

CASE STUDY

PETERCHURCH, DIOCESE OF HEREFORD, COFE

www.hubcommunity.org

Population: 1,091 (2011 Census)

St Peter's is an impressive 12th century Grade I listed building which stands in the small village of Peterchurch situated in the Golden Valley in South West Herefordshire. The area is very rural with many families feeling isolated with few opportunities to interact socially and a lack of access to public services.



Herefordshire Council were looking for ways to deliver children's services in the area when they approached the Hereford Diocese and expressed an interest in using St Peter's. At the time the church had no facilities and the Local Authority offered £20k towards the cost of putting in a toilet. From that initial conversation, a vision developed and a partnership was established between the local authority and the church, and the whole community backed the idea of using the church for activities.

The project to refurbish the interior involved freeing up space by removing the pews and installing environmentally-friendly underfloor heating, a lift, lighting, toilets, kitchen, consulting room and a new mezzanine floor with access into the bell tower to provide an additional room.

The project was finished at the end of 2009 and is an exemplar of extended church use and partnership working.

The project has met several objectives and addressed several needs of the community: a long-term use for an underused community facility and resource, ensured the sustainability of a major heritage building now in regular daily use, helped address the issue of access, increased service delivery from the church centre, created a greater sense of community cohesion and people working together to address their own needs, improved access to cultural activities through the facility provided in the library and an improved performance space, and improved quality of life for families and young children.

In recent years with the withdrawal of Surestart funding, the project has had to reinvent itself and the use of the building to ensure a sustainable income. They have developed a range of new activities including a good neighbour scheme, a community café that is run on a social enterprise commercial basis and a Food Assembly. They also engage through Twitter and Facebook.