

CASE STUDY

ST DAVID HOPE CHURCH, ISLINGTON, DIOCESE OF LONDON, COFE

www.hopechurchislington.org

Population: 215,667 (2011 Census)

In 2013, the Anglican church of St David, Holloway, re-opened – after being closed and declared redundant in 1984 - after extensive refurbishment.

Funded through the redevelopment of adjacent church land for private and social housing, as well as significant fund-raising by the Parish, the congregation got a bright, new worship space. The local community got a beautifully designed venue, which has hosted many community events and youth and children's groups. It enjoys a strong income stream from renting out space.

It was very different in 2004. The church was only being used on Sunday afternoons by a Greek Orthodox congregation, which then moved to other permanent premises. This could have been the end of St David's. However, since 1992 nearby St Mary Magdalene had established a community project (The Paradise Project) in St David's Church Hall, adjacent to the old church and had recently encouraged around 30 people to re-start a congregation there on Sundays.

The hall was also well used through the week, rented out for community uses or by the Paradise Project. With a growing congregation on Sundays, it became clear, it was not a large enough venue.

So in 2004 they decided to take on the refurbishment of St David's church. It needed investment – the fuse box hadn't been touched since the 1930's - and was arranged in a formal style that did not fit the worshipping style of the congregation. However with the help of the Revd Jonathan Rust, Curate at St David's from 2000 – 2003 and later Associate Vicar the congregation decided to demolish the hall and build new private and social housing, which would generate capital to encourage further grants and donations and fund a comprehensive refurbishment of the main church building.

The project took nine years, opening in 2013. It cost over £4m, so the church had to fundraise £1.6m and it took many turns including complications in securing planning permission, which was finally granted in 2009.

The refurbished church now offers:

- On the ground floor - a well-equipped commercial standard kitchen, toilets, offices and a prayer room, an attractive reception area and the main church worship space
- Upstairs – two floors of space, wrapped in a ‘u’ shape around the main worship space, currently used by The Courtyard, a specialist school for children with autism, part of St Mary Magdalene Academy, the local Church of England secondary school
- In the basement – seven classrooms and a ‘cinema room’ by the Academy during school hours, but by the church and other community groups at other times.
- Two parish flats – a one-bed flat is part of the church complex and a two-bed flat in the adjacent housing development. In the neighbouring seven-storey housing block, there are 30 private flats (which were sold), nine social housing units managed by a Housing Association and the church also owns a four-bedroom Vicarage flat and a two-bedroom flat for use as a parish flat. The scheme won a design Award at the LABC Awards for Building Excellence 2014.

Together with St Mary Magdalene’s, St David’s runs activities for all – including concerts, outreach events like Soul in the City and even an (outdoor) Pet Service.

The church earns over £160,000 per year from renting out its spaces so that some £130,000 net per year is available for it to spend on what it chooses.

