

St. Cadoc's Church Caerleon

Vision Statement

March 2022



Background

St. Cadoc's PCC has been discussing the need to reorder the church for nearly 20 years, with only limited progress being made. Recently, however, there has been an increase in momentum with a new determination to bring about the proposed development. This is not unconnected to changes in our pattern of worship. More small group meetings, innovations like Taizé and Café Church, a greater involvement of children in Sunday morning worship, the re invigoration of our musical tradition have all pointed to the necessity for a building which supports development rather than impedes it.

This determination is supported by improved communications. Our remodelled magazine, a well-used website, and social media platforms are all used to keep our parishioners up to date with developments. During lockdown, the effective use of Zoom kept the congregation together.

There will still be those who will find the proposed changes a challenge. Patterns of practice over decades make change difficult. Nevertheless, a critical mass of the congregation is ready for the changes already underway. They are aware that we must do all that we can to secure Christian witness in Caerleon for succeeding generations

Our Vision

Be Bold or Die: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' *Proverbs 29:18*

We aim

- to build a Church whose head is Jesus, whose help is the Holy Spirit and whose focus is the Great Commission, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with the local community.
- to be a Christ-centred Church in the heart of Caerleon, and beyond, where the hurting, the depressed, the frustrated, and the confused can find love, acceptance, help, hope, forgiveness, guidance, and encouragement.
- to see people disciplined, grow in spiritual maturity, equipped, empowered and serving; using the gifts and talents God gave them.
- to nurture a community of believers whose hearts are full of love for Christ and a willingness to meet the needs of the world.
- to be good stewards of an ancient building drenched in prayer and steeped in history.
- to create a Church that is vibrant and inclusive, energetic and flexible and fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Our Plan

In order to achieve our aims, we will:

- **Remodel our worshipping Environment** by removing the pews and replacing them with stackable chairs allowing a flexible worship space for informal as well as more informal gatherings. Worship 'in the round' will be possible, making use of the portable nave altar. The church can then be used at local and Diocesan level for conferences, workshops, day retreats and exploration of different spiritualities. Removal of the pews will also eliminate health and safety concerns. The hinged pew doors are a hazard for children and toddlers and can obstruct the aisles.



- **Make space for prayer and pastoral care** by creating quiet private areas. The new mezzanine area will provide the privacy, dignity and intimacy which is not possible with the present configuration of the church. The prayer board and confessional kneeler is located in an area next to a door which is used to house cleaning resources and it is used as a thoroughfare to the choir vestry. The Lady Chapel is open to the public and is not private. Pastoral Care, which may include confession and absolution, can be offered in a 'safe' spiritual space which provides confidentiality, warmth and welcome, and where refreshments can easily be offered.
- **Create an immediate sense of welcome** to visitors by changing the existing configuration. The entry into the church through the South Door is often congested prior to services and events. The step onto the font area is a trip hazard for visitors and the array of dark and mismatched furniture, existing storage area for books along with the dark pews, present the church as gloomy and cluttered. This does not provide a fitting welcome and is 'off putting'. The new glass vestibules for the South and West Doors, will provide easier access and sources of natural light. They will make the church a visible sign to the community that we are a welcoming and open church. The installation of glass doors at **Sidmouth Parish Church**, for example, immediately created an inviting, open church for visitors.



- **Provide space for a new visitors' centre.** St. Cadoc's is at the heart of Caerleon. The Welsh Government Report *Visits to Tourist Attractions in Wales 2018* recorded 56,332 visitors to Caerleon, excluding school visits. The church only attracts a small number of these at present, with a lack of welcome, and an absence of relevant information. The re-ordering will enable a '**Visitors Centre**' to truly celebrate the history of the church, whilst providing an opportunity for additional revenue through hospitality. Visitors will be welcomed into a light church, with an audio visual display / screen providing an immediate link to the history of the church supported with information about services and events. This should provide a 'memorable' experience of this Grade II* building. It is envisaged that, with advertising, future visitors, including schools, will factor in time to take the short walk across from the National Roman Legion Museum into the church. The open and light space, with soft furnishings, will allow visitors to view the Victorian windows and monuments, with greater ease. The highlighting of key church features will further enhance the visitor's experience.
- **Build the Infrastructure for growth & revenue.** The small church room in the churchyard cannot meet requests from the community for children's, youth and adult groups, parties and functions. The single toilet is inadequate for the present congregation and an impediment to more ambitious uses of the building. Internal toilets with baby changing requirements and disability access is a priority to abide by legislation and ensure dignity is provided for all. Floors with Ramps at strategic points and a lift to the upper floor / mezzanine are also necessities in order to meet the Equality legislation. Kitchen facilities, though recently improved, remain inadequate for anything other than basic refreshments. A fully resourced kitchen is a necessity. This can be achieved within a functioning historic building as the case studies below demonstrate. The kitchen and toilets, together provide the infrastructure to establish a working café. This will be in addition to 'in-house' catering functions for events. With Wi-Fi access already available throughout the building, the visitor area adjacent to the refurbished kitchen, supported by ample power/USB sockets will allow individuals to use laptops for work and leisure and create a relaxed informal space and atmosphere. A space for all – worshippers, local community and visitors and an opportunity for additional revenue.

The re-ordering of **St. Elvan's Aberdare** has provided a kitchen area which not only serves the church but is a functioning café, with informal seating, monitors for information and a mezzanine.



The facilities at **St. Thomas' Church, Swansea** reinforce the difference a well equipped kitchen has had on the church worship and local community. The kitchen is used as a café and caters for large events including weddings.



- **Take advantage of the new space to create missional opportunities.** Regular Sunday morning services currently average about 50-60 people, but the ambition is to provide for up to 400 safely with the use of the mezzanine. The re-ordering will enhance the experience of attendees at the occasional offices, services and events, drawing individuals into the holy space and linking the nave, chancel and sanctuary. The grand piano, portable altar, lectern and font can be easily re-positioned to create the 'perfect' environment for each occasion. Zoned areas for children and for prayer can be created.



The vision is for the floor of the nave to include a labyrinth like this one from **Chartre Cathedral**. Prayer walks will embody the notion of pilgrimage and faith journeys to develop personal prayer and spirituality within in the church.

Flexible use of the space will provide for groups of different sizes and age groups – from Messy Church to a dementia café. Throughout there will be an emphasis upon providing a welcoming friendly space for families. The reordering of St Thomas's Church in Swansea shows what can be achieved in this respect.



St Thomas's



- **Create a hub for performing arts in Caerleon.** St Cadoc's has a long tradition of working with the Caerleon Arts Festival and hosting a range of performing arts. The reordering will provide enviable facilities for future

events combining a wonderful acoustic space with comfortable seating and modern facilities. It will be in much demand and, as well as contributing to the cultural and spiritual life of Caerleon, will generate a useful additional source of income. The space will also allow art installations set within the context of a spiritual and historic setting.

Dance



Concerts



Art Exhibitions



- **Play our part in social action initiatives.** The re-ordering will allow space for the church to host Night Shelters and to store Food Bank resources discreetly.



Hosting Lenten ‘Churches Together’ Charity Lunches and Charity Fundraising events E.g. *Children in Need* and *Christian Aid* will open up new avenues to raise awareness and generate financial support.

- **Provide a dedicated church office.** This will be the ‘shop window’ of the church to welcome visitors and those seeking the occasional offices. The secure and centralised storage of resources and material for parish administration is well overdue. The office will serve a dual purpose as an administrative centre and as a place for confidential consultations in a comfortable setting. **All Saints, Penarth** shows what can be achieved with this configuration.



- **Ensure that we safeguard the environment**

The vision is for the church to reduce its Carbon Footprint and provide a sustainable heating source.

In April 2021, the Governing Body of the Church in Wales declared a climate emergency and agreed that an “urgent and rapid global response” to global warming was necessary. They also voted to plan for the whole Church to have net zero carbon emissions, ideally by 2030, and to divest funds from fossil fuels. The reordering at St Cadoc’s will contribute significantly to this agenda.



In addition to sustainable heating sources and improved insulation, external stands will encourage cycling - an important addition given that a major cycle route is close by.



An Afterword

Honouring the Past and Securing the Future

Visitors walking into St Cadoc's, and looking to the left, are unlikely to miss the substantial stone font placed there in Victorian times. What they will probably fail to notice, is a smaller chunk of stone, tucked into a corner, which looks as though it may be part of a Roman pillar but is, in fact, a twelfth century font. It is hard to imagine how many children have been baptised in one or the other but, together, they provide a striking symbol of an enduring Christian ministry in Caerleon.

They are also a powerful reminder that reordering is not a novel concept – that, through its long history, the church at Caerleon has changed to meet its changing circumstances. At significant points, it has been seized with the urge to build for the future. When the old wooden structure became unfit for purpose, it was rebuilt in stone by the Normans and, as population grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, St Cadoc's was extended and remodelled to meet the needs of a growing town.

Now during a period of unprecedented change, it is our time: time for us to show the same care for future generations that our forebears did; to look at the holy space we have inherited and envision how it can meet the needs of people now and for the next hundred years. The Victorians did no less in 1867 and, in many ways, our community is as needy as theirs. We are driven by the same ambition to serve and to spread the light of the Gospel.

In our planning for the future, we will continue to honour St Cadoc's past. It is a place where Christ has been met in scripture and sacrament for hundreds of years. Longevity, however, is no guarantee of survival. Churches, sadly, are not immune from the depredations of time and change. Over coming decades, St Cadoc's will change. The status quo is not an option. Either it will decline or it will grow. Our vision is that it should grow and we have faith that it will do so. The reordering proposal and the submitted plans show how, with God's help, we hope to achieve this. We know that the building itself is not the vision but that, skilfully and sensitively reordered, it can serve and embody it.

We believe that this is the right time for changes to be made and that, guided by the Holy Spirit, we need to get on with the task.