

2007 Business Plan



‘...I have seen the good work that the centre has done for the entire community.’

David Lidington MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

‘It is centres such as these that put the heart back into the community and raise the standard of living for all concerned.’

Councillor Bill Chapple
Deputy Leader, Buckinghamshire County Council

2007 MCCP BUSINESS PLAN

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Executive summary	5
2. Organisation summary	6
2.1 About us.....	6
2.2 Our Organization overview.....	6
2.3 Our Steering Group profiles	7
2.4 Our project experience.....	9
2.5 Our track record	9
2.6 Project beneficiaries.....	10
2.7 Our service delivery – activity and partner summary	11
3. Project background	13
3.1 Project overview.....	13
3.2 Design brief.....	14
3.3 Architect selection.....	15
3.4 Design process	15
3.5 Detailed design	15
3.6 Development costs	15
3.7 Consultations	16
3.8 Options reappraisal.....	17
3.9 Project research.....	18
4. Strategic context.....	19
4.1 Activity research.....	19
4.2 Activity inputs, outputs and beneficiary outcomes	20
4.2.1 Babies, toddlers and parents	20
4.2.2 Children and young people.....	20
4.2.3 Families.....	21
4.2.4 Recreation.....	22
4.2.5 Health.....	23
4.2.6 Charities	23
4.2.7 The mature and elderly.....	24
4.3 Project links	25
4.4 Service delivery options	27
4.5 Environmental impact.....	27
4.6 Financial viability.....	28
4.7 Strategic objective.....	28
5. Project delivery	29
5.1 Building improvements.....	29
5.2 Community benefits	30
5.3 Energy economy and flexibility.....	30
5.4 Accessibility and equality	30
5.5 Floor plans	32
5.6 Forecast user numbers 2008/9	35

2007 MCCP BUSINESS PLAN

CONTENTS

6. Project resources	37
6.1 Introduction	37
6.2 Resources Group structure and profiles	37
6.3 Church office.....	39
6.3.1 The location.....	39
6.3.2 The roles	39
6.3.3 Staffing requirements	39
6.3.4 Training policy	40
6.3.5 Training methods.....	40
6.3.6 A Training Panel.....	40
6.4 Policy development.....	40
6.5 Partners and volunteers	40
7. Project costs	42
7.1 Capital costs	42
7.2 Additional annual revenue costs	42
8. Financial appraisal	43
8.1 Project capital costs	43
8.2 Project funding policies	43
8.3 Project revenue costs.....	44
8.4 Project capital income	45
8.5 Revenue income	45
8.6 Cash flow and temporary loans.....	45
9. Project income	46
9.1 Capital income	46
9.2 Additional annual revenue income	46
9.3 Notes	46
10. Financial planning	48
10.1 Additional revenue costs and income.....	48
11. Marketing and Communications strategy	49
11.1 General strategies.....	49
11.2 User group promotion	49
11.3 Community centre promotion	52
11.4 Equality and inclusion	52
12. Monitoring and evaluation plan	54
12.1 Monitoring construction.....	54
12.2 Monitoring first year activities.....	54
12.3 Beneficiary input	54
12.4 Project evaluation	55
12.5 Long term impact	56
13. Risk analysis	57
13.1 Basis.....	57
13.2 Table	57

2007 MCCP BUSINESS PLAN

CONTENTS

14. Supporting information	59
14.1 Safeguarding policy	59
14.2 Other policies.....	62
14.2.1 Lettings policy and procedure.....	62
14.2.2 Equal opportunities (draft)	64
14.2.3 Harassment and bullying (draft).....	65
14.2.4 Health, safety and security (draft).....	66
14.2.5 Fire and accident prevention (draft).....	67
14.2.6 Data protection (draft).....	68
14.3 Building improvements.....	69
14.4 SWOT analysis	70
14.5 PEST analysis	71

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to a consultant's report, Aylesbury is at the hub of the biggest house-building programme in the country and possibly Western Europe. Government papers stress the importance of an adequate infrastructure for sustainable communities. Yet there is already a shortage of suitable town centre venues for charities and community groups, with no local authority plans that will address this.

In this context our £1 million town centre project has an important contribution to make. It will increase the capacity of our suite of meeting rooms by 30%, modernise our mainly 1920s building and will continue to be self-funding. A lift, disabled toilets and baby changing facilities are just some of the 27 building features that will improve access, flexibility, space, storage, safety, security and environmental impact.

Currently we have over 30 user groups serving the youngest to the oldest, especially those in greatest need. The church organizes about a third of these groups and professional partners with specialist expertise identify the need for and run the rest. We aim to increase overall community usage by 50% within five years.

Present beneficiaries include breast-feeding mums, other parents and toddlers; youngsters in traditional youth activities or needing advice on issues such as drug and alcohol abuse; disadvantaged teenagers needing recognised qualifications for employment; children of broken relationships; those needing support with autism, bereavement, rape or adoption; choristers and budding organists; people wanting to improve their public speaking; Asian women needing medical advice; blood donors; charities selling merchandise; older people needing exercise, or a safe environment in which to meet people; those needing food and day care or affected by dementia.

Our selected architects have drawn up the project plans after consultation with other specialists and user groups. A qualified quantity surveyor has estimated the cost of the project after considerable attention to ways of reducing costs and is ready to submit to tender. The project will be tightly controlled by the Project Steering Group, which is made up of individuals with engineering, business and financial experience including the management of major capital projects. To reduce the risk of delays and cost increases no changes will be permitted once the contracts have been signed.

We hope to start work in January 2008 and reopen in the September. Methodist approval only depends on our funding being in place. Our policy is to raise two thirds of the money needed from Methodist sources, including about half from our own church members. 85% of this Methodist total is already secured with donations and pledges and from past experience of other projects we are confident in raising the rest. External funding has been more difficult, with no money being forthcoming from Landfill Tax, Section 106 funds or our local authorities whose policy is not to fund capital projects for faith-based organizations. We do however have the backing of the Town, District and County Councils in the form of verbal and written support and the funding of several of our activities. The Aylesbury Society is fully supportive, as is our local MP. Without exception, our users are enthusiastic about our plans and several expect to require additional accommodation when it becomes available.

Whilst we now have sufficient funds to produce a reduced scheme that will be adequate for our church-based activities, we will not be able to afford the full scheme outlined in this Business Plan without a Community Buildings Big Lottery grant. Such a grant will therefore make a huge difference to the rapidly growing population of Aylesbury's town centre and the wider communities we also serve.

2. ORGANISATION SUMMARY

- 2.1 About us
- 2.2 Organisation overview
- 2.3 Steering group profiles
- 2.4 Project experience
- 2.5 Our track record
- 2.6 Project beneficiaries
- 2.7 Service delivery – activity and partner summary

2.1 ABOUT US

Charity Number: The Methodist Church is exempt under Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 1598.

Our Vision: To be widely recognised as a busy, vibrant, inclusive, caring and friendly town centre venue enabling and encouraging excellent life-enriching service provision for identified needs for the youngest to the oldest in the community.

Our Mission: To serve the community by maintaining a suite of modern, attractive meeting rooms and associated facilities in a friendly, town centre site in order to initiate, partner, enable and encourage activities that will enrich lives. (This Community Centre Mission links to our local Church’s Mission to ‘actively seek ways of serving God through serving others’ and the wider Methodist Church’s directive to make the best use of our premises.)

Our Motivation: To be a channel of God’s love to all people, irrespective of their creed, race, ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation or marital status.

2.2 OUR ORGANISATION OVERVIEW:



All three groups are appointed by and report to the Church Council. The Chairs of the Steering Group and Resources Group are both part of the Church Leadership Team.

Our Church Council: This is the decision making body of the local church whose governance is set out in the annually updated book 'The Constitution, Practice and Discipline (CPD) of the Methodist Church. Our Aylesbury church is part of Aylesbury Vale Circuit, a mutually supportive group of 14 churches overseen by our Superintendent Minister. In turn the Circuit is part of Northampton District and the various District Chairs report to the annual Methodist Conference as set out in CPD.

Our Project Steering Group: Members meet regularly and communicate almost daily by email. Many of its members are retired or semi-retired and are thus able to devote a considerable amount of their time and energy to the project. Collectively the Group has extensive management experience at all levels of the public and private sectors, including specialist knowledge of finance, audio-visual, communications, project management and community care provision. Additional specialists are available on an ad hoc co-opted basis.

Our Resources Group: Once the project is completed, day-to-day running of the Community Centre will revert to our Resources Group. Represented on the Church Leadership Team and reporting to the Church Council, they are responsible for the ongoing letting, management and maintenance of the building and financial management of both Church and Centre. Section 6 gives the detail.

2.3 OUR STEERING GROUP PROFILES



Some members of the Steering Group in front of the church with its off street entrance to the coffee bar. The entrance to the Community Centre and redevelopment area is at the back to the left.
Photo: Courtesy *The Bucks Herald*.

Chair: Peter Farmer represents the project on the Church Leadership Team and reports to the Church Council. He is a graduate of the Universities of Durham and Reading and an Honorary Fellow of Oxford Brookes University. With BP he was responsible for the development of human resources across the group and became a Director of BP Aviation Services. After retiring early from BP he was Director of the Foundation for Management Education, a member of the Warwick and Durham University Business Schools Advisory Boards and a Trustee of the Lubbock Trust, Balliol College Oxford. He was a Director and later Chairman of Methodist Guild Holidays, which owns and operates six hotels and is now a member of the Board of Governors of the University of Hertfordshire and Chairman of its Employment Committee and a member of its Nominations and Remuneration Committee.

Secretary: Bob Bucknell is responsible for the day to day management of the project, liaison with our architects and formal communications with Steering Group members and supporters. A Chartered Engineer, Bob became a well-known Business Analyst for London stockbrokers. He was Treasurer of major schemes to refurbish and modernise our church in the 1980s and replace the roof in the 1990s. Both schemes paid off their debts in less than the required five years.

Treasurer: Roger Kirk is responsible for management of the project's finances and is our main contact with the Big Lottery. A Chartered Accountant he worked in local government prior to retiring. He is our Church Treasurer and member of our Resources Group, Circuit Manses Secretary responsible for the maintenance of three manses and member of our Circuit Leadership Team. He is the church's Gift Aid Secretary and has been involved in our previous major refurbishment schemes.

Fund Raising: Tony Noble is Chair of our Fund Raising Group, which has committed to raise £120,000 over the life of the project. They remain on track to do so, monitoring an annual programme against target. Tony started his business career in banking before becoming a systems development consultant within the financial services sector. On retirement he became a locum for Postmasters in sub Post Offices. He is Treasurer for two of the community centre's organisations, the Monday Contact Club and the Parent & Toddler Club. With his wife Pauline, who won an MBE for her services to youth work, he has been involved in fund raising for the NCH children's charity for many years and for various other projects and youth activities.

Minister: Rev. David Jenkins is our Superintendent Minister with special responsibility for overseeing outreach to the community. Responsible for 14 churches and three full time ministerial colleagues he is Chair of the Church Leadership Team, the Church Council, the Circuit Meeting and the multi-agency Youth and Community Steering Group. He is also Chair of Bucks Forum of Faith and was instrumental in the formation of the Aylesbury Inter-Faith Forum. A trained counsellor and former teacher, he has some 30 years experience of ministering to people's needs.

Lay Worker: Arthur Sara is a retired Deputy Head of the local Grange upper school where he taught mathematics, computer and business studies. For the last three years he has been our part-time Lay Worker with special responsibility for visiting and developing relationships with all our user groups. A trainer of Lay Preachers, he formerly ran the Grange's youth club and is in charge of our church's Safeguarding Policy.

Furnishings: Sue Kirk liaises with user groups on their needs for kitchen design, soft furnishings, fixtures and fittings. From advising husband Roger on refurbishing three manses, she has a recognised artistic flair and colour sense. Her continuing work in education gives her a strong focus on value-for-money and practical solutions within restricted budgets.

Audio-Visual: Brian Latham advises us on specifying our audio-visual needs. He has over 30 years experience in the business and has been responsible for managing the sound and visual requirements for such diverse events as rock concerts, G8 summits, conferences and church events within equally diverse budgets. His company has been responsible for providing the sound systems for two royal funerals and with the planning of the next ones. As an active church member he is aware of the varied needs of users of both our church and community centre.

Communications: Peter Green is responsible for written materials, media liaison and advice and reporting on project outcomes. A semi-retired management training

consultant with published research on training effectiveness, he is a Course Director for the Chartered Institute of Marketing, publishers of his time management book. In the 1980s he was part of a four man Steering Group, which planned and delivered on time and within budget a new European headquarters for the Hallmark Cards group.

Technical Advisor: Paul Ingram provides advice and guidance on all technical aspects of our building project. Paul is an architect with experience in both private and public sectors including 10 years as a Chief Officer at Aylesbury Vale District Council. For the last seven years he has worked for our Methodist Property Office in Manchester, which has oversight of all Methodist property within the UK, including responsibility for assessing all major schemes.

2.4 OUR PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Twenty years ago we undertook a major redevelopment of our church building, described at the time as to 'adapt a 19th Century building to 21st Century needs.' The 1986 cost of the project was £330,000. Using similar methods to the ones we are using today most of the funds were raised through our own church members' direct giving. The total funds were raised in three years rather than the five years target. Ten years ago we had a second major project to replace the church roof. Again mainly from fund-raising programmes and direct giving, the funds were raised well within the time required.

Two lessons we learned from these projects are 'The Scaffolding Effect' and 'The Wedding List.' We found that once the scaffolding went up, more people were stimulated into emptying their pockets. Similarly, once we had a wedding-type list of actual costs of specific pieces of furniture and fittings, individuals and small charities were more encouraged to help. This gives us confidence that we will find any remaining deficit of planned funding targets more readily once our long-awaited building work actually begins.

2.5 OUR TRACK RECORD

We have a long, acknowledged record of service to the town through our own provision, the dedication of our volunteers and our partnership with the other agencies listed in 2.7. A few examples of our commitment to excellence and to long-term community involvement are:

- Longevity of some activities
 - 50 plus years of youth provision through our Brigades and youth clubs
 - 43 years for our German youth exchange (the UK's longest running club-to-club international youth exchange)
 - 20 years for our Monday Club Day Care Centre
 - 19 years for Cruse Bereavement counselling
 - 15 years for the Wednesday Club Day Centre
 - 12 years for the Child Contact Centre
- A millennium MBE for our member Pauline Noble for her nearly fifty years work with children and young people, over half this time in the Aylesbury area.
- The attainment of the President's Badge by three of our Boys Brigade members between 2005 and 2007, the organisation's second highest national award.
- The 2005 Mayor's Community Award to Janet Neville for her work as organiser of our Monday Club Day Care Centre.
- Wide support from the media and the voluntary sector as quoted earlier and from local politicians.
- A 2005 two hours outside broadcast by BBC Three Counties radio on the community work conducted at our Centre.



Sally Mansi of Youth @ ACT (Addiction Counselling Trust), being interviewed by BBC Three Counties Radio presenter Martyn Coote, during the two-hour outside broadcast from our Community Centre Coffee Bar of 'At One With Martyn Coote' on 23 May 2005.

'We hope to keep growing! We aim to offer a safe, friendly and confidential service to young people, and are particularly excited about the proposed changes to AMC [Aylesbury Methodist Church] and greatly value the prospect of being part of it. We would like to say a big thank you for the support we have received from everybody at AMC...'

Sally Mansi, AMC-based Youth @ ACT Manager

2.6 PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

In our stage one Big Lottery application, we listed these as:

- Mothers, babies and toddlers needing social interaction, support and advice.
- Young people who can benefit from uniformed and non-uniformed youth groups; young people with drug, alcohol, sex education, career, bullying, transport, accommodation or other problems and those needing a safe after school 'drop-in chill out' café-style venue.
- Excluded, deprived and hard to reach young people needing help and motivation to obtain recognised qualifications for employment.
- Children needing a safe and neutral environment to meet non-resident parents.
- Charities and community groups needing affordable, accessible town centre venues.
- Dementia sufferers and other elderly referred patients needing social stimulation and respite for their carers.
- Elderly, isolated people who benefit from interaction with people their own age.

Recent new beneficiaries include:

- The over 60s requiring gentle exercise as part of Bucks County Council's Prevention Strategy to keep older people fit and out of hospital.
- More mainly disadvantaged young people seeking some basic qualifications in 'overflow courses' that Rathbone have no room for in their own premises.
- Autism parents, teachers and carers attending monthly support meetings.
- Christian Aid committee and members attending meetings.
- Rape victims attending weekly support meetings.
- Promising young organists receiving bursaries from Bucks Organists.

2.7 OUR SERVICE DELIVERY

At present, about a third of our activities are delivered by our church organisations, using trained volunteers. The rest are delivered by partner organisations with a mix of paid professionals and trained volunteers. The nature of such partnerships is that we provide the premises at not-for-profit rental and the partner organisations identify the community needs for their service and deliver it.

In the table below, church-run activities are shown with an asterisk *.

ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS
2.7.1 Babies, Toddlers and Parents	
Baby Café	Aylesbury Vale Primary Health Care Trust and Health Visitor
*Noah's Ark Parent and Toddler Group	White Hill Surgery and Health Visitors
Parenting Course	Meadowcroft Surgery and Health Visitor
2.7.2 Children and Young People	
*Junior and Senior Youth Clubs	Methodist Association of Youth Clubs
*Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade	National Brigade Organisations
*International Youth Exchange	Tus 05 Daun (German Sports Club)
Youth @ ACT	Addiction Counselling Trust, Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC), Bucks Drug Action Team
Teenagers' Drop-In	Connexions, Youth@ACT, Check-Out, Bucks County Council, Rathbones
Qualifications for young learning disabled	Rathbone Trg, Learning & Skills Council
Youth Café	Aylesbury Youth for Christ
2.7.3 Families	
Aylesbury Child Contact Centre	Courts, Social Services, Solicitors, CAB, Children and Families Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS), National Association of Child Contact Centres
Adoption assessments and meetings	Adoption Agency
*Listening service	
Bereavement counselling	Cruse
Autism support group	Autism Bucks.
Rape victims support	Aylesbury Vale Rape Crisis, Home Office
2.7.4 Recreation	
Choral practice	Aylesbury Choral Society
Public speaking	Toastmasters
Organist bursaries	Bucks Organists
*Craft groups	
2.7.5 Health (& see sections 1 and 7)	
Aylesbury Asian Women's Project	Aylesbury Vale Primary Health Care Trust
Blood Donor Sessions	National Blood Transfusion Service
2.7.6 Charities	
Charity Christmas Card Shop	Cards for Good Causes
Fair Trade Shop	Fair Trade Organisation
Kenyan-made gifts	Karibuni Trust
Christian Aid meetings	Christian Aid
Meetings of various charities	Vale Volunteers
2.7.7 The Mature and Elderly	
*Weekly Coffee Bar	
Smarter Café	Bucks Adult Learning, Univ. for Industry

*Tuesday Fellowship Local residential homes
Monday and Wednesday Club Day Care John Hampden Unit Stoke Mandeville
Centres Hospital, Age Concern, Bucks C.C.,
Gentle Exercise for the over 60s Bucks C.C./ Hartwell House Day Centre



Serving the youngest...



...to the oldest.

3. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Project overview
- 3.2 Design brief
- 3.3 Architect selection
- 3.4 Design process
- 3.5 Detailed design
- 3.6 Development costs
- 3.7 Consultations
- 3.8 Options reappraisal
- 3.9 Research

3.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Timing	Key milestones	Activities/deliverables to achieve key milestones
2003	Church Council (CC) request 'a bold and imaginative scheme' to redevelop 1920s community meeting rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Project Steering Group • Conduct User Survey on building usage • Enough space for church use but CC opt for 30% more space for community use • Produce Design Brief
2004	Choose architect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortlist 2 firms from 8 responses • Have presentations/ visit projects • Appoint architects
2004	Produce design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architects consult user groups/ Feasibility Study • Design produced and costed • Design reworked to reduce cost • Church Council signs off final design • Building surveys conducted
2005	Seek funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive brochure produced • Church members pledges sought • Fund raising programme started • Other Methodist and external funding investigated
2005/2006	Consult church and review Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Way Ahead' church consultation • Leadership Team Mission Strategy Review • Community outreach gap filled • Youth & Community Steering Group formed/ More activities initiated
2006	Seek more funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund-raising programme and external funding requests continue • Additional Methodist funding won • Big Lottery application made
2006	Plan preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2006 Business plan produced • Plans brought to 'ready to tender' stage • Planning permission obtained
2007	Centre preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies/ procedures developed • Volunteer-based staffing model to be completed (+ policies) by 30/11/07

3.2 DESIGN BRIEF

In the first quarter of 2003, a small team from the Steering Group consulted with all the then 27 user groups. The purpose was to find out how the rear premises were being used by both church and community groups and how they might be improved. A detailed questionnaire was used as well as informal discussion.

The questionnaire covered user group's needs for space, lift, cooking, heating, lighting, storage, flooring, parking, telephone, room height, security, reception, toilets and disabled access. It also covered average numbers attending, their ages and future aspirations of the group.

From this survey, areas of concern identified included people flow, access control, reception area, office and vestry location, kitchen, hall, disabled access, storage, decor, meeting room standards and building services. A detailed design brief was therefore drawn up with the following objective:

The object of the project is to remodel, refurbish, demolish and rebuild as appropriate, the rear church premises to create a modern building suitable for widespread use by the church, social bodies and charitable organisations within the Aylesbury Vale area.

The Design Brief called for:

1. Creation of a reception area
2. Relocation of the church office near to the reception area
3. Compliance with current disability legislation including the installation of a lift
4. Building a new 60–80 person large but flexible meeting room on the first floor
5. Refurbishment of the kitchen
6. Installation of audio-visual systems for the entire building
7. Improved wash room facilities
8. New stores
9. General upgrading of the décor
10. Major overhaul of services including heating and lighting
11. Provision of new seating
12. Maximising the use of all available space
13. Maintaining or increasing the current floor area of the main hall.

3.3 ARCHITECT SELECTION

In January 2004 the Methodist Church's Manchester Property Office provided a list of eight architects known to have experience of this type of work. All were sent the Design Brief and invited to express an interest. Four responded and were given equal access and team-based site interviews.

Two were then short listed and invited to give presentations to Church Council. Site visits were arranged to inspect their work and talk to their existing clients. From this process Church Council members voted on the basis of their own assessments of each firm against the following criteria:

1. Significant experience of church architecture
2. A clear indication of how he/she will gain an understanding of our vision and how the building might reflect that.
3. The approach to working with us in exploring and presenting the feasibility of the strategic options and developing the detailed brief thereafter.
4. Adequate resources and back up within the practice.
5. Evidence of completing projects on budget and on time.
6. Evidence of an ability to manage contractors effectively.
7. The ability to encourage, inspire and to work well with our various teams.

On a majority vote, the medium-sized architectural practice of Compton Lacey was selected and duly appointed.

3.4 DESIGN PROCESS

Compton Lacey assigned an architect to the project who conducted her own needs analysis by meeting users on site in order to validate the Design Brief. She then produced a scheme that sought to address the various issues. A Quantity Surveyor and an Electrical and Mechanical Services (M&E) Consultant were appointed to assist in the production of estimates. Other consultants were subsequently appointed for, for instance, an asbestos survey and structural suitability.

The resultant Feasibility Study was presented to the Steering Group and then to church members at a special meeting. The plans were approved in principle and afterwards, discussed with each of the user groups. This resulted in a few minor amendments and the Church Council approved the final design.

3.5 DETAILED DESIGN

In June 2005 we instructed our architects to produce a detailed design 'ready to go to tender'. In October 2005 this detailed design produced a 30% increase over initial estimates, mostly due to rise in the expected cost of M&E work. The Steering Group implemented a cost-reduction exercise, which reduced costs back to the original level without compromising the design brief. A major factor was the decision not to re-site the existing stairwell. A further cost estimate reduction of £61,000 including VAT was realised on the M&E work. This final amended scheme was discussed with and signed off by each of our user groups and the Church Council. A 'no changes policy' was agreed to prevent a major source of budget overrun. The Quantity has updated the schedule of works and confirmed the cost estimate.

3.6 DEVELOPMENT COSTS

To reach our present 'ready-to-tender' state, we have taken the following actions and incurred the attendant costs:

Development item	Fees	V.A.T.	Total
Architects ^{1,4}	£50,085	£8,663	£58,748
Quantity Surveyor	£7,685	£1,345	£9,030
Mechanical & Electrical consultants	£6,312	£1,096	£7,408
Structural survey ²	£2,300	£402	£2,702
Drain survey ²	£450	£79	£529
Asbestos survey ^{2,3}	£850	£149	£999
District Council Planning Fee	£530		£530
Building Regulations fee	£750	£55	£805
Health and Safety	£750	-	£750
Total Costs	£69,712	£11,789	£81,501

Notes

1. The architect's fees include work up to tender stage and also work on the cost reduction exercise of £4,315.
2. The precautionary surveys were all positive.
3. A type 2 asbestos survey was carried out showing negligible amounts present, namely asbestos concrete vent pipe, boiler seals and paper under a layer of vinyl floor tiles. All these items are easily removable.
4. The total cost of the cost reduction exercise amounted to £5,919 including VAT and is included in the above figures.

3.7 CONSULTATIONS

Throughout the process we have sought to consult with our major partners and stakeholders.

User Groups created the Design Brief, signed off the final design and have contributed to surveys in 2005, 2006 and 2007 that have informed our earlier and this present business plan. This included the special needs of what our Stage 1 application described as our **professional partners** such as Youth @ ACT, the Aylesbury Child Contact Centre and Rathbone.

The Church members were involved in 'The Way Ahead' church consultation exercise to determine our priorities, led by our minister soon after he arrived in late 2004.

'There is genuine enthusiasm to continue and extend our work with the community'

Rev. David Jenkins, The Way Ahead church consultation

The Church Council was consulted and approved the choice of architect and the final design. It was also consulted on approaching the Big Lottery, voting in favour by 24 votes for and one against with one abstention.

The Church Leadership Team was consulted throughout its Mission Strategy Review. It consequently reorganised so as to work better with the MCCP Steering Group and Resources Group in the planning and subsequent managing of the community centre.

Local authorities in the form of individual councillors and officers of both Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) and Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) have been consulted and involved in various ways, whilst Aylesbury town council requested a project presentation and our MP agreed to be our independent referee.

Community networks help us to learn of community needs and include our representation on two Police Review Boards, contact with Q Alliance, a charity supporting the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender minority group, the newly formed Aylesbury Inter-Faith Network and our Youth and Community Steering Group. The latter group, chaired by our minister, meets informally each month for an hour. It has had attendees from the District and County Councils, Youth @ ACT, Connexions, Aylesbury Youth For Christ and Rathbone. Recent outcomes from this networking include:

- Our involvement in induction training for Community Support Officers
- An after school youth café, both with us and at other venues
- Establishment of a Saturday daytime youth café at Rathbone
- The organisation of a 'New Dawn' Youth Exhibition with County and District Council involvement at the Civic Centre in May

3.8 OPTIONS REAPPRAISAL

Since our Stage 1 application description of options the only change is the reinforcement of the views described there. In particular, doing nothing is simply not an option given the increased usage and increasingly obvious building shortcomings.

The value and importance of our town centre location in catering for the needs of both town centre and wider communities is repeatedly stressed by several of our key

users such as Youth @ ACT and Rathbone. This confirms the wisdom against the option of our selling up and moving elsewhere.

Also, given the government's plans to further increase new homes in the area beyond 2026 to 2031, the importance of a sound infrastructure, which includes community centres, becomes even more pressing. Settling for a lower cost but effectively less spacious venue would be a great loss to the people of Aylesbury, especially those most in need.

Our options appraisal review therefore confirms our view that the full scheme we propose is the only one that is right for our town centre and wider communities.

3.9 PROJECT RESEARCH

Relevant studies on the need for individual centre activities are described in the Strategic Context section. Here, we look at research and strategic papers which strengthen the case for our project as a whole.

'In 20 years time, Aylesbury will have a population of over 100,000 and will be located within the fastest growing sub-region in the country (and possibly in the whole of western Europe.)'

Vision Framework for Aylesbury – Part 2 – Comparator Analysis

From the various numbered sources listed below, the following facts emerge:

- At the 2001 Census, Aylesbury town's population was just under 70,000¹.
- Aylesbury is scheduled to grow by over 40% by 2016 with 10,000 additional homes.²

'But few have mentioned one of the most important factors in this planned development – people. That is until the Aylesbury Methodist Church decided to go ahead with an ambitious project to provide new community facilities at their historic church in Buckingham Street.'

The late David Truen, Business Editor, *The Bucks Herald* Leading article, *Aylesbury Vale Business Section* August 2005

- There is a national strategy for creating sustainable communities. These are places where people want to live now and in the future.³
- Aylesbury is facing challenges across most of the factors contributing to such communities. A major shortcoming is the town centre where post-war eyesores need to be replaced to complement the quality heritage buildings.⁴
- We are part of the valued 'quality heritage' having won a design award for our last redevelopment.⁵

'Unless the town can function effectively, the consequence will be...a deteriorating quality of life, both for the people who live in Aylesbury and those that are resident in the wider Vale.'

Vision Framework for Aylesbury – Part 2 – Comparator Analysis

- Sustainable communities 'consider the needs of all residents, whatever their age or circumstances.'⁶
- The District Council's many development plans for the town do not provide another community centre.⁷

- Their existing Multi-Cultural Centre is outside the inner ring road which defines the town centre⁴ and their Alfred Rose Community Centre is also peripheral and small⁸.
- It has not been possible for us to find suitable town centre venues for some of our users during the planned project-building phase.⁸
- Vale Volunteers, the Rathbone training charity and the Aylesbury Society have conducted their own surveys of town centre venues with similar findings.⁸

‘Rathbone’s current building in Aylesbury is too small. We would be expecting to use the enhanced facilities at Buckingham Street as it is ideally located for our office base and clients.’

Stephen Denning, Rathbone’s Thames Valley Centre Manager

‘The Aylesbury Society has been concerned for some time that imminent closure of the Civic Centre and its replacement by a theatre will result in the loss of intermediate size meeting rooms in the centre of Aylesbury. As a result local societies will not be able to hold exhibitions etc., to display their activities. We, as a society have similar difficulties in finding a location for our A.G.M. The presently available rooms, excluding the Civic Centre, are either too small (the Multi-Cultural Centre, Friends Meeting House) or somewhat out-dated (St. Mary’s Church and King’s Head National Trust owned public house). ...We understand that your proposed development will cater for a wide range of users. As this will fill a growing need for such facilities particularly in the town centre and, given the anticipated rapid growth of Aylesbury, we wish you well in your proposals...’

Keith Robinson, Chairman, Aylesbury Society.

References

1. *Census 2001* quoted in 4 below.
2. *A Vibrant Aylesbury Vale* (Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) /Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004).
3. *Securing the Future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy*, HM Government, 2005 (Crown copyright).
4. *Vision Framework for Aylesbury – Part 2 – Comparator Analysis*. A report to Aylesbury Vale Advantage, English Partnerships and South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) SQW Economic Development Consultants, February 2006.
5. *Aylesbury Society* design award plaque (1988) in the Aylesbury Methodist Church front entrance.
6. *Community Plan: Achieving our vision for a Vibrant Aylesbury Vale*: Produced by AVDC for the Vision 2031 Partnership, 2006.
7. *AVDC Website*, February 2007.
8. *Meeting Rooms in Aylesbury*, Vale Volunteers, December 2005.

4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 4.1 Activity research
- 4.2 Activity inputs, outputs and beneficiary outcomes
- 4.3 Project links
- 4.4 Service delivery options
- 4.5 Environmental impact
- 4.6 Financial viability
- 4.7 Strategic objective

4.1 ACTIVITY RESEARCH

In determining the need for our project, we have conducted our own formal and informal research and considered several national and local sources of information. Much of the latter related to the planned growth of the town discussed in the previous section. It also included the 23.6% growth we have already experienced in the last 20 years (Office of National Statistics/ Aylesbury Vale District Link magazine).

Town centre venue shortage was also covered in the last section and was the focus of one of the informal surveys we did in researching possible alternative venues for some of our groups during the rebuilding phase. As well as venue shortage, our own premises are now failing to meet the space needs of some of our users. For instance:

‘The plan...will provide much needed extra space to create quiet areas particularly with small babies. It will also allow us to have more families use the Centre at one session.’

Sue Hewitt, Chair, Aylesbury Child Contact Centre

‘If the facilities were available, we would use these premises more often for other aspects of our work such as training and more counselling.’

Robin Radley, Cruse Counselling Co-ordinator

‘Both clubs have waiting lists for the provision of social interaction and/or respite care. The lift to the first floor will enable the use of a larger meeting room and so the possibility of increasing the number of clients.’

Janet Neville and Carol Rogers, Day Care Centre Organisers

‘Our numbers are growing rapidly without advertising. Numbers are likely to be limited by the capacity of the building.’

Debbie Lovell, Youth Café Organiser

With better accommodation, we would require substantially more than one session per week, especially for one-to-one counselling.

Christine Russell, Aylesbury Vale Rape Crisis

This information came from one of our annual user surveys, which use tailored one-page questionnaires to obtain feedback and assess needs. We plan continuing these in the future.

However, most of the research into the need for our project comes from our partners. Not only does their research and experience point to the need for their activity, many of them have to demonstrate effectiveness and measurable outcomes to their various

often cash-constrained paymasters. For instance, in the next section it will be seen that the Smarter Café was immensely popular and yet has failed to obtain renewed funding due to the below target attainment of qualifications by their mature and elderly target group.

The need for many of the activities comes from national or regional research and from large private and public sector bodies. This will become more evident as we examine each of our activities in more detail.

4.2 ACTIVITY INPUTS, OUTPUTS AND BENEFICIARY OUTCOMES

By **inputs** we mean the resources involved such as people, premises and time.

By **outputs** we mean the activities and services that actually take place.

By **beneficiaries** we mean the people who participate in or benefit from the activities.

By **outcomes** we mean the difference the activities are expected to make.

An asterisk * indicates a church-organised activity.

4.2.1 Babies, Toddlers and Parents

Baby Café: Part of a countywide programme to deliver mother-to-mother support to women wishing to initiate and sustain breast feeding and part of a wider strategy to support baby and maternal nutrition, reduce childhood obesity and reduce inequalities. Part-funded by Bucks Strategic Partnership. Provides advice, social contact, and training mums in mutual support.

- Staffed by nurse, one session per week for on average 7 people per session.
- Outcomes: More knowledgeable and confident mothers. Contented, well cared for babies. Less stressed parents.

***Noah's Ark Parent and Toddler Group:** Established for 11 years and they sometimes have a waiting list due to restricted space. Planned discussions with a local surgery when our building nears completion on the need to extend the number of days and to consider providing a shoppers' crèche (none currently available in Aylesbury) to enable parents to shop, attend medical and dental appointments etc. Other parent and toddler groups exist in town but the above indicates that demand still exceeds supply.

- Staffed by one co-ordinator, 11 volunteers one morning per week for average of 45 parents and 55 children. Liaison with Health Visitors as needed.
- Outcomes: Support and social time for parents. New activities/experiences for children. More effective parenting. Better-integrated children.

Parenting Course: Similar courses are run at other community centres around the town. Thames Valley Police believe such family support is a major priority to reduce crime rates in the town.

- Staffed by Health Visitor from liaison with and demand from some Noah's Ark parents for effective parenting behaviours.
- Outcomes: Improved parenting. Less disruptive children. More productive lives. Less crime.

4.2.2. Children and Young People

***International Youth Exchange:** The UK's longest running club-to-club exchange is now in its 44th year. A successful model with yesterday's students being today's parents/ leaders both here and in Germany. Periodic funding support from local and national charities.

- Annual visit staffed by 2-3 leaders for 15-30 young people.

- Outcomes: Long lasting international friendships and understanding

Youth @ ACT: Research from a variety of sources indicates that over the past ten years there has been a significant increase in drug use among young people under 18: a fivefold increase among 12-13 year olds and eightfold among 14-15 year olds since 1987. Over the past four years, Buckinghamshire has developed a group of drug treatment services which work in partnership to provide Education, Drug Awareness, Outreach, Treatment, Counselling and Medical treatment. This model and the systems that support these interventions have been recognised as a model of best practise by GOSE (Government Office South East) and the NTA (National Treatment Agency). Youth @ ACT provides information and confidential advice on drugs/ alcohol use and related issues.

- Staffed by 2 full time AVDC funded paid staff and 4 ad hoc sessional workers based 5 days/week at the Centre. 6,000 contacts in 2006.
- Outcomes: Reduced drug and alcohol abuse among young people. Less related NHS costs. Safer communities through less drug-related crime. More productive young lives.

Teenagers' Drop-In: Enables young people, some of whom are excluded from mainstream schooling, to drop in for advice on issues that matter to young people and for some supervised sporting or fitness activity.

- Staffed one afternoon per week by typically 6 specialists for 30+ 14-19 year olds.
- Outcomes: Greater self worth of youngsters. Sounder career choices. Changed attitudes to drugs, alcohol, education. Fitter youngsters. Less anti-social behaviour. Higher quality of life for youngsters and those around them.

Learning Disability Opportunities: Rathbone is a national organization committed to helping anyone whose needs have not been met by education or who need support to overcome their barriers to learning, training or employment. It provides a range of mainly government-funded programmes such as Entry to Employment, (e2e) apprenticeship preparation or retraining of adult long-term unemployed.

- About six such courses per year staffed by a Rathbone trainer for up to 15 participants.
- Outcomes: Recognised qualifications. Improved employment prospects. Increased confidence and self-worth of youngsters, often excluded from mainstream education.

Youth Café: The *Research Report into the Needs of Youth and Community of Aylesbury Vale*, (2006) by Aylesbury Vale Youth for Christ and Fusion Youth and Community UK highlighted as one of the needs a safe after school 'drop-in' place where young people could explore creative things to do. Our Youth Café is now one of four rolled out across Aylesbury. Clients include released prisoners.

- Staffed by volunteers and a part-time leader paid for by Youth for Christ and the local authority, it currently attracts 30 youngsters and is growing rapidly.
- Outcomes: More confident youngsters. Improved social skills. Development of creative abilities. More positive attitudes about themselves and others.

4.2.3. Families

Aylesbury Child Contact Centre: Provides a safe, neutral relaxed environment for children to meet parents with whom they no longer live after relationship breakdown. It is a fully accredited member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres.

-
- Staffed by a paid co-ordinator plus volunteers. 32 families and 347 1:1 contacts in 2005. Has moved from opening once per month to two sessions per month and usually has a small waiting list, all from referrals.
 - Outcomes: Safe environment for children. Improved family relationships. Improved contact for children with their non-resident parent and other family members. Less stress and friction between former partners in dispute over their children.

Adoption assessments and meetings: The need for careful and sensitive work in this area is self-evident. We provide a convenient, neutral central venue.

- Adoption agency staff meets potential new parents on an irregular basis, which could be increased in the new building to about one meeting per week.
- Successful matching of potential adopters and children. Happier children and adopters. Less public expenditure.

***Listening service:** Currently piloted with church members, using a team of trained counsellors, we are looking at the potential for extending this for community use.

- Staffed by 6 volunteers on a rota basis for one session per week.
- Outcomes: Less stress for people in need. Greater ability to cope with difficult situations. Additional resource for professionals.

Bereavement counselling: Established in 1959 and now with 200 branches, Cruse is the largest Bereavement Counselling Charity in the world. Demand-led, its work has extended from widows to widowers and now includes support for all family members including children.

- Staffed by trained volunteers they have their telephone line at the Centre and meet twice monthly. They support about 100 people per year mainly from referrals.
- Outcomes: Greater ability to cope with bereavement. Less call on local doctors and NHS. Less traumatised partners, children, friends and relatives.

Autism Bucks: A charity set up to help both parents and professionals gain a better understanding of autistic spectrum disorders and to offer practical assistance. A support group for parents, teachers and carers.

- Staffed by a volunteer co-ordinator and meet monthly.
- Outcomes: Less isolation felt by parents; mutual support; more effective behaviours; less stress for parents and carers; free more potential of autistic children.

Aylesbury Vale Rape Crisis: Established in 1990, this charity exists to support women affected by sexual assault, rape or child abuse. The service is for women over sixteen affected by sexual violence.

- Staffed by a trained counsellor and trained volunteers and meet about 16 times per year, averaging 10 people.
- Outcomes: Enable survivors to lead fulfilled lives. Increased confidence. Development of more interests. More control of their own lives.

4.2.4. Recreation

Choral practice: Established in 1932, Aylesbury Choral Society continues to give an annual programme of various musical works, for which they have a weekly evening practise in our church. Other groups use the church for concerts and meetings for up to 350 people.

- The Choral Society has about 20 rehearsals per year for about 80 people.

-
- Outcomes: Public entertainment. Improved musical skills. Public concert and meeting venue. Relaxation and enjoyment.

Public speaking: Toastmasters is for men and women from all walks of life who seek to improve themselves in communication skills and leadership. There are 10,000 clubs worldwide with 150 in the UK.

- Staffed by club members the group meets fortnightly with an annual attendance of about 30 people.
- Outcomes: Improved self-confidence. Effective communications.

Bucks Organists: Promote organ playing and organ music and encourage promising young organists with awards of Thomas Gascoigne bursaries.

- Organised by volunteers meeting 3 to 4 times per year benefiting about 20 people.
- Outcomes: Development of music potential of young musicians.

***Craft Groups:** Two groups making wall hangings and greetings cards are open to all. The greeting card group have so far raised around £3,000 for their products as part of our fund-raising programme.

- This is a self-supporting group with about 12 members usually meeting fortnightly.
- Outcomes: Improved handicraft skills. Friendship and company. Funds for charity.

4.2.5. Health (see also sections 1 and 7)

Aylesbury Asian Women's Project: Brookside Clinic have found a need for a safe, neutral drop-in place where women from the large Asian community nearby can speak to a female doctor away from their clinic.

- Staffed by a female doctor one session per month, this drop-in monthly session probably caters for about 20 to 40 patients per year.
- Outcomes: Healthier Asian women. Better informed women. Safe neutral venue. Brookside clinic resource.

Blood Donor Sessions: With a core purpose of improving and saving people's lives, the National Blood Service is entirely dependent upon voluntary donations of blood from the public in centres such as ours.

- With 10-15 NHS staff and volunteers, monthly sessions average about 100 attendees.
- Outcomes: Saved lives. More effective health service.

4.2.6. Charities

Charity Christmas Card Shop: Established for 19 years in our church, Cards for Good Causes have raised over £28,500 in both 2005 and 2006 on behalf of 36 UK charities.

- Staffed by a manager paid by the card publisher and up to 100 assistant managers and volunteers, the shop opens Monday to Saturday from October to December.
- Outcomes: £25-30,000 per year raised. Prospering of good causes. Relief for the needy. Boost for the charities.

Fair Trade Shop: Open at our church for 11 years, the shop supplies fairly traded goods to the public and to other churches in the area. The products guarantee

disadvantaged producers in the third world get a better deal. The shop has also been the focus of regular campaigns in the media to raise people's awareness.

- Staffed by a rota of volunteers from the daily coffee bar, it is open six mornings per week.
- Outcomes: Retail outlet for Fairtrade goods. Fair return for third world producers. Focus for local Fairtrade campaign.

Kenyan-made gifts: Wood and stone carvings and other products are sold to raise funds for the Karibuni Trust, a UK Registered Charity, which aims to raise awareness about the plight of children living on the streets and in the slums of Kenya. Their projects care for children physically living on the streets and/or who are supporting themselves on the streets by begging, stealing, scavenging or prostitution.

- Staffed by the same volunteers for the same hours as the the Fair Trade shop.
- Outcomes: Housed and educated Kenyan children saved off the streets. Food and medical care for those most in need.

Christian Aid: Christian Aid is an agency of the churches in the UK and Ireland that works wherever the need is greatest – irrespective of religion or race.

- About six meetings per year organised by volunteers with an average 10 people attending.
- Outcomes: Increased awareness of world poverty and the causes. Improved lives for disaster and famine survivors. Effective local fund-raising.

Meetings of various charities: There is a shortage of affordable town centre meeting venues for charities as highlighted in the Vale Volunteers survey mentioned earlier. Charities hiring rooms in 2006 have included Cornerstone, Welsh Association, Drugs Education School, Bucks Carers, Connexions and Turning Point.

'The local voluntary sector really appreciates the facilities offered at Aylesbury Methodist Church – a variety of rooms of different sizes, available for hire at reasonable rates which small charities can afford! The prospect of upgraded new meeting rooms after next year's work is completed is indeed very exciting and positive for us and our members.'

Karen Boddy, Chief Officer, Vale Volunteers

4.2.7. The Mature and Elderly

***Weekly Coffee Bar:** Since 1985, this has provided somewhere inexpensive to drink, talk and obtain help if needed. Regulars include men and women living alone, small groups of ladies wanting somewhere to meet, passers by and church members.

- Staffed in pairs by a rota of 62 people, it is open daily from 10-12noon, averaging about 15 people per day.
- Outcomes: Main social contact for some clients. Safe, friendly environment. Less social isolation.

Smarter Café: Provided informal computer learning opportunities for the 'hard to reach' mainly retired population as part of a countywide scheme. Currently seeking renewed funding due to too slow a rate of qualifications gained.

- Run by one of a team of paid professionals, it had to run two shifts in its weekly session to cope with the demand, thereby showing the need for the service.

- Outcomes: Some computer qualifications, especially Internet and email for hard to reach, mainly older clients. Improved family communications. Increased self-confidence.

***Tuesday Fellowship:** Established in the 1930s, group numbers have increased in recent years with many people coming from local retirement flats and residential homes. There is a programme of guest speakers and time for a chat over refreshments.

- Self-managed by a committee, it has around 40 members and meets fortnightly.
- Outcomes: Social interaction. Less loneliness. Stimulated minds. More contented lives.

Monday and Wednesday Club Day Care Centres: Funded by Social Services and accepting clients by referral only, there is a growing need for this service. It provides respite care for carers and activities and hot lunches for mainly NHS referred clients, many with dementia.

- Staffed by volunteers and a Social Services paid co-ordinator with 20 patients and 21 volunteers including car drivers for both the Monday and Wednesday sessions.
- Outcomes: Reduced stress for carers. Social interaction. Happy, engaged clients. Reduced need for residential homes.

We fully support Aylesbury Methodist Church in the redevelopment of their premises not only to offer more and better facilities to existing users but also to meet growing local needs in our multi-ethnic community.

Carol Rogers and Janet Neville Day Club Organisers

Gentle Exercise for the over 60s: Bucks County Council have a Prevention Strategy to keep older people out of hospital by maintaining their health and fitness. This activity is part of that wider strategy, spread across many centres throughout the county.

- Staffed by a paid member of the County Council's Hartwell House Day Centre staff and run weekly for an hour.
- Outcomes: Improved fitness and health. Fewer falls and fractures. Reduced hospital admissions.

'I look forward to hearing about the progress of the centre's refurbishment plan, and will continue to support the efforts of the centre which provides so much benefit and assistance to the community.'

**David Lidington MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland**

4.3 PROJECT LINKS

The links with other local county and national projects discussed above is summarised here. The value of such wider links includes the sharing of innovation and best practice, the availability of experienced guidance and the resources to engage in research and development that is rarely possible for the smaller organisation.

Activity	Only 1 in town centre	Others in town	Others in County	National Links	International links
Baby Café	✓		✓		
Parent & Toddler		✓			
Parenting course		✓	✓	✓	
Brigades	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Youth Club	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Youth @ ACT	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Youth drop-in	✓		✓		
Rathbone Trng		✓	✓	✓	
Youth Café	✓	✓		✓	✓
Child Contact	✓		✓	✓	
Adoption		✓	✓	✓	
Cruse Bereavmnt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Autism support	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Rape support	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Choral practice		✓			
Toastmasters	✓		✓	✓	✓
Bucks organists	✓				
Craft groups		✓		✓	
Asian women	✓				
Blood donors		✓	✓	✓	
Charity cards	✓		✓	✓	
Fair trade shop		✓	✓	✓	✓
Karibuni goods	✓		✓	✓	✓
Christian Aid		✓	✓	✓	✓
Vale Volunteers		✓	✓		
Coffee bar		✓			
Smarter Cafe	✓		✓		
Tuesday Fellwshp	✓				
Day Care Clubs	✓	✓	✓		
Over 60s exercise	✓	✓	✓		

Strong competition from similar services is not really an issue. In theory, the Parent and Toddler group compete with similar groups in the town but as mentioned earlier, demand still exceeds supply. This applies to all the youth provision. However, were this to change, competition is good in raising standards and increasing choice.

Complementary services include Youth @ ACT. Their outworkers operate in other parts of the town with their work co-ordinated and supported from our premises. The Youth Café at our church is one of several rolled out in the town from an initiative encouraged by our Youth and Community Steering Group. Rathbone runs courses for disadvantaged people in various locations as well as ours, whilst Blood Donor sessions are held in a variety of locations around the town. All these services complement each other in providing a service to the community that one venue alone would be unable to provide. Our contribution is particularly valuable as one of the very few suitable, convenient and inexpensive town centre venues.

4.4 SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

Early in the lifetime of this project, we considered which of the following six options should we follow:

- A Conference Centre, attracting high rental income.
- Commercial Office Letting, attracting a regular year-round income stream at commercial rates.
- Charity Office Letting, attracting charities and community groups at affordable rates.
- A Booking Agency, passively taking bookings from any group.
- A Do It Ourselves approach to providing all identified community services through our own church resources.
- A Partnership Model, working with professional partners to meet identified community needs.

Bearing in mind our church mission statement about serving God by serving others and Methodism's founder John Wesley's advice to 'Go not just to those in need but to those in greatest need', opting for the Partnership Model was an easy decision. Only a range of professional partners have the resources to accurately research and identify the breadth of community needs that exist and have the trained staff able to meet those needs. What we can do well ourselves we do, such as our youth groups and coffee bar. For the rest, we follow our community centre's Mission Statement given earlier about 'maintaining...facilities...in a...town centre site in order to initiate, partner, enable and encourage activities that will enrich lives.'

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

As well as the project having a significant number of social benefits, the refurbishment and extension works will also lead to a number of environmental improvements to the building as a whole. An environmental statement from our architects lists the following as examples:

1. The replacement of the existing boilers with more efficient gas fired low-pressure hot water condensing boiler. The output of the boilers is fully variable between 20% and 100% with individual room controls allowing the centre staff greater levels of control over which rooms are heated. This is in contrast to the existing system, which has limited controllability resulting in rooms being heated when they are not in use.
2. The extension of the existing building to include a reception lobby. This lobby area has high levels of thermal insulation and double glazed units to meet the current building regulations. It is likely that this extension will improve the thermal efficiency of the building as a whole.
3. With the introduction of a new first floor extension, a double height corridor has been introduced to the internal spaces in the centre with a glazed roof light. This brings natural light and ventilation to areas of the building that were previously artificially lit. This is likely to reduce the energy demand of the building.
4. The new first floor meeting room extension has high levels of thermal insulation and double glazed units to meet current building regulations. It is likely that this extension will improve the thermal efficiency of the building as a whole.
5. The single glazed windows in the main hall are being replaced with double glazed units for increasing thermal efficiency and improved security.

6. All new heating pipe work and domestic service pipe work including all mains cold water will be thermally insulated to comply with the requirements of BS5422 and BS5970.
7. The existing sanitary ware in the building is being replaced with dual flush WC with smaller cisterns to increase the building's water efficiency.
8. In general the lighting in the centre is being replaced with compact fluorescent lamps and other energy efficient light sources.

4.6 FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The finances of our church and community centre are closely intertwined and managed by our Resources Group through the Church Treasurer. Throughout our 113 years existence at Buckingham Street we have always been solvent. Our rental income accounts for less than 15% of our total income and we are therefore not susceptible to any wild swings in centre usage. However, such wild swings seem highly unlikely given that we continue to have regular bookings by all our major users.

When we significantly increase our centre usage after the refurbishment as planned, this will generate additional income, which will pay for any increase in overhead costs such as heating and lighting. We will also continue to monitor our letting rates against other venues in the town to ensure we stay competitive but affordable for charity and community groups.

As well as church members' regular giving, which in effect subsidises our centre, we work on a volunteer-based staffing model. This currently covers most of the cleaning, though we do have a part-time paid cleaner as well. It extends to the church office which will double as a reception area and many of our members are involved in the ongoing maintenance of the building such as painting and decorating.

The broad aim with our refurbished centre will be to stay affordable for community use but produce a slight annual surplus to pay for additional costs such as lift maintenance. A congregation that despite losing some older members continues to grow will also help this, thereby enhancing our annual income.

4.7 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

The aim of our £1million Aylesbury Methodist Community Centre Project (MCCP) is to redevelop the back premises of our church so as to provide a town centre suite of meeting rooms for community use by September 2008 which:

- Offers 30% more capacity
- Enables us to continue and extend our community involvement
- Has a welcoming, friendly, attractive environment
- Is affordable by charities and community groups
- Hosts a range of life-enhancing activities for the youngest to the oldest
- Is used extensively by professional partners and trained volunteers
- Is open to all but especially to those most in need
- Meets the identified space, safety, security, storage and access needs of our existing users as defined in our Design Brief
- Has flexible accommodation to meet the future needs that will inevitably arise within this area of town centre renewal and population growth.
- Is financially self-funding and environmentally friendly.

5. PROJECT DELIVERY

5.1 Building improvements

5.2 Community benefits

5.3 Energy, economy and flexibility

5.4 Accessibility and equality

5.5 Floor plans

5.6 Forecast user numbers 2008/9

5.1 BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The project will provide:

- Improved facilities for those with disability and for parents of young children:
 - Lift to first floor and disabled toilets on both floors
 - Contrasting colour décor to help the partially sighted.
 - Improved signage and logical circulation to help those with learning difficulties.
 - Induction loops in the hall/larger meeting rooms for the hard of hearing
 - Baby changing facilities on both floors.
 - A disabled car parking space.
- Improved visibility and supervision of entry from the church office.
- Enhanced safety and security.
- Improved equipment storage, allowing an uncluttered, more spacious hall.
- Revamped and extendable coffee bar area with new kitchens and toilets on both floors.
- Improved building services and environmental considerations through:
 - High efficiency, condensing gas central heating/hot water boilers.
 - Energy-saving double-glazed windows.
 - Better roof insulation.
 - New concealed wiring and electrics.
 - Zone control for heating using child-safe panel heaters and eliminating high temperature hot water pipe work.
 - Thermally insulated pipe work keeping the water hot and eliminating the need to run and waste water until it is hot.
- Attractive new side entrance providing a useable area for display, socialising and greeting.
- Provision of a wide range of meeting rooms that can be used in combination as self contained suites suitable for 100 or more to small rooms for just a few. The combination of the church with the rear premises via a common lobby will enable much larger groups of up to 500 to make full use of the building.

In summary, the scheme:

- Provides improved space, safety, security, storage and access.
- Meets the design brief prepared after consultation with all the user groups.
- Offers flexible accommodation to help meet future needs.
- Increases useable capacity by 30%:

Grd Fl. Area	Old sq. m.	New sq. m.	1 st Fl. Area	Old sq. m.	New sq. m.
Hall	145	180	Room 4	55	42
Room 2	55	34	Room 5	N/A	32
Crèche	22	0	Room 6	22	22
Entrance	N/A	40	Room 7	N/A	36
			Totals	299	386
Increased useable sq. m.		87	Increased capacity %		29.1 (30%)

5.2 COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The town centre and wider communities will gain by having:

- An accessible town centre meeting venue for 350 (in the church) to 500 (with video link to hall)
- A variety of other meeting rooms for two or three up to 180.
- Enlarged and enhanced premises to help meet the present shortage in town centre provision.
- Affordable rates for community groups and charities to complement the planned Waterside development planned for the town that includes a theatre but very limited meeting facilities.
- An improved community infrastructure to help meet the needs of the 1000 new homes to be built in the Aylesbury area each year for the next two decades.

5.3 ENERGY ECONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY

A summary of the environmental considerations and energy saving methods to be used was given in 5.1 and included in the architect's statement in 4.5. The long-term financial viability of the project and economical management of the premises was covered in 4.6.

Flexibility of the premises for future use was a key requirement in the design Brief. This has been met with a range of room sizes summarised in 5.1 and the added flexibility of room dividers between rooms 4 and 5. This can be seen in the floor plans in 5.5.

5.4 ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUALITY

Improvements to the physical accessibility of our premises, especially for those with disability and parents of young children, are listed in 5.1. Here we look at specific accessibility and equality issues for our various activities. In general, if an activity needs to attract more potential beneficiaries, volunteers or leaders, we will provide help on communication and marketing (see section 9 for marketing and communications strategy).

Activity	Accessibility and Equality Comments
Baby Café	Meet after normal opening hours in the coffee bar at the front of the church in a relaxed atmosphere. External sign advertises café, as do local surgeries and health agencies. Drop-in facility open to all breast-feeding mums.
Parent & Toddler Parenting course	For 10 years, word of mouth still fills the available places. Open to all as are the parenting courses. Has catered for an emerging trend of parents bringing children at earlier age.
Brigades	Boys and Girls Brigade, our youth clubs and international youth

Youth Club	exchange are open to anyone of the required age range. Access here is partly dependent on having sufficient trained leaders.
Youth @ ACT	Run by three full time social workers supported by 8 outworkers this team proactively seek vulnerable young people. They have doubled the numbers contacted in the last two years and of these 30% were from the minority ethnic or dual heritage communities.
Youth drop-in	
Rathbone Trng	These government-funded courses attract disadvantaged mainly young people, often excluded from school.
Youth Café	Open to anyone, this is attracting large numbers in venues very close to specific schools. Due to transport links, our town centre venue can potentially attract youngsters from several schools both in and outside Aylesbury. We will actively market this when the building work nears completion.
Child Contact	Both these activities are only available by referral. The lift will improve accessibility for one of our existing Child Contact Centre clients. Last year with Child Contact there was a greater ethnic mix with Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani Muslim, British Muslim, British white, Egyptian, Irish, Portugese, Polish and American.
Adoption	
Cruse Bereavmnt	Whilst most of their work is by referral from doctors, they are also available for off-the-street consultations. A sign advertises their presence. Their world leader position can only be by good accessibility and equality principles.
Autism Bucks.	Open to all parents, professionals and carers of the autistic.
Rape Crisis	Open to victims, partners and carers affected by sexual abuse.
Choral practice	All colours and creeds are equally excluded if they cannot sing!
Toastmasters	Like Cruse, a world leader based in part on accessibility to all.
Bucks Organists	Open to all. Bursaries open to the most promising young talent.
Craft groups	Open to anyone with an interest in handicrafts.
Asian women	Exclusive to Asian women, recognising their cultural difficulty in sometimes wanting medical advice without the presence of their husband.
Blood donors	Open to all who meet their age and health requirements.
Charity cards	Retail goods available to all.
Fair trade shop	
Karibuni goods	
Vale Volunteers	This organisation has meeting room information available for all its member charities and voluntary groups.
Coffee bar	Open to all each morning Monday to Saturday.
Smarter Cafe	Accessible to all within the 'hard-to-reach' retired age group.
Tuesday Fellwshp	Mainly but not exclusively for older women, some of whom live in nearby retirement and residential homes.
Day Care Clubs	By referrals only based on medical and domestic criteria.
Over 60s exercise	Open to all the over 60s.

From the above, it can be seen that our user groups practise the equality principles espoused by the Big Lottery. It will be seen from Our Motivation in section 2.1 that as a Community Centre we also share this view. This striving for inclusivity pervades our church as can be seen by the multi-racial nature of our congregation and this quote from the Q Alliance Website, a charity supporting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people in Buckinghamshire:

'I've had a chance to visit the Aylesbury Methodist Church recently, and I was very impressed with their focus on equality and forward thinking on LGBT issues, if you're interested in finding out more about the Methodist Church, I highly recommend their 'rough guide' to Methodism.'

Gareth Pacetti, Equalities Officer, Q Alliance Website 11 Dec 06



Our multi-racial congregation, illustrated with surnames A and B from our 2007 Church Directory

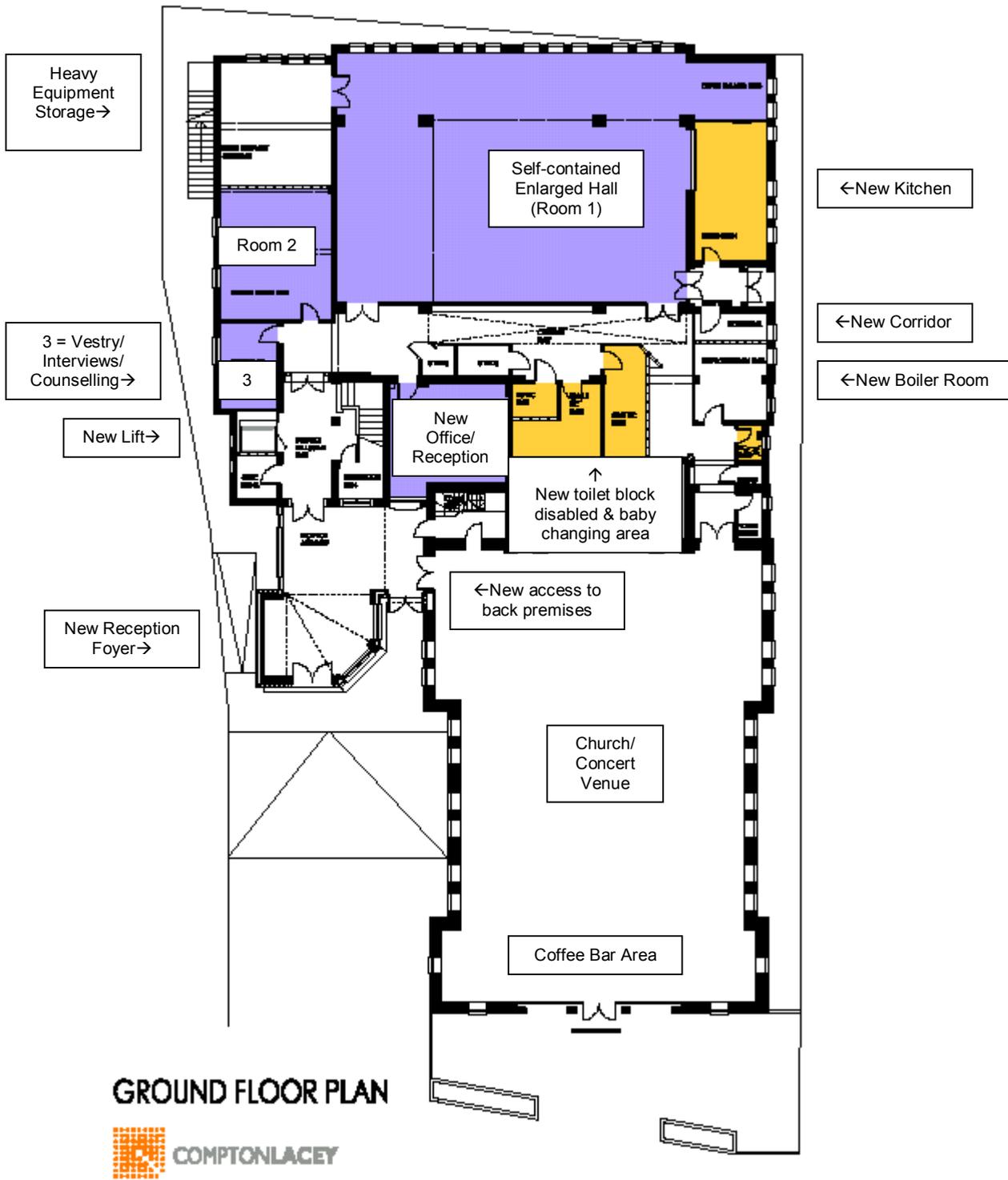
(Reduced from 30 people to save on file size)

5.5 FLOOR PLANS

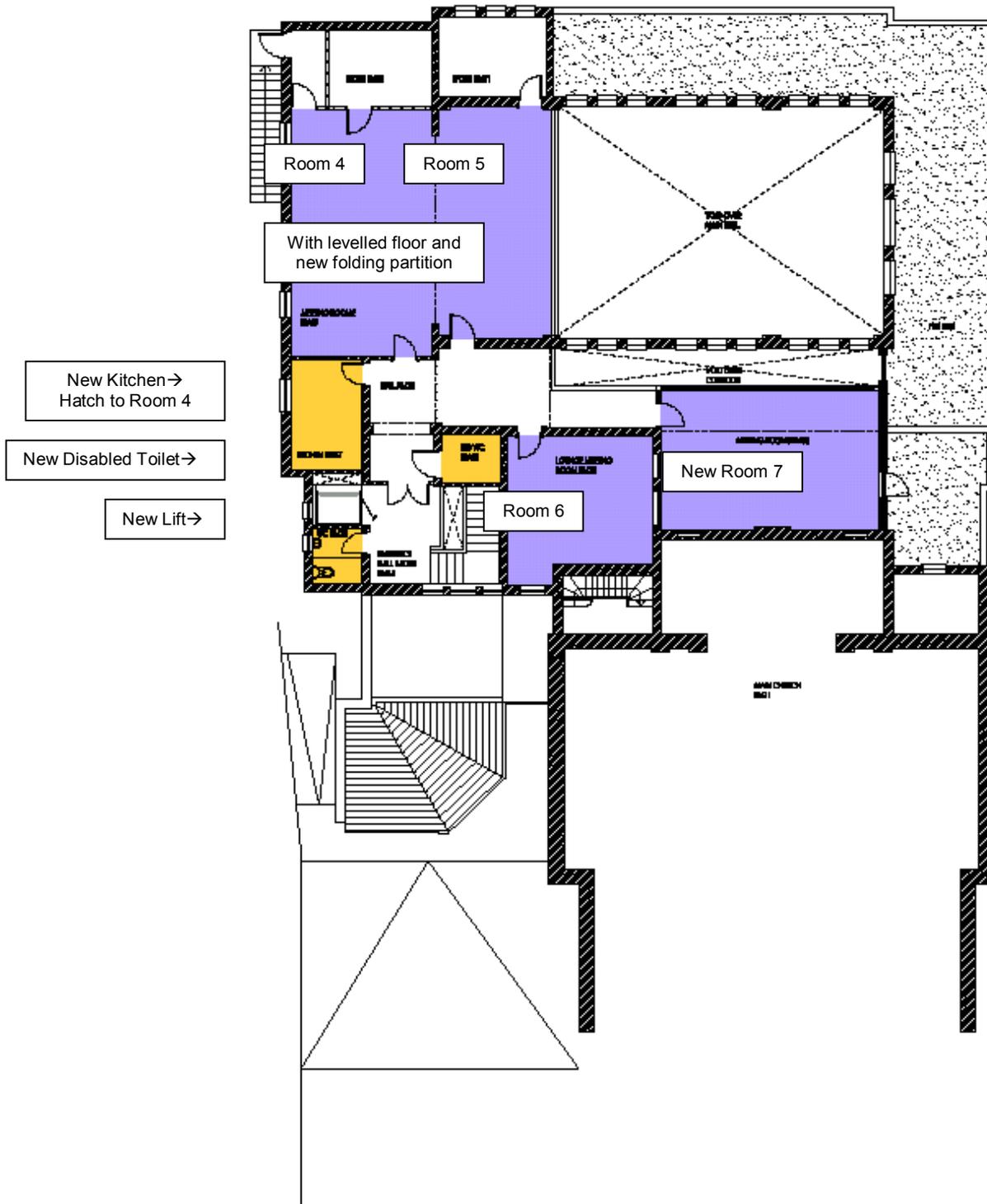
The following ground floor and first floor plans seek to show:

- The range of room sizes available.
- The main improvements and additions.
- The fact that on the first floor, rooms 4 and 5 can be let separately with the partitioning closed or as one large room with it open.

5.5.1 GROUND FLOOR PLAN



5.5.2 FIRST FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



5.6 FORECAST USER NUMBERS 2008/9¹

A	B	C	D	E	F
Activity	Meeting Frequency	Annual Sessions	Average Attendance	Total/Yr (A x D)	Annual Benefics.
Baby Café	Weekly	50	7	350	130
Parent & Toddler	Weekly in term time	40	100	4,000	140
Parenting course	1 x 5 sessions	5	10	50	10
Brigades	Weekly	50	80	4,000	80
Youth Club					
Youth@ ACT	Weekdays	250	See detailed breakdown below ^{2,3}		12,000
Youth drop-in	Weekly	50			
Rathbone Trng	Irregular	40	15	900	60
Youth Café	Weekly in term time	40	30	1200	60
Child Contact	Fortnightly	25	50	1250	50
Adoption	Irregular	40	3	120	40
Cruse Bereavmnt	Fortnightly	25	4	100	100
Church of God	Twice weekly	100	30	3000	40
Choral practice	Weekly pre concerts	20	80	1600	90
Toastmasters	Fortnightly	25	20	500	50
Craft groups	Fortnightly	25	6	150	10
Asian women	Monthly	12	5	60	30
Blood donors	Monthly	12	110	1320	1,320
Charity cards	Daily pre Christmas	50	30	1500	1,500
Fair trade	Daily in coffee bar	300	5	1500	100
Karibuni					
Vale Volunteers	Ad hoc meetings	25	10	250	100
Coffee bar	6 days/wk	300	15	4,500	150
Smarter Cafe	Weekly	50	20	1000	30
Tuesday Fellwshp	Fortnightly	25	40	1000	50
Day Care Clubs	Two per week	100	20	2000	25
Over 60s exercise	Weekly	50	10	500	15
TOTALS		1,719			16,180
Excluding weddings, funerals, baptisms and Methodist Church services.					

Notes:

1. Figures are based on forecasts provided in our 2007 User Group Survey.

2.

'The fundamental underpinning of all the work is the provision of open door access at the AMC (Aylesbury Methodist Church).'

Sally Mansi, Manager, Youth @ ACT

3. The statistics below are an example of quarterly figures that Youth @ ACT have to produce for their funders. These are for Oct – Dec 06.

	3 months	Annual (x 4)
The total number of Young people with whom Y@A had contact	3029	12,116
Outreach contacts	2588	10,352
Number of young people who have either accessed the open door or Tuesday Multi Agency Drop In (AMC)	189	756
Group work or presentations attendees (AMC and other venues)	173	692
Number of young people who have accessed formal face to face support (AMC)	79	316
Of those receiving formal support, number in semi-structured treatment in accordance to an agreed care plan.(AMC)	21	84
Number of young people experiencing housing issues (AMC)	20	80
Adults also receiving support (This could be adults who ask for a referral into adult services or parents requesting support).(AMC)	18	72

'Obviously Youth @ ACT has grown and developed a great deal since its origination. The increase in outreach and development of new projects has resulted in generating an increase in numbers accessing the service at the AMC. Given our current accommodation and increased staffing this has resulted in difficulties at times. The proposed growth in facilities will result in a growth of service for young people in the Aylesbury Vale. This is an exciting proposition and Youth @ ACT are very grateful to be a consultative partner in this process.

Sally Mansi, Manager, Youth @ ACT.

6. PROJECT RESOURCES

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Resources Group structure and profiles

6.3 Church office

6.4 Policy development

6.5 Partners and volunteers

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Staffing resources for our various activities was provided in section 4.2. Here we focus on the staffing of the community centre itself, both how we operate at present and how we plan operating in the future.

There are four phases to this project:

- Phase 1 Developing
- Phase 2 Funding
- Phase 3 Building
- Phase 4 Delivering

At present, in April 2007, we are at the funding phase. We hope to start building in January 2008 and delivering the project from September 2008. As this is 18 months away we are still at the stage of exploring our post-build management options. This section therefore only represents our current thinking rather than our firm detailed plans. Further consultations with our stakeholders may produce some changes and refinements.

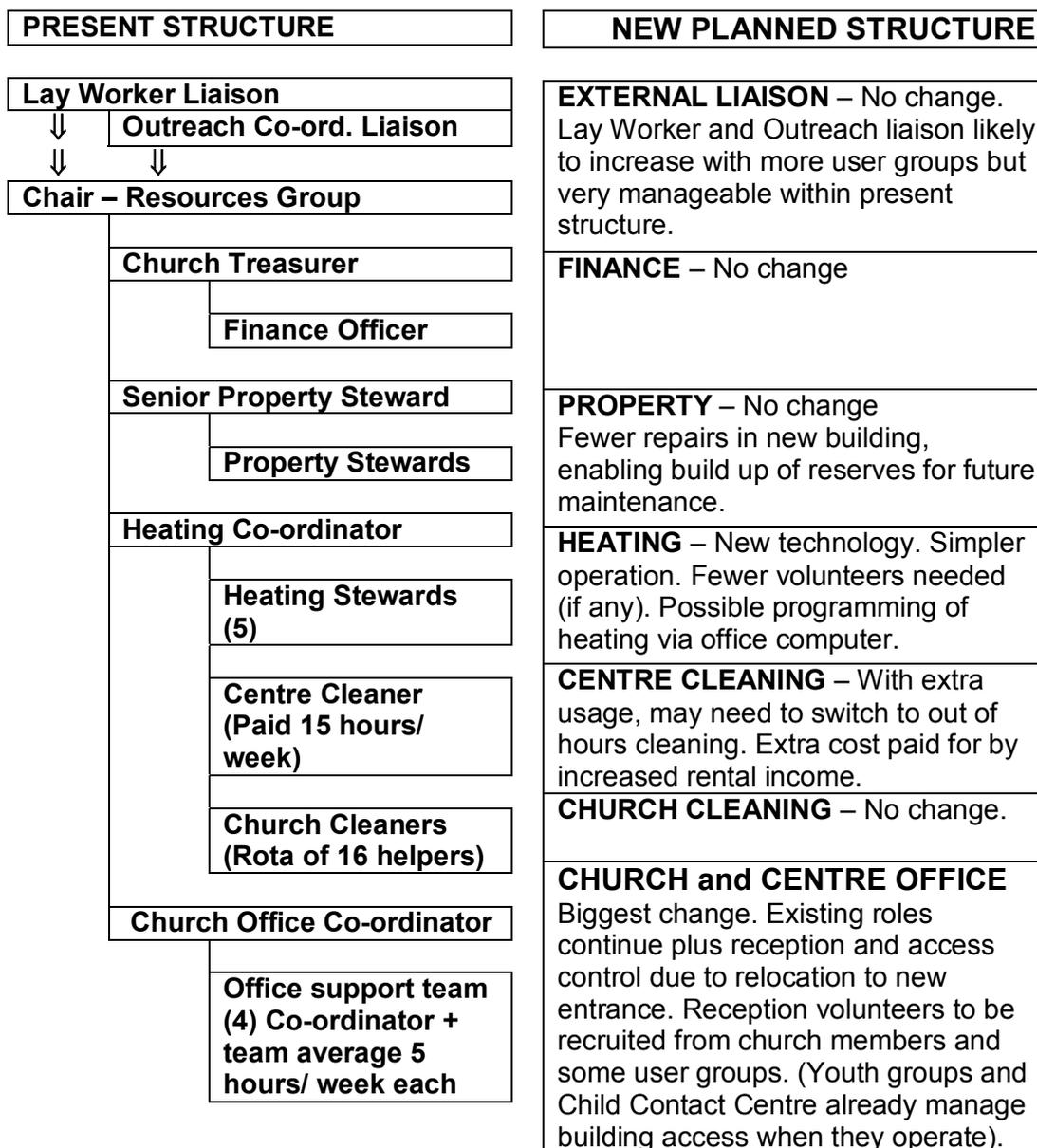
Section 2.2 gave our Organizational Overview. This showed the Project Steering Group planning and delivering a refurbished and paid for building, which the Resources Group was responsible for managing. The Chairs of both groups are members of the Church Leadership Team that is responsible to the Church Council for overall policy and direction of both the church and community centre.

We now look at how the Resources Group operates at present and how we believe it will operate in the future, beginning with the profiles of some of the key players.

6.2 RESOURCES GROUP STRUCTURE AND PROFILES

Chair: Kevin Hardern who is responsible for church and community centre property, finance and the day-to-day management of the centre. This includes lettings, building maintenance, safety, security, storage and user liaison. He represents the Resources Group on the Church Leadership Team and reports to the Church Council. As IT Programmes Director for Lloyds TSB, he was responsible for all aspects of their merger and now runs his own management consultancy. He is also Chair of Governors at Aylesbury Grammar School.

Outreach: Michele Challenger's role is to proactively seek new outreach opportunities and liaise with Resources on room availability and costs. Michele represents all the Aylesbury Vale faith groups on two Thames Valley Police Review Boards. She is a member of the Youth and Community Steering Group and the



Resources Group Structure

Church Leadership Team. A former Head of two large mathematics departments and an A level and GCSE examiner, Michele is a busy private tutor currently studying part-time for a mathematics doctorate. She also sits on the Aylesbury Society committee which reviews local planning applications.

Lay Worker: Arthur Sara's profile was given in 2.3 as a member of the Project Steering Group. His role with Resources involves calling on and establishing relationships with all the community centre's user groups. He is therefore able to provide feedback to Resources on potential concerns before they become major problems.

Church Treasurer: Roger Kirk's profile was also given in 2.3 as Project Treasurer. His role in Resources Group is to manage and report on church and community centre finances. This includes claiming back tax relief on Gift Aided donations and weekly giving by church members.

Finance Officer: David Rogers supports the Treasurer by managing the day-to-day income and payments, ensuring the income due are collected and payments are made to creditors on time. Dave is a retired college lecturer with groundbreaking published work on computer education.

Senior Property Steward: Trevor Nord is responsible for maintaining the church and community centre in good repair. There is a five-yearly inspection of all Methodist premises by a qualified architect or surveyor to report on all work that needs doing and Trevor ensures that this happens. An engineer involved in consultancy on major computer projects, Trevor is also responsible for health and safety and security, helped by his personal experience in access control systems and by expert support.

Health and Safety Adviser: Nick Storer has run his own consultancy on quality procedures and health and safety since 1989. He is helping Trevor to strengthen our policies and procedures in these area.

Property Stewards: Diane Thomas and Bob Bucknell . Diane undertakes project work for fixtures and fittings and as an example, was personally responsible for furnishing the permanent Youth @ ACT room. Bob and a number of DIY-skilled church members provide support to Trevor and monitor a Maintenance Log available to all centre users. They correct identified defects as soon as possible after they are reported.

Heating and Cleaning Co-ordinator: Brian Taylor has overseen the operation of the present boilers for many years, supported by his team of volunteers. Being on the premises on a regular basis, he also supervises the community centre's part-time cleaner Geoffrey Rutland who works a 13-hour week Monday to Friday. The church is cleaned by a team of volunteers, working in pairs on a rota basis.

Church Office Co-ordinator: Sue Ingram formerly ran the office herself but with the growing work now co-ordinates a team of four other people. Their duties include Church and Circuit administration and secretarial support to our three ministers. Their present community centre roles include bookings and publishing a weekly booking matrix showing which groups are in which rooms. As will be seen from the above organization chart, it is the Church office that will see most changes.

6.3 CHURCH OFFICE

6.3.1 The location of the new Church office will be next to the new glass fronted foyer as shown in the ground floor layout in 5.5.1.

6.3.2 The roles it will provide are:

- **Church administration** support to the Superintendent Minister and Aylesbury Church organizations as it does now.
- **Circuit administration** to Circuit Ministers and Circuit Churches as now.
- **Community Centre administration** such as bookings, diary maintenance and administration as now.
- **Community Centre reception**, probably from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
- **Community Centre access control**, providing safety and security.

6.3.3 Staffing requirements: We already have five office volunteers averaging five hours per week each. Given that other people have expressed an interest in helping in this area once the building is completed, we believe that volunteer staffing in this

area is highly feasible. Evening reception and access control is already provided by some of our church and external user groups and we see this continuing.

This use of volunteers is consistent with our Resources Philosophy, which is based on their oft repeated motto, *'If we all give a little we all gain a lot.'*

'...we should be driving for volunteer staffing rather than paid. ...this does not mean inferior, but it does mean cost-effective. We have been following this line over the last 10 years to the extent that our costs are now less than they were 10 years ago, we have many more of our own people 'involved' than they were then and we are able to spend our money on what we feel are good causes, rather than paid employees.'

Kevin Hardern, Chair, Resources Group.

6.3.4 Training Policy is likely to be based on each volunteer having an individual Training Matrix showing tasks to be learnt for that role and dates proficiency was obtained. This could cover anything from photocopying to knowledge of each user group.

6.3.5 Training methods will be heavily based on written information and procedures and on on-job training by proficient staff. Training evaluation will be a combination of observance, and simple verbal or written tests.

6.3.6 A Training Panel is available to provide guidance and practical help to establish suitable training programmes. This includes:

- **Arthur Sara**, a retired deputy head and Circuit Trainer of Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders.
- **David Neville**, a retired engineer and joint Circuit Trainer of Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders.
- **Brian Taylor**, a former trainer of train drivers, author of the Chiltern Railways Train Drivers' Manual and former District Trainer for the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs.
- **Peter Green**, former European Training Manager for the Hallmark Cards Group and self-employed Training Consultant.
- **Peter Farmer**, formerly responsible for the development of human resources across the whole of the BP Group.

6.4 POLICY DEVELOPMENT

We have an established Safeguarding Policy for workers with children and young people, (see Appendix 14.1). We are currently engaged in updating or creating other policies covering: Equal Opportunities, Finance, Health and Safety, Harassment and Bullying, Data Protection, Training and Lettings (see Appendix 14.2)

6.5 PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The roles and numbers of both partners and volunteers have already been covered in sections 2.7, 4.2, 6.2 and 6.3. Because we have such a wide range of partners, the success of the project is not dependent upon any one of them. Furthermore, we are proactively looking for other community needs, which our facilities could help to address. So whilst we will do everything we can to retain all our existing users, especially major ones such as Youth @ ACT, Rathbone and the Aylesbury Child Contact Centre, should we, for any reason lose one of them it will not make a major

difference to the continued success of the project. There are already signs that even with the new building there will be needs for accommodation we will not be able to meet.

Just as finding users is not seen as a problem, neither is finding volunteers. We have an enviable track record of responses to our requests for volunteers from both inside and outside the church. We continue to receive fresh offers of help and we are confident that this will continue to be the case; especially once the building is completed.



Part of the 'buggy park' at the Parent and Toddler Group, (an activity staffed by volunteers).

7. PROJECT COSTS

7.1 CAPITAL COSTS

Item	Cost (Excl VAT)		VAT	Total	Remarks
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's)	
Construction					
Demolition etc	28.0				
Construction	296.0				
External works	22.0				
Mechanical and Elect	270.0				
Fixtures and fittings	20.0	636	103	739	The £103k allows for an £8k refund re disability items
Fees					
Architect	68.0				
Quantity Surveyor	16.0				
M and E services	8.0				
Structural	3.0				
Health and Safety	0.7				
Surveys	1.3				Drains + asbestos
Local Authority	1.3				
Planning supervisor	1.0	99	17	116	
Furniture and equipment		49	8	57	
Contingencies					
Inflation		23	4	27	3% on items above
General		<u>121</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>141</u>	15% " " "
Total capital costs		<u>928</u>	<u>152</u>	<u>1,080</u>	

7.2 ADDITIONAL ANNUAL REVENUE COSTS

Item	Costs	
	£	£
Maintenance		
Lift	700	
General	800	1,500
Cleaning		3,000
Energy		<u>1,000</u>
Total additional revenue costs		<u>5,500</u>

8. FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

8.1 PROJECT CAPITAL COSTS

The total estimated capital cost of the project is £1,080,000 the detail of which can be seen in section 7. The main breakdown of this is as follows:

Direct Costs	£000s	£000s
Construction	636	
Furniture and equipment	49	685
Further Costs		
Fees	99	
Contingency	144	
VAT	152	395
Grand Total (£000s)		1,080

Notes

- In arriving at the final cost of £1,080,000, several options were investigated as described in our stage one application and in 3.8 of this business plan.
- Prices are at current prices except for those of furniture and equipment, which are at January 2005 prices.
- A substantial part of the fees have already been incurred in designing the project so there is little risk of variation there.
- The contingency for inflation is based on 3% of all costs and the general contingency at the rate of 15% recommended in stage 1 of the Community Buildings Programme application process.
- It is hoped that by tight control of the project little use will need to be made of the general contingency thus bringing the total cost under £1,000,000.

8.2 PROJECT FUNDING POLICIES

Our funding policies for this project highlight the fact that two thirds of the cost of the scheme will come from Methodist resources and over half from the efforts of our own members. Another feature of the policies is our aim to reduce unexpected problems to a minimum, maintain tight control of the budget and save money wherever possible. The 12 funding policies we have adopted are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 8.2.1. Two to One | To raise two thirds of monies needed from Methodist sources, one-third from external sources. |
| 8.2.2. 50% Local | To raise half of the total from church members through direct giving, bequests, gift aid and a fund-raising programme. |
| 8.2.3. 50% Banked | To have half of this locally raised total in the bank before going to tender (Methodist Church Policy). |
| 8.2.4. Five Years | To repay all outstanding debt within five years of the start |

of the programme.

- 8.2.5. Half Million** To help cash flow by arranging access to a £500,000 low interest Chapel Aid Loan.
- 8.2.6. No surprises** To conduct pre-build surveys on foundations, asbestos and drains to prevent surprises and extra costs. (All positive).
- 8.2.7. No changes** To allow no changes to the final tender document, thus removing a common source of budget overrun.
- 8.2.8. User ownership** To involve users in signing off the final detailed specifications room by room.
- 8.2.9. Best Value** To work with the architect to reduce costs on the original Quantity Surveyor's estimate. (£200,000 savings achieved on original detailed costing).
- 8.2.10. Own labour** To further reduce costs by the use of some in-house professional expertise post-build to purchase and install some fittings and equipment. (A-V, soft furnishings).
- 8.2.11. No extra staff** To maintain staffing at present levels by the use of partner professionals, self-funded positions and volunteers from inside and outside the church.
- 8.2.12. Self-funding** To continue to operate on a low rental not-for-profit basis for community and charity groups, whilst covering the general running and upkeep costs of the premises.

8.3. PROJECT REVENUE COSTS

Introduction: The church already incurs ongoing expenses in running the community premises but the additional revenue costs resulting from the improved and enlarged premises are shown in the second table at section 7.

Lift: The new lift will incur an annual maintenance charge of £250 per annum (free for the first year) exclusive of repair costs so an extra £450 will be budgeted each year for this, giving a total annual cost of £700 for the lift after the first year.

Cleaning: We anticipate that with increased usage of the premises our cleaning arrangements will need to be reviewed, possibly making some use of contract cleaners and an additional cost of £3,000 a year is allowed over the present £4,000 spent on employing a cleaner.

Energy: An additional allowance of £1,000 is made for energy costs. This makes allowance for increased usage but also allowing for the increase in efficiency of the plant and buildings and the improved controls that will reduce the incidence of heating unused rooms.

Maintenance: Although maintenance costs will initially be reduced on the refurbished premises an allowance of an additional £800 is made due to the larger floor area, increased usage (and wear and tear) and the more sophisticated heating

and electrical services provided. An annual provision is transferred to a maintenance fund as a buffer against future large repair costs.

Total: The total annual increase in revenue expenditure is anticipated to be £5,500. Although we are anticipating a need for some additional reception and clerical support volunteers will carry this out as at present.

Sensitivity: Regarding the sensitivity of our costs to a drop in our letting income, if the estimated increased occupancy, and therefore rental income, is not achieved, then similarly not all the additional costs listed above will be incurred. Our experience over the last 20 years is that our income has been constant or growing and the costs of running the community premises are small as a proportion of the church's total expenditure. With the planned increase in the population of Aylesbury over coming years church membership and demand for community premises are both likely to increase rather than decrease thus reducing the risk of reduced income.

8.4 PROJECT CAPITAL INCOME

Sections 9.1 and 9.2 summarise the expected sources of our capital and revenue incomes. Section 9.3 gives explanatory notes on each element.

In summary, we are confident in our ability to raise the target sums from non Community Buildings Fund sources. This level of income would enable us to modernise our building and adequately cater for all our church-organised activities. However, our ability to finance the project needed to cater for all the community activities described in this Business Plan is now solely dependent on a successful outcome of this Big Lottery bid.

8.5 REVENUE INCOME

After completion of the redevelopment of the premises, we anticipate a substantial increase in rental income from letting the updated and larger premises. Present lettings income is about £10,000 pa and we are expecting that to increase to between £17,000 and £20,000 an increase of at least £7,000. This extra income should cover the additional revenue costs estimated to be £5,500 as described above.

8.6 CASH FLOW AND TEMPORARY LOANS

There will be a need to resort to borrowing towards the end of the building phase pending the receipt of annual pledges and fund raising income during 2009 to 2013.

We have received promises of a total of £24,500 by way of interest free loans from members and we have arranged for a loan facility at a competitive interest rate from Methodist Chapel Aid Ltd. The amount of this loan is likely to be no more than £100,000. All debt will be paid back within 5 years of the start of the building work as required by the Methodist Property Office but we are aiming to do this within 3 years.

The interest payable on this loan will be found from interest presently being earned on our current balances in hand. More information on cash flow of the capital costs can be seen in the Capital Project Delivery Plan.

9.0 PROJECT INCOME

9.1 CAPITAL INCOME

Source of funds	Total Amount	Secured	Unsecured	Remarks
	£000's	£000's	£000's	
Church members	340.00	270.00	70.00	
Gift days, bequests etc	40.00		40.00	
Fund raising events	120.00	120.00		
Total church efforts	500.00	390.00	110.00	
Methodist grants				
Connexion (ie national)	50.00	50.00		
Northampton District	15.00	15.00		
London Committee	10.00	10.00		
Aylesbury Vale Circuit	130.00	130.00		
Total Methodist grants	205.00	205.00		
Other grants				
Garfield Weston	20.00	20.00		Already received
Beatrice Laing	10.00	10.00		
William Harding	10.00	10.00		Furniture and equipment only
Allchurches	0.50	.50		Already received
Lord Carrington	0.25	.25		Already received
William Harding	9.25		9.25	2 nd tranche to be applied for.
Total other grants	50.00	40.75	9.25	
Total income identified	755.00	635.75	119.25	
Shortfall	325.00		325.00	
Total income needed	1,080.00	635.75	444.25	

9.2 ADDITIONAL ANNUAL REVENUE INCOME

Item	Annual Amount
	£
Lettings income	7,000

9.3 NOTES

9.3.1 Introduction: The table in 9.1 above shows how we expect to raise the income needed to finance the project. It shows how we expect to raise the £755,000 income from non Community Buildings Programme sources. It also shows a balance of £325,000 needed from the Community Buildings Programme.

9.3.2 Brought forward: In 2005 we already had resources of £90,000. This comprised £38,000 from members' giving to earlier projects and £52,000 donated by

one member from a share of the sale proceeds of a former independent chapel. The £90,000 is part of the £340,000 to be raised from our members.

9.3.3 Members' pledges: During 2005 150 of our 250 members and adherents pledged to give a total of £180,000 towards the project either as a lump sum or spread over a five-year period. This is in addition to their regular weekly giving to meet our annual expenditure and in addition to fund-raising events mentioned below. Whilst inevitably several members did not have the financial resources to make such an additional contribution, the figures show solid and broad support for the project by church members.

After two years, over £100,000 of the £180,000 pledges have been received. A further £70,000 is expected from pledges from newly arrived members to the church and from an extra 10% from all members once the project is complete. The latter has been our experience in previous projects.

9.3.4 Gift Days: We plan to hold two gift days to appeal to former church members, members of other local churches and the local community. Together with the possibility of bequests we hope to raise a further £40,000 by these means.

9.3.5 Fund-raising: We have a very active fund raising team who set themselves a target of raising £120,000 over 6 years and after two years are on target to achieve this. This has had the effect of raising money not just from our own members but also from a wider circle of friends and the local community. These events have also provided valuable social benefits to those taking part.

9.3.6 Methodist grants: The grants from Methodist sources have all been approved after seeing details of what we are planning to do subject only to our ability to raise the balance from other sources.

9.3.7 Other grants: A total of £255,000 is shown as income from grants and the table at section 9.1 shows where these will come from, the amount involved and whether they are secured.

The grants of £50,000 shown as from non-Methodist sources were secured after selecting 40 of the most appropriate ones from a 'long list' of almost 200 grant giving bodies. Many of these bodies, while applauding the merits of our project, were unable to help us financially either because of geographical reasons, preferences for specific types of project or sheer excess of demand on their funds. We were fortunate therefore that six grant giving bodies have promised to give assistance and in fact three of them have already made payment.

For many years the local William Harding Trust have looked favourably on the work we do for young people and have helped us to buy equipment and furniture and have promised a grant of £10,000 for this project. They have also suggested that we make a further application to them, which we will do when we judge the time is right.

10. FINANCIAL PLANNING

10.1 ADDITIONAL REVENUE COSTS AND INCOME

Item	Year 1					Year 2			Year 3		
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Total Year 1	1 st half year	2 nd half year	Total Year 2	1 st half year	2 nd half year	Total Year 3
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Lift maintenance (Note 4)				450	450	125	575	700	125	575	700
General maintenance (Note 5)		100		300	400	200	600	800	200	600	800
Cleaning (Note 6)	300	400	400	400	1500	1250	1250	2500	1500	1500	3000
Energy (Note 7)	200	200	50	50	500	500	300	800	600	400	1000
Total additional costs	500	700	450	1200	2850	2075	2725	4800	2425	3075	5500
Additional lettings income (Note 8)	500	700	800	1000	3000	2000	3000	5000	3500	3500	7000
Surplus income	--	--	350	-200	150	-75	275	200	1075	425	1500

Notes

- 1 All prices are at an April 2007 price base.
- 2 Year one is deemed to start at 1st October 2008, the planned completion of building work.
- 3 Further commentary on revenue costs and income can be seen at section 8, Financial Appraisal.
- 4 First year free maintenance. Contribution to maintenance fund £450.
- 5 Contribution to maintenance fund at year-end.
- 6 Increasing as lettings increase.
- 7 Quarters 1 and 2 are winter quarters.
- 8 Income increasing as lettings increase.

11. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

11.1 GENERAL STRATEGIES

There are two separate marketing and communication needs. One is for the individual user group activities. The other is for the community centre itself.

Our strategy for the promotion of user group activities is one of 'by exception intervention'. This means that we believe that the promotion of an activity should be the responsibility of the individual user group. In other words it should be partner-led. Only if their methods were proving to be ineffective would we intervene by offering support. With our current list of users, this has not proved necessary.

However, if it were necessary, we can offer assistance from three sources:

- Our Fund Raising Group are now expert in producing small promotional plans and programmes for their various events.
- A member of our Project Steering Group has a diploma in marketing and experience in sales consultancy.
- Our Youth and Community Steering Group have connections with a low-cost but creative and effective local marketing organization.

Our strategy for the promotion of our community centre is to maintain a programme of ongoing 'low or no-cost' awareness building. In marketing, ongoing programmes are far more effective than a 'one-off' advertising or promotional campaign. Furthermore, just as our policy is to use volunteers and spend our money on 'good causes' rather than paid staff so too with marketing and communication. Our policy here is to find free or low-cost promotional methods rather than have a large marketing budget.

We now examine these two strategies in more detail.

11.2 USER GROUP PROMOTION



Activity	Marketing and Communication Methods
Baby Café	Bucks Primary Health Care Trust has an objective to roll out a series of these cafes to promote breast-feeding and has its own marketing programme. This includes a freestanding sign outside our coffee bar entrance when they are open.
Parent & Toddler	Word of mouth and close liaison with two local surgeries and Health Visitors has worked well for 10 years. We still have a waiting list. If it proves possible to increase the number of days per week, then this would be promoted through cards and small posters in local supermarkets, shops and surgeries as well as coverage in the local newspaper.
Brigades and youth club	Promotion of these has been on hold until the building is nearing completion. We then plan advertising in-house in our church magazine for more volunteer officers and leaders to enable us to cater for more young people. If necessary, we will try other churches in our Circuit and town. All volunteers will have the mandatory police checks before working with the children and young people. With more leaders in place, we will promote the activities through word of mouth and small posters in local schools. Contacts with schools are being extended by our minister offering to do some school assemblies and through some of our teacher church members.
Youth @ ACT	A mixture of word of mouth between young people, widespread distribution of attractive business cards in surgeries, proactive seeking out of vulnerable youngsters, liaison with the police on problem estate areas and two initiatives to use sport and art as alternatives to other destructive lifestyles have all contributed to the success of these two activities. Youngsters are encouraged to phone, text, email or simply drop into the centre. Additionally, Youth @ ACT have been one of the main beneficiaries of community centre publicity which has further raised public awareness, as has their own occasional feature articles in the local press.
Youth drop-in	
Rathbone Trng	This national training charity promotes its work with disadvantaged young people through a network of contacts at schools, Job Centres and community groups such as our Youth and Community Steering Group. Most of their programmes are government designed and have their attendant promotional methods and materials. It also has an informative website.
Youth Café	Aylesbury Youth for Christ work with a local advertising agency that produces very professional post cards and small posters for widespread distribution in schools. This supplements word of mouth publicity, which will doubtless grow as the Cafés become more established. It is already going rapidly. There has been a feature article in the local press and other articles on specific activities are planned for the future.
Child Contact	All cases are by referral from the courts, social services and Citizens' Advice Bureau. Based on the need for a waiting list, awareness of the service is high, helped by its being an accredited member of the National Association of Child Contact centres.
Adoption	Again, the adoption service is aware of our existing facilities and will be invited to see our new premises.
Cruse	Local surgeries are aware of the service and refer clients. Their

Bereavement	telephone number, which is at our church, is in the telephone directory and further links to our community centre are given on the web.
Choral practice	Aylesbury Choral Society constantly advertise on their website for new singers to come along to our church for rehearsals, giving the dates and times. They also promote themselves through their concert programmes and through their members.
Toastmasters	The Aylesbury branch's website is linked to their national and international websites and carries details of meeting times at our centre for anyone interested in improving their communication and leadership skills.
Craft groups	At present, there are sufficient numbers to make the various church banners and create greetings cards for fund-raising. This is a group that will be happy to attract new members interested in various forms of handicrafts in the new building. Potential sources of newcomers are the church and community centre website, Queens Park Arts Centre and/or a piece in the local paper.
Asian women	This service is in partnership with the NHS-run Brookside Clinic who make suitable clients aware of its availability.
Blood donors	Large banners in the vicinity of the church announcing dates and times of sessions advertise Blood Donor Sessions.
Charity cards	The Charity Christmas Card shop now benefits from AA road signs in the town centre from October to December and has received annual coverage in the Bucks Herald and Bucks Advertiser, supplementing the word of mouth advertising. Fair Trade and Karibuni Trust goods are advertised throughout out 14 churches in the Circuit and the town centre churches. There have also been regular media articles on the Fair Trade campaign led by the manager of our shop. A national programme of presentations to a wide range of groups by the Karibuni trustees raises Karibuni awareness.
Fair trade shop	
Karibuni goods	
Autism Bucks	This group have their own website and their seems to be good awareness of their organisation.
Rape Crisis	This Home Office funded group also has a website and police and other agencies are aware of them.
Vale Volunteers	This organization has a list of available venues for meetings of charities and community groups. It also has a monthly e-bulletin to its members and is looking forward to promoting our refurbished premises.
Coffee bar	An external sign advertises the coffee bar when it is open. Otherwise it is word of mouth. The new foyer is likely to attract more attention and more passer-by trade.
Smarter Cafe	This was advertised in a Bucks County Council regular publication and by word of mouth from the mainly 'hard to reach' older users. It was soon full and compelled to operate two shifts. If funding is renewed, a similar approach is expected.
Tuesday Fellowship	Again, it is mainly word of mouth advertising that has attracted so many new members in recent years. Many of these are from local retirement and residential homes.
Day Care Clubs	Clients are all by referrals through doctors, psychiatric nurses or social services and have had periodic waiting lists, suggesting further promotion is not needed.

Over 60s exercise	Hartwell Day Centre advertises and runs this programme at our centre and other locations. Promotion is through local surgeries and county council publications.
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11.3 COMMUNITY CENTRE PROMOTION

During the early stages of this project there has already been anecdotal evidence of a growing awareness of our community centre and what we do. This has been greatly helped by prominent articles in the local newspapers and our BBC radio outside broadcast. By the time the building work is completed we will have a timed programme of public relations, or to be more precise, public's relations. These will be geared to our various publics such as user groups, potential beneficiaries, local authorities, the wider public and our own church members and stakeholders. This programme will flesh out the following outline programme in order to raise general awareness of the community centre and specific awareness of some of our activities:

11.3.1 Local newspapers: (The Bucks Herald and the free Bucks Advertiser). A 'drip feed' of regular newsworthy stories, based on the different activities that take place.

11.3.2 Local radio: (Mix 96). A similar drip-feed of ideas, based on interviewing some key people involved with the community centre.

11.3.3 Regional radio: (BBC 3 Counties Radio). A return visit after their pre-build 2005 broadcast for a post-build 2008 or 2009 two-hour show.

11.3.4 Official opening: (Big name opener with invitation to the great and the good and anyone who has helped us in any way). Local media invitations will include regional TV.

11.3.5 Open days: (For the general public. Hopefully an invitation newspaper ad paid for by various building contractors and suppliers).

11.3.6 Annual Youth Exhibition: (New Dawn at the Civic Centre). A stand covering the youth activities at our centre available to all young people in the area.

11.3.7 Schools: (Primary and secondary schools). Postcards and small leaflets will promote all or some of our youth activities, supplemented by school assemblies by our minister.

11.3.8 Vale Volunteers: (Via their monthly e-bulletin). A link to our website to show the room layouts, capacities and hire charges to charities and other community groups.

11.3.9 Our website: (www.aylesburymethodists.org.uk). An expanded community centre section with details of all our activities and contact information.

11.3.10 New housing: Our church is currently actively developing strategies to engage with the thousands of new people who are already moving to Aylesbury. The community centre will be able to 'piggy-back' on any welcome packs or other communication methods in the form of a descriptive outline of what goes on there.

11.4 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Our promotion of equal opportunities and inclusivity was covered in sections 5.1 and 5.2 from which it will be seen that we 'walk the talk' on our motivation described in

2.1. User groups are informed of our beliefs in equality and inclusion for all and are required to demonstrate that in their use of our premises. Our knowledge of our user groups reassures us that this is happening in practice.

Some outstanding examples are the brigades and youth club with a multi-ethnic mix of youngsters; the Aylesbury Child Contact Centre that has an increasingly wide spread of ethnicity; Youth @ ACT which has a disproportionately high percentage of young people from Asian and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and Rathbone whose whole range of training programmes for disadvantaged teenagers matches our motivation and the equality principles of the Big Lottery. They are all about reducing exclusion and promoting participation and equal opportunity for those less well served by the educational system.

Whilst we are confident in our user group's adherence to these inclusive principles, we will be quite happy if required, to monitor this aspect of our work in our next annual user survey.



Inclusivity in action at the Noah's Ark Parent and Toddler Group

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

12.1 Monitoring construction

12.2 Monitoring first year activities

12.3 Beneficiary input

12.4 Project evaluation

12.5 Long term impact

12.1 MONITORING CONSTRUCTION

Each month during the building phase, our architects Compton Lacey will sign off part-completion certificates related to the work done by the chosen contractor. This will form the basis of a monthly report by the architect to our Project Secretary, the only nominated contact between Compton Lacey and the Project Group. This is to prevent any unauthorised changes. Progress will be tracked against the Gantt chart of significant events to be produced by the architect.

The Project Secretary Bob Bucknell will report to the monthly meeting of the Steering Group, copying our Circuit, District and Manchester property people.

12.2 MONITORING FIRST YEAR ACTIVITIES

It is sound management practice to monitor new ventures very closely in the early days. It is then that problems are most likely to arise. If spotted early, they can be fixed as 'to-be-expected teething problems' before they become major problems.

We therefore intend to arrange daily reviews with office/ reception staff and user groups for the first couple of weeks. When we are happy that all is running smoothly, we will gradually reduce this to weekly, then monthly. After that we will revert to reporting on a by-exception basis, that is only if there is a problem, to the Resources Group meetings. The Resources Group will arrange all this using an informal approach.

Formal monitoring will be by:

- The bi-annual Resources Group report to the Church Council.
- The annual User Survey which in the first year will focus on users' reaction to the new building and their suggestions for improvement.
- A section in the Annual Report of the church and centre that several people have suggested we produce.

12.3 BENEFICIARY INPUT

At present, our community centre feedback has been sought primarily from user group organisers rather than the beneficiaries of their activities. Beneficiary input has been confined to informal discussions with our Lay Worker on his visits to the various events.

In our refurbished building, the intention is to have a User Feedback Form and a Suggestions Box at reception, where individuals will be enabled to share their thoughts on any aspects of our centre.

More structured input from beneficiaries should, we believe, be at the discretion of the user groups. For instance whilst the many visitors to Youth @ ACT, Rathbone courses or Youth Drop-in could doubtless give valuable feedback to us, the prime

concern must be that they have a need for help or advice and this must take priority over all else.

Any feedback sought from beneficiaries will therefore be voluntary, non-intrusive, confidential, quick and easy to do. Resources Group will take appropriate action on any user Feedback Forms. If the individual provides contact details, they will receive a personal response whenever possible.

12.4 PROJECT EVALUATION

Responsibility for evaluating and reporting on the project against the project's planned outcomes will initially be the responsibility of the Project Steering Group's Communication's member Peter Green. As a former Investors in People adviser and management training consultant with published evaluation research, he has experience of organizing diagnostic organizational assessments in a pragmatic yet rigorous way.

The specific methods of evaluating each of the six project outcomes are:

12.4.1 Increased centre usage of 50% over 2005 bookings within five years.

- 2005 community centre bookings diary to be analysed for bookings per month. (2005 was chosen as the last full year before the announcement of the planned refurbishment temporarily drove some users away, such as Blood Donors who have long planning schedules.)
- Bookings to be counted by sessions (morning, afternoon or evening or any part thereof)
- Each booking to record the number of rooms used. (Most groups use one room except youth groups who tend to use more than one).
- A computer spreadsheet to be set up to record future bookings in a similar way, allowing monthly, quarterly and annual comparisons.
- This computer spreadsheet to be linked to the weekly bookings diary that is posted on the notice board to show which group is where and when.
- This weekly programme is also to be used for the room-heating schedule to minimise energy usage.

12.4.2 At least 26 new community benefits from building improvements.

- A checklist of these planned improvements including access, flexibility, storage, safety, security, supervision, heating, lighting, insulation, water efficiency and meeting space is shown at Appendix 14.3.
- These improvements should all be evident immediately or within the first few months of building completion.

12.4.3 25% more services than in 2005 within five years supported by promotional programmes to target groups as needed.

- 2005 diary analysis to total the number of services offered.
- Annual comparison
- We have set a lower services increase than overall usage because several of our existing users plan using us more extensively.

12.4.4 The maintenance and development of at least five Community Action Networks (Aylesbury Methodists CAN) to identify and meet community needs.

- Annual report on the networks and their outputs and outcomes.
- Current CANs: User groups; Youth and Community Steering Group; two Thames Valley Police Review Boards; LGBT link; Inter-faith forum.

12.4.5 100% increase within five years over 2005 education and training attainments, especially for the disadvantaged,

- Annual report on numbers and achievements of mainly (but not exclusively) Rathbone-organised training programmes compared with the 2005 baseline.

12.4.6 A self-funding community centre offering affordable town centre meeting venues for charities and community groups.

- Annual church accounts
- Annual comparison of letting rates with other town centre venues, especially using the Multi-Cultural Centre as the main yardstick.

12.5 LONG TERM IMPACT

Whilst monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the project's outcomes listed above should be straight forward, evaluating the long term impact of the project is much more difficult. This is not unusual. For instance:

'No single factor...could have brought about the change that has taken place.'

Robinson and Robinson (1989:page 275) *Training for Impact*.

'All assessment is necessarily and by definition subjective.'

J. Stewart (1999:page 180) *Employee Development Practice*.

'When all is said and done, evaluation is a rather 'murky' business and the evaluator should be prepared to use whatever methods prove helpful to him.'

M. Easterby-Smith (1994:page110) *Evaluating Management Development, Training and Education (2nd edition)*.

So if we take one of Youth @ ACT's intended outcomes from 4.2.2, 'reduced drug and alcohol abuse among young people', if the Aylesbury Vale figures go up, does that mean they failed? Or might it mean that it would have been even higher had it not been for their work? Who can tell? Similarly, the outcome 'reduced NHS costs' will be an obvious reality in terms of the people helped and guided by Youth @ ACT but how can anyone measure the effect on NHS costs with any certainty? Likewise with an outcome of the Parenting Course of 'improved parenting', there may be some obvious behaviour changes at the time. But how can this be realistically measured in the long term?

Given that some outcomes are hard to measure, we believe that the best way to monitor the long-term impact of the project is against the outcomes in 12.4 and Our Vision in 2.1. Have we, as our vision states become 'widely recognised as a busy, vibrant, inclusive, caring and friendly town centre venue enabling and encouraging excellent life-enriching service provision for identified needs for the youngest to the oldest in the community'? When we achieve that vision, we believe it will be fair to claim that this project has made a real difference to the quality of life of the people of Aylesbury.

13. RISK ANALYSIS

13.1 Basis

13.2 Table

13.1 BASIS

This risk assessment is the result of conversations at the Steering Group, with User Groups and from a discussion at the General Church Meeting, which is open to anyone who wants to attend. Several stakeholders also contributed to the SWOT and PEST analyses shown in Appendices 14.4 and 14.5. (Refer to the Capital Project Delivery Plan section 3.11.2 for our project risk assessment.)

13.2 TABLE

Possible risks	Prob-ability	Impact	Actions to minimise/ comments
Failure of present users to return after premises closure for refurbishment	Low	Low	Great enthusiasm by present users who especially appreciate the location. Plans to help each group make interim arrangements during the building phase and to keep in touch.
Reduced car parking	Definite	Low	Limited parking already, so usage not dependent on this. Drop-off facility planned for front of church and centre.
Insufficient volunteers to man reception and office	Low	Medium	Volunteers helped by more church members, new retirees and more offers of help.
High turnover of volunteer receptionists	Medium	Medium	Formal interview to assess their commitment
Ineffective security and access control	Low	Medium	Train reception staff in usage of equipment, knowledge of user group needs and how to deal with problems.
Increased cleaning costs	High	Low	Higher costs possible if out-of-hours cleaning necessary due to increased usage. Paid for by increased rental income.
Evening and Sunday street parking costs introduced	Low	Medium	AVDC once proposed it but dropped idea due to public protests. Would make drop off and pick-up for evening activities, especially youth activities more difficult.
Under capacity	Low	Low	As rental income is only about 15% of our overall budget, it is not critical to our success.
Over capacity	High	Low	If we eventually have more

Increased running costs	Medium	Low	groups than we can cater for we will prioritise on the basis of the greatest need and community benefit. Increased costs of greater usage should be partly offset by more economic energy systems and paid for out of more rental income.
Conflict of user group interests	Medium	Medium	Segregate on different floors

14. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Aylesbury Methodist Church And Centre

14.1 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

As the people of the Methodist Church and members of The Aylesbury Methodist Church, we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent neglect and the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people.

2. The Church Council will:

- (a) oversee implementation of the policy
- (b) appoint a Safeguarding Officer to be a member of the Church Council
- (c) maintain day to day practices that best safeguard children and young people by ensuring the recommendations of the Home Office Code of practice Safe From Harm are fully implemented.
- (d) approve all new work and new workers with children and young people but where necessary delegate this approval to the Safeguarding Officer.
- (e) initiate a risk assessment by all groups and organisations within the church concerning the safeguarding of children and young people and ensure this is reviewed regularly.
- (f) review Safeguarding Policy and Procedures annually.
- (g) provide adequate resources for the full implementation of the policy.

3. Appointment of Workers with Children and Young People:

In the London North West District all those working with children will need to apply for the Criminal Records Bureau police check during the month of March 2005, according to current Methodist Church procedures, unless one has already been applied for and or a disclosure received. If a disclosure has been received for work in another field the safeguarding officer will decide if it is acceptable. All new workers with children and young people will:

- (a) apply for the Criminal Records Bureau police check, according to current Methodist Church procedures
- (b) be interviewed by an experienced Children & Young People's Worker within the church
- (c) provide adequate references
- (d) undertake a probationary period
- (e) undertake appropriate training

4. Managing the Work with Children and Young People:

- (a) All workers will have access to a current copy of The Methodist Church's booklet "Safeguarding a policy for good practice in the case of children and young people" and a copy of the Safeguarding Policy of the Church.
- (b) all workers will be provided with a job description informing them of their responsibilities and the person to whom they are accountable.
- (c) workers will undertake appropriate training.
- (d) workers will implement the policies of the Church Council with regard to matters of safeguarding children and young people

5. The Safeguarding Officer will:

- (a) be the designated person for matters to do with Safeguarding within the life of the church
- (b) devise necessary procedures to administer the Safeguarding Policy of the church.
- (c) liaise with groups working with children and young people who are the responsibility of the Church Council, to
 - ensure appropriate job descriptions for all workers are completed and filed with the Church Council.
- (d) administer the procedures for job references.
- (e) oversee the completion of Safeguarding Form A parts 1 and 2 applications for CRB Certificates and the
 - completion of all other relevant forms as recommended by The Methodist Church's booklet "Safeguarding a policy for good practice in the case of children and young people"
- (f) maintain a current Church list of all: (i) accredited workers with children and young people (ii) church groups (iii) outside groups working with children and young people.
- (g) liaise with the circuit Safeguarding Officer.
- (h) ensure the Church Council is kept up to date on matters related to Child Protection and make
 - recommendations as appropriate.
- (i) liaise with the person responsible for church lettings to ensure organisations using the church are aware of
 - their responsibilities.
- (j) liaise with groups and organisations within the church concerning a risk assessment of the safeguarding of
 - children and young people and its impact on the working of the group
- (k) liaise with groups as to appropriate training needs and make recommendations to the Church Council.

6. Recognising and Dealing with Abuse

- (a) If abuse is suspected, workers must report this to the person to whom they are responsible.
- (b) Workers must be aware of what to do in the event of a child making a disclosure to them (see Safeguarding Booklet).
- (c) Appropriate training in this area will be offered.

7. Good Practice

- (a) Workers must record and report any incidents concerning the welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person.
- (a) Workers will be made aware of procedures relating to practical issues, e.g.
 - 1) when only one worker is available
 - 2) transporting young people in cars and minibuses
 - 3) meeting children or young people off church premises
 - 4) fire drill

8. Office Holders within the Church

- a) Church members who are asked to consider taking on office within the church (these officers outlined in Safeguarding Booklet) must be made aware that they cannot hold office if they have any conviction or caution or sexual offences against children and young people.
- b) The office holder is responsible for immediately bringing a conviction/caution to the notice of the Church Council if he/she is holding office.

9 Rehabilitation of Sex Offenders

The church is aware of procedures as laid down in the Conference 2000 Report, The Church and Sex Offenders, which must be adhered to in the event of a known sex offender being integrated into the life of the church.

10. Lettings

a) When contemplating letting either the church or its premises, where the use would involve work with children and young people, the following clause will be added to the letting agreement. "The hirers confirm that they are familiar with the Home Office Code of Practice Safe From Harm and have an understanding of it and undertake to follow the Code of Practice contained therein in relation to work with children and young people under the age of 16 years."

b) Lettings to any other group should include the clause: "The hirers confirm that they are aware of the Safeguarding Policy of Aylesbury Methodist Church and will undertake to ensure that they work within it."

11. Resources

A variety of resources exist to assist and support churches in the well-being of their children and young people:

- (1) The District Taking Care Group
- (2) The Taking Care Resource Pack
- (3) Safeguarding A policy for good practice in the care of children (MPH)
- (4) Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service
- (5) Worth Doing Well. (MPH)

14.2 OTHER POLICIES

Aylesbury Methodist Church and Centre.

14.2.1 LETTINGS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Responsibility for Lettings

The church council as a body is the managing trustee of the church and is responsible for the lettings of the premises. It delegates this authority to the resources coordinator who is responsible for the maintenance and use of the premises and ensuring that this is coordinated with financial plans. The resources coordinator is a member of the leadership team who are appointed by church council to run the church and centre on a day-to-day basis.

AMC office staff receive enquiries for lettings and bookings on both a regular and ad hoc basis, and liaison for bookings is focused on the diary secretary, with other office staff acting as back up. Queries are discussed between the diary secretary and the resources coordinator.

Lettings Policy

The policy for lettings follows the national guidelines for Methodist churches and the local mission of our church in Aylesbury. As a church, our mission is to put the largest number of people in the greatest possible danger of finding the love of Jesus Christ and to spread this love in a sensitive, supportive and methodical way. We achieve this by identifying and making best use of all our resources, which includes our premises.

Our policy follows this and is focused on letting to:

- Internal Organisations; approved by the church council, insured under the cover of the church itself and often not being charged for the use of the premises;
- External Organisations; these will be working in areas of service provision to the community of Aylesbury, in areas of greatest need and irrespective of any direct connection to the church. They need their own insurance cover and will be charged an appropriate rent for their circumstances, based on an agreed tariff. They are required to sign a formal lettings agreement stating specific times and responsibilities and insurance cover;
- Individuals; as for external organisations.

Lettings Procedures

The diary secretary maintains an up to date diary of bookings, which is kept in the church office and accessible to other office staff. On accepting a booking, she ensures the organisation completes a bookings form and shows people over the premises, explains fire and other necessary procedures and arranges for keys. The financial clerk invoices payment on the terms agreed at the time of the booking. Rates are reviewed on an annual basis.

Reporting

The church council delegates authority to the resources coordinator who reports annually on the usage of the premises. Organisations using the premises are encouraged to contribute to the LINK magazine in order to keep the general community aware of their activities.

Kevin Hardern,
Resources Co-ordinator, Aylesbury Church and Centre,
January 2007

The following policies are in the process of being developed and agreed by the Church Leadership Team. Other policies such as training will also be produced as needed.

Aylesbury Methodist Church And Centre

14.2.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY (Draft)

It is a central part of the Christian faith that all human beings are created in the image of God; all are valued equally by God and share equality in God's love. Unlawful and unfair discrimination between people is therefore contrary to God's purpose, as well as contravening the law. The church therefore promotes, in spirit and in deed, equality of opportunity and diversity in all spheres of its activity.

Exclusion and discrimination can occur on many grounds, including gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status and disability. The church seeks to eradicate any less favourable treatment in these areas by endeavouring to:

- Build inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity and respect and have equality of opportunity to contribute their gifts to the common life;
- Identify and remove barriers to participation in employment, training, promotion, leadership and representation on church committees and in the attitudes and actions;
- Take positive action to counter attitudes and practices contrary to this statement of intent;
- Ensure that all users of the premises are informed of, and conform to, this policy.
- Respond quickly and sensitively to any breaches of the policy.

To take account of the special needs of disabled people, the church will ensure that

- So far as is reasonably possible, the church premises are accessible, safe and welcoming to all
- The church is equipped to enable the disabled to enter and to take a full part in any of the activities which take place on the premises;
- Those working with disabled people, either as colleagues or as attendees of groups/meetings/functions, have appropriate information and support;
- The church takes steps to enable that those who become disabled continue to be able to participate as fully as possible in meetings/functions.

The person responsible for monitoring this policy, and to whom any breaches should be reported, is.....The church resources team are responsible for the physical condition of the premises and particularly for the maintenance of the ramps, lift, sound systems, lighting, wheelchair access and the physical tidiness of the premises.

Aylesbury Methodist Church And Centre

14.2.3 HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY (Draft)

The Aylesbury Methodist Church warmly welcomes diversity and aims to provide an environment that enables all users of the premises to worship, study, play and meet in an atmosphere where the dignity of all individuals is respected. To this end, the church aims to provide an environment that ensures that all using the premises are free of harassment, bullying and any behaviour which is considered distressing or threatening. This policy applies to all members of the church community and other users of the premises. Any act of discrimination or harassment will be regarded extremely seriously.

Harassment is defined as any behaviour in which an individual or group is subject to aggressive, threatening or other unacceptable behaviour on the grounds of gender, race, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation or personal characteristics. The defining features are that the behaviour is unwanted by the recipient and would be regarded as discrimination or harassment by any reasonable person.

Any person subject to harassment and bullying of any kind, and any person who witnesses behaviour of this kind, should report it as soon as possible to the Church Secretary, the Minister or to any Church Steward. All reports will be fully investigated and appropriate action taken.

This policy will be published to existing and potential users of the premises and all individuals and groups will be required to conform to this policy.
The person responsible for monitoring this policy is.....

Aylesbury Methodist Church And Centre

14.2.4 HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICY (Draft)

The Church Council is dedicated to ensuring the health, safety and security of all members, staff, visitors, contractors and others who are authorised to use the premises by

- Keeping up to date with best practice in relation to health, safety and security and by complying with all relevant legislation and authoritative guidance;
- Ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that those who use the premises apply the highest standards of health and safety;
- Controlling access to all parts of the premises to approved individuals and groups;
- Providing the necessary information and, where appropriate, equipment and training, to all using the premises;
- Keeping the policies and procedures up to date and communicating them to all users.

To keep the premises safe for all members and visitors use and to control potential hazards in and around the premises we will

- Carry out risk assessments once a year and take appropriate actions to eliminate or reduce any hazards/risks identified;
- Install equipment and systems that conform to ISO.....
- Maintain the premises and equipment to a high standard;
- Carry out regular safety inspections of the premises, including tests of all electrical equipment
- Put in place systems to report, record unsafe events and to respond to incidents;
- Ensure that all maintenance work is carried out by suitably qualified individuals, using approved safety procedures, equipment and materials;
- Ensure that all users are aware of their responsibilities for their own safety, where appropriate, the safety of others and to report any hazards which may pose a danger to others e.g. damaged electrical sockets, broken windows, suspected gas leaks, wet or slippery floors immediately.

The monitoring of this policy is the responsibility, and the person to whom any breaches or hazards should be reported, is.....

Aylesbury Methodist Church And Centre

14.2.5 FIRE AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION POLICY (Draft)

AMC is committed to eliminate where possible all accidents and fire risks in the premises and to provide appropriate facilities for responding effectively to both. To eliminate any risks the Church ensures that

- The building is free from inherent risks and complies with safety and fire prevention regulations;
- In all aspects of the life of the church best practice is followed;
- The premises are inspected at regular intervals to ensure conformity with best practice and to identify any risks, paying particular attention to the standard of housekeeping (general cleanliness and tidiness), the adequacy and proper functioning of lighting, heating and ventilation, ease of access and movement, and freedom from obstruction of doors and corridors.

To protect against possible fires the Church will

- Ensure the buildings are fitted with a suitable fire/emergency alarm system that is regularly tested;
- Provide at least two clearly marked fire escapes on the ground and first floor;
- Make all users of the premises aware of any fire risks and of the procedures for evacuating the building for both able persons and those with restricted mobility;
- Appoint fire marshals to manage any evacuation and to carry out a roll call at the designated assembly point for the building;
- Install clear exit signs, provide clearly marked and located fire extinguishers and train members in their use;
- Make all users of the premises aware of the policies and procedures and of their responsibilities for contributing to the safety and well being of other users;
- Test the evacuation procedure at regular intervals.
- Ensure that all organisations using the premises are aware of this policy.

First Aid

A first aid box is located in.....for the treatment of minor injuries. Wherever possible, a qualified first aider should administer first aid treatment – the names and telephone numbers of first aiders can be found on any notice board.

Responsibility for this policy

The Resources team is responsible for the implementation of this policy including for checking the fire control equipment and first aid boxes and for investigating any incidents.

Aylesbury Methodist Church And Centre

14.2.6 DATA PROTECTION POLICY (Draft)

The church holds information, on computers or on paper, on individuals who have a direct or indirect connection with the church. The Data Protection Act lays down standards governing how such information is stored and used. Although churches are not required by law to register with the Data Protection Commissioner, the Church Council has agreed that we should be guided by the principles and practices laid down by the Act.

The Act requires that personal information must only be held with the consent of the person, used only for relevant purposes, is accurate and up to date and deleted when it is no longer required. It must be stored securely, not disclosed to any person who does not need it and made available, on request, to the individuals whose information is held.

The AMC practice

- The church holds information on past, existing and prospective members of the Church or its associated organisations e.g. Girls' and Boys' Brigades, youth clubs, Church committees, and on any person who has regular contact with, or use of the Church premises or its associated organisations.
- Personal information usually consists of the name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and other identifiers of those who are eligible for membership of the Church or its associated organisations, who have a contractual relationship with the church or who wish to participate in its activities or use the premises e.g. baptisms, weddings, funerals, meetings etc.
- The information is held with the permission of the individual.
- It is stored on both computers in the church office and on paper e.g. the AMC directory. The computers are protected with firewalls and anti virus software. All records are held in secure premises and access is limited to those who need it for church purposes.
- When the information is no longer needed, it is destroyed.

The person responsible for the application and monitoring of this policy is the Church Secretary. The following members are responsible for processing, using and storing the information – Michele Challenger, Sheena Hudson and Janice Matthews.

14.3 BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

ACCESS

1. Lift to first floor
2. Disabled toilets on both floors
3. Contrasting colour décor to help the partially sighted.
4. Improved signage and logical circulation to help those with learning difficulties.
5. Induction loops in the hall/larger meeting rooms for the hard of hearing
6. Baby changing facilities on both floors.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

7. Improved visibility and supervision of entry from the church office.
8. Enhanced safety and security for children and the elderly confused.
9. Heating using child-safe panel heaters and eliminating high temperature hot water pipe work.
10. New concealed wiring and electrics.

STORAGE

11. Improved and increased equipment storage.

FLEXIBILITY

12. An uncluttered, more spacious hall.
13. Revamped and extendable coffee bar area.
14. New kitchens and toilets on both floors.
15. One additional new room.
16. Suite of seven self-contained meeting rooms plus the church and coffee bar.
17. Rooms suitable for one-to-one counselling to a hall for 180 or the church concert and meeting venue for over 300.
18. Moveable partitioning to make one large room or two smaller ones.
19. Attractive new side entrance providing a useable area for display, socialising, greeting and parents' waiting area.
20. A 30% increase in usable space.

ENVIRONMENT

21. More efficient condensing gas fired central heating/hot water boilers.
22. Energy-saving double-glazed windows.
23. Reduced lighting needs due to glazed ceiling in double-height corridor.
24. Improved thermal insulation from the new lobby and extension.
25. Thermally insulated heating and mains cold water pipes.
26. Compact fluorescent lamps and other energy-saving lighting.
27. Dual flush and smaller cisterns to save water.

14.4 SWOT ANALYSIS

Affecting Running Of The Centre When Capital Works Completed

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre site • Flexible rooms • Number of rooms • Various sizes of rooms • Large volunteer group • Strong user group support • Friendly atmosphere • Neutral territory • Accessible for young people • Improved access for disabled • Established activities • Good community networks 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited on site parking • Potential loss of user groups during closure for building work • Reception staffing • Security and access control • Insufficient volunteer numbers
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge town growth • Present shortage of town centre community venues • No plans for additional ones • More people living alone needing somewhere to socialise • Providing support to families and single parents, the elderly and those with special needs • New initiatives to meet new needs 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of user groups during building • If AVDC introduced evening and weekend parking charges • Extra cleaning costs • Low user numbers • High user numbers

14.5 PEST ANALYSIS

Affecting Running Of The Centre When Capital Works Completed

<p>POLITICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South East Plan for massive population growth in and around Aylesbury • Potential policy clashes between Bucks County Council, AVDC, Aylesbury Town Council, Aylesbury Vale Advantage and Central Government • National Methodist church policy document, 'Priorities for the Methodist Church' • Government recognition of role of charity and faith-based groups in community support/ provision 	<p>ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding for adequate infrastructure • Stagnant employment growth • High cost of housing • Fewer first time buyers • More renting • More debt • Charities short of cash
<p>SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of people living alone • More single parents • More marriage break-ups • Work commuting to London and Milton Keynes • Drink and drugs culture • More home working • More gated communities 	<p>TECHNOLOGICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgraded office computers • Access control system • Potential room bookings from website • Potential handling of enquiries by remote access

**Contact for the
Big Lottery Fund
and address for
correspondence**

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