were difficulties in sustaining the relationship of the Inspired Futures project given the pressures faced by the Christ Church project team. As a result, the final outputs are not entirely those anticipated/planned for at the outset of the project, and Christ Church were working largely independently towards the end of the project period with continuing Inspired Futures mentoring and advisory support.

The work towards refining the partnership and practical arrangements for the circus project, to clarifying the practical church design constraints and options for the main church building, and building wider community linkages through the heritage work, all puts the future development agenda on a more secure basis. In addition, the success of the hall refurbishment project, and the learning through the HLF major funding application (although this was not successful) have created a realistic skills, knowledge, planning and confidence foundation for the successful delivery of the main circus partnership project. Issues of capacity certainly remain, and it will also be crucial for the next phase of proposals and funding applications to incorporate a robust business - as well as social and community benefit - case.

To carry on the work achieved by Christ Church during the IF project, the key suggested areas of work for the next 12-18 months for the group include:

- Development of NLHF funding application for the church refurbishment project, with increased emphasis on activity planning and direct people benefits
- Further development work on the 'heritage hub' concept, including scoping on what this might look like in more detail
- Additional partnership development (e.g. wider community groups) to help increase management and practical capacity for the facilities the revamped church will offer

Christ Church, Shieldfield, Newcastle



Inspired Futures Project:

Way Forward Report



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Executive summary

Christ Church is a Grade II* listed church in the Shieldfield district of Newcastle. The Partners Group have been developing an extended use project for the past few years with the aim of creating a regional centre of excellence for circus training, whilst continuing to provide an area for ongoing worship. The Group are now at a point where they need to develop an evidence base of need through external consultation and begin to develop the business financials for the project. They also require support to help maintain momentum and take this project forward. The project has huge potential to deliver long term learning and participation and health and wellbeing outcomes for local people and address the deficit in youth services in the surrounding area. The Partners Group have the skills, connections and drive to take this project forward - with support - and the proposed phased approach to project delivery will help the Partners Group to achieve this in manageable steps.

The executive summary provides a view on the priority actions for the church and Partners Group. 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. An appendix provides links to further guidance on the specific reports and processes suggested and, where possible, relevant examples.

The Partners Group 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

- **Skills audit** - undertake a skills audit of the existing Partners Group to identify skills gaps;
- **Project governance** - establish the governance for the Partners Group, identifying peoples/organisational roles, defining offers of support, identifying skills gaps and a clear terms of reference for the project;
- **Project support** - contact groups and individuals in the area that would be interested in supporting the project and advising the Partners Group;
- **Consultation planning** - start to prepare a plan for formally consulting the local community on the project proposal. Ensure activities and events proposed are fun and will get new people through the doors;
- **Revenue funding** - identify funders that could support project revenue costs;
- **Register the project** with www.timebank.org;
- **Case for Support** - review and create a new Case for Support for the project.

Medium term

- **Recruit** - new members and/or advisor to the Partners Group based on identified skills gaps;
- **Consultation activity** - continue community consultation activity and use feedback to inform and develop project outputs and outcomes. Use consultation events to explore appetite and recruit new volunteers to the project;
- **Partnership Agreements** - set out Partnership Agreements with Christ Church Primary School and North East Circus Development Trust;
- **Revenue funding** - seek funding to support revenue costs for a dedicated Project Manager;
- **Business planning** - seek funding to support the development of an outline business plan for the site which outlines how the site will be financially sustainable (e.g. project development grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund);

- **Needs assessment** - Continue to test out new activities and undertake/co-ordinate market research in support of the development of a business case;
- **Review Statement of Need** - which outlines what physical changes are required to meet project objectives;
- **Assessment of Significance** - Seek funding (e.g. HLF Start up Grant) to commission an Assessment of Significance for the building and after completion, funding to develop an up to date concept design and set of costs for the project based on the outline business plan, Statement of Need and model of phased delivery;
- **Funding** - continue exploration of funding options for the project and work towards developing a detailed fundraising strategy for the project based on known project costs;
- **Communications** - develop a communications plan for the project.

Longer-term

- **Governance** - consider also applying for funds to pay for specialist support that can help the Partners Group review its existing governance arrangements and recommend alternative options for the group to consider based on current Partners Group membership, project scale and direction;
- **Business planning** - continue to review income generation opportunities for Christ Church;
- **Bid preparation** - begin to prepare funding applications for initial development work (e.g. potential application to the Heritage Lottery Fund).