

# Norton Community Trust

## Newsletter No 5

July 2020

Hello everybody! Hope you are all keeping well and safe and coping with these difficult times. This is a quick update on the progress of the adaption project - things are still moving along, if a bit slower than we hoped.

St Andrews has now officially been declared redundant by the Church in Wales which means that the building can no longer be used for regular Christian worship. Just a reminder that under the terms of the proposed lease between the NCT and the Church in Wales, the building can in future be used for occasional religious services, including public worship, baptisms, funerals, as well as marriage blessings. (Marriage ceremonies will require a special licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury, no less! And yes, really, from the Church of England - full canonical history lessons available on request!)

We have also received a long-awaited response from Powys County Council Planning in respect of two related planning applications arising from the proposed adaption of the church building. The Listed Building Application was submitted in November last year, followed by a Change of Use planning application submitted in February this year. The planning process was always going to be challenging because of the Grade 2\* status of the former church building. This grading is a reflection of the work of the famous Victorian architect Sir Gilbert Scott whose office was responsible for the extension and adaption of the building in 1868. The building is viewed as a virtually complete example of Scott's rural work, and is protected by a wide range of constraints on any changes to its fabric, fixtures and fittings. The current community plans for the adaption of the building into a community hub take account of the

need to preserve the building's architectural heritage, fixtures and fittings, the only exceptions being the removal of the pews and the relocation of the font. Nevertheless the Build Heritage Officer at Powys CC has requested a range of additional information about the Trust's plans, taking into account observations/objections from other interested parties, including the Victorian Society, which has a strong interest in preserving the building in its present form. All the various documentation in relation to both applications can be viewed on the Powys Planning Portal. You can simply use the St Andrews post code (LD8 2EN) to locate the material. No final decision on planning permission is likely before the autumn.

We have also been exploring further the best legal status for the Norton Community Trust prior to signing the lease for St Andrews with the Church in Wales. Achieving charitable status is of course the primary aim, but ongoing discussions with the Charity Commission (mostly on-line) have been delayed by some misunderstanding about the NCT's purpose and, of course, the current pandemic. An easier option to at least get the adaption project completed is for the NCT to be registered as a company limited by guarantee, which is a well-established model for charitable and not-for-profit organisations.

You may already be familiar with the Presteigne and Norton Community Trust (PNCT) which was established as a limited guarantee company in 1995.

Its main object is 'to preserve, restore, enhance and improve the historical, architectural and cultural heritage (of the town and community of Presteigne and Norton) particularly by the refurbishment of existing historical amenities and property.....'

This seems an ideal fit for the Adaption project, particularly as the PNCT has recently been adopted by the Town Council, which strongly supports the Adaption project. As a result, discussions are underway with the Council to determine if the PNCT can be used as an umbrella legal structure for the Adaption project.

Finally, we hope you haven't forgotten about the Norton calendar photo competition. For obvious reasons, it won't be possible to conclude the competition this year, but keeping the competition alive enables us to capture the best of Norton across all four seasons. So keep your cameras to hand as we begin to benefit from the removal of restrictions on movement across the country.

It is hoped to judge the photo entries at the Norton Show in summer 2021 and have a calendar for 2022 which we will make us all proud.

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