

LEADER Final Report | The Redevelopment of St Joseph's Church into a Performing Arts Venue

Background to the Project

1. How was the idea for the project developed?

St Joseph's is B listed, was deconsecrated as a church in 1998, and was purchased by the Creetown Silver Band, who use the building as a rehearsal, tuition and storage space. The Creetown Silver Band, which was founded in 1880, has a dedicated membership of over 30 amateur musicians, however the configuration of the building, disrepair and poor state of facilities meant that it was impossible for the band to expand further, reach new members and increase their tuition output.

Furthermore, there are no purpose-built performing arts facilities in the local vicinity, making it extremely difficult for local performing arts groups to operate. National and international touring companies who perform throughout the region are unable to perform in Creetown due to the lack of appropriate facilities. Therefore our community has missed out on accessing quality performing arts.

After extensive community consultations were carried out, it was therefore decided that the best option for the community was to redevelop St Joseph's Church into a performing arts venue, providing suitable performance and tuition facilities. Consequently the band donated the hall to the Creetown Building Preservation Trust, to restore St Joseph's Church and establish it as a Performing Arts Venue for the community of Creetown and the wider area of Dumfries and Galloway.

2. Who was involved in the project? Individuals and Organisations.

Creetown Building Preservation Trust is the owner of the building and makes management decisions. The Trustees are:

James Stuart McNab (Chair)
Ralston McKay (Secretary)
Peter Sainty (Treasurer)
Dr David Hannay (Trustee)
Rosanne Service (Trustee)
Gillian McKnight (Trustee)
Jim Hunter (Trustee)

CBPT have been supported by local community charity and social enterprise, Creetown Initiative. Those involved are:

Andrew Ward (Senior Project Manager)
Amy-Dee Watson (Project Officer)

CBPT engaged the services of ARPL Architects to finalise the architectural plans and spec and project manage the build. The contractors carrying out the capital works are Andrew Campbell and Sons Contractors.

3. What were the aims and objectives of the project?

Overall objectives:

- Increase skills development opportunities for young people in creative activities, volunteering and musical training
- Boost wellbeing and mental health among local people, by providing a purpose-built space for personal development, creativity and skills development

- Engage with people of all ages through performing arts, in particular, music
- Create a facility that caters for a wide range of events for all the community, in particular creating a music performance and tuition facility in an area where these facilities are lacking
- Extend the function of the building, establishing a facility that can be used all year round
- Encourage visitors to Creetown to sustain and further develop the local economy

4. How was the funding package assembled?

Hollywood Trust:	£82,750
Robertson Trust:	£20,000
Foyle Foundation:	£10,000
Hugh Fraser Foundation:	£8,000
Creetown Silver Band:	£7,145.18
CBPT (own ring-fenced funds):	£4,604.82
David Stevenson Trust:	£2,500
LEADER D&G:	£164,500
TOTAL	£299,500

The Project Experience

5. When did the project take place?

Start Date: 7th July 2018. End date: 30th November 2020

6. What actually happened?

The project was divided into 5 capital phases, as below:

1) Developed Design Stage 3

Final approval by CBPT for the design option and costings from the architect. Necessary ground works carried out.

2) Technical Design Stage 4

Architects produce detailed drawings and tender for building contractor is issued. Prior to Covid-19 a meeting was held with CBPT Trustees and ARPL architects to discuss and approve the final design, including layout, lighting type and locations, heating, plumbing, electrics and socket placements etc. Of the tenders received, Andy Campbell Contractors was chosen as the best option for the project.

3) First Quarter Construction Stage 5

Removing and demolishing any parts that require demolition. Stripping back to walls, preparing building for upgrade.



4) Second Quarter Construction Stage 5

Reconstructing building, new roof, windows and doors, new heating system, plumbing and electrics improvements. Installation of equipment. The new entrance was created by knocking down part of one of the sidewalls. Due to Covid-19 this stage and the next were delayed. Once the Government allowed building and construction sites to reopen, the contractors made necessary health and safety changes to their operations and resumed work.



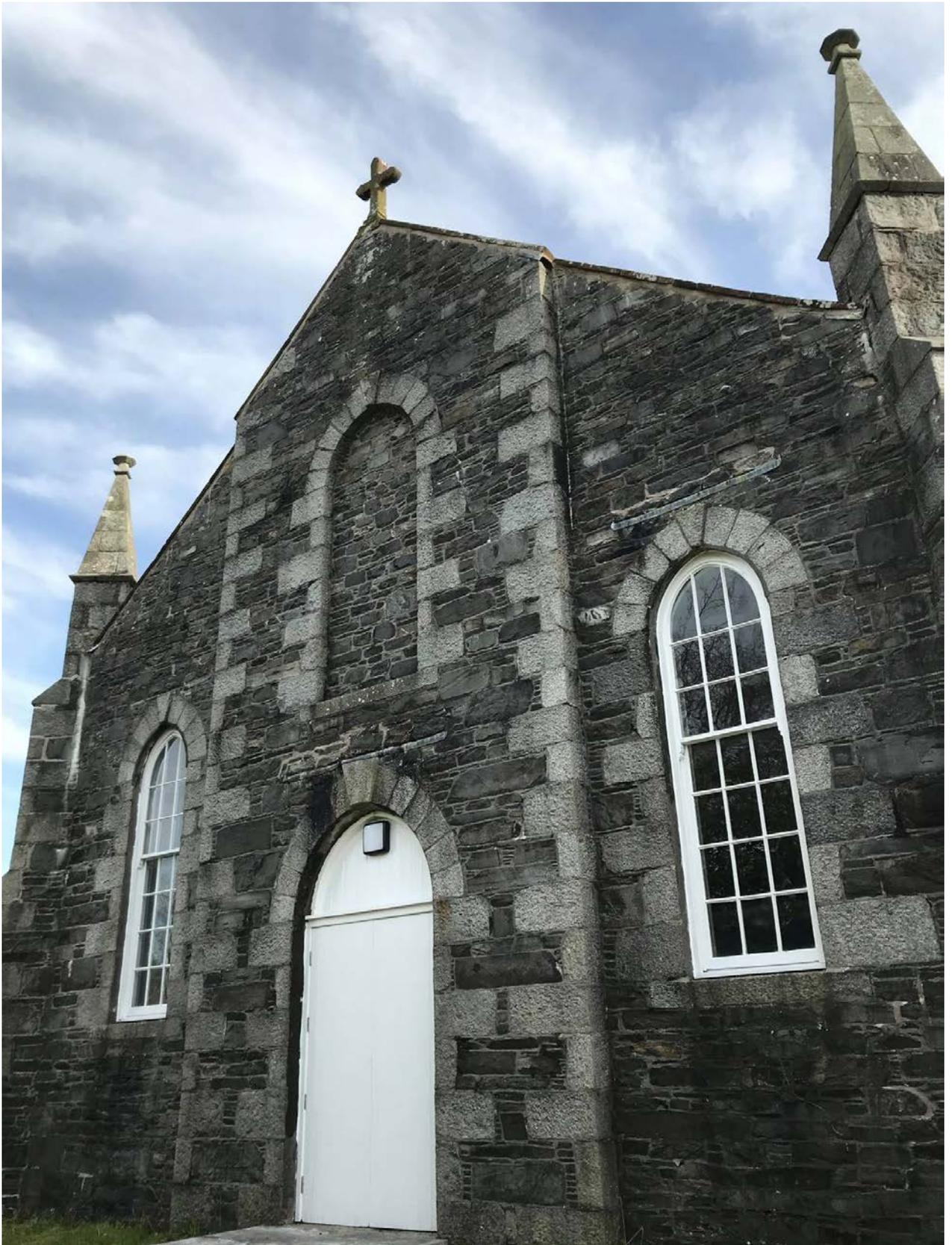
However budgets were stretched due to delays and CBPT was forced to seek additional funding for the seating element of the build cost. CBPT applied for funding for the retractable seating from LEADER and was successful. Architects identified an appropriate company to supply and install the seating system and CBPT decided the style, seating and operations of the system. The LEADER deadline, with regards to spending the money, was tight, however the seating company was able to meet this deadline and the seating was installed by the end of February 2021. CBPT liaised with the architects to chose the flooring and interior paint.



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5) Occupation Stage 5
Build work is complete and building handed over back to Trust from building contractor.

7. Detail how the project fits with the Local Development Strategy

The project fits within the Economy and Sustainable Settlements aims of the Local Development Strategy:

Economy: Young people -

Once the venue reopens, local youth work providers will be able to use the facility for drama, film, performance and dance workshops for young people and other key user groups of the building, including the Creetown Silver Band and Highland Dancers and others will be in a position to engage with more young people aged from 4 – 20. Through new opportunities to participate in performing arts in the newly refurbished venue, young people will gain in confidence, have improved self belief and better social skills, all of which will help to equip young people for their transition into adulthood and working life. They will also develop their communication skills, creativity, performance skills, team working skills, musical skills and balance and co-ordination via workshops in dance, drama, film, music and art – all of which are transferable skills that are desirable characteristics for a potential employer or education institution, “enabling younger people to find employment and purpose”. We are therefore fully aligned with LEADER’s Local Development Strategy by providing “employability and enterprise opportunities for young people and for those furthest from the labour market in rural areas”.

Economy: Tourism -

The new facilities within the refurbished building will help to “strengthen services” locally within Creetown, as the increased usage of the building for rehearsals, group hire and performances (both amateur and semi-professional), will result in a much greater footfall into the village. Visitors will be encouraged to use the other local amenities and businesses, including the village shop, food and drink providers, petrol station and accommodation providers. Our project is therefore aligned with the LEADER Local Development Strategy, as it is “keen to explore joint working opportunities for project development” both with local businesses and with regional and national arts performance companies.

Economy: Art and Culture –

Once the venue reopens and the retractable seating is installed and the tuition rooms are operational, larger audiences will be able to engage with and see drama productions, dances, musical performances, art exhibitions, film screenings and visual art. People from the local area, as well as those from neighbouring towns, from within the county and from further afield will attend performances and events. We would also like to attract tourists into the village, who would otherwise be passing through. Through a varied selection of performances and productions, we hope our project will build a good reputation for arts and music performances, encourage repeat visits to the area and that we will generate good relationships with past and new audience members. Our project will “develop cultural tourism”, a key part of the LEADER Local Development Strategy. Our larger partners and supporters include Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival, Newton Stewart and District Music Club, Scottish Brass Band Association, Galloway Music Festival and The Galloway Consort, all of whom work with professional artists in the region and have stated their strong interest in using the newly redeveloped venue for performances, part of their programme of events, tuition, rehearsals, or part of their wider work.

Sustainable Settlements -

An historical building is being brought back into full community use, with a designated, needed purpose, designed to provide opportunities for social interaction, arts access and engagement, skills development, creativity, diversification of opportunities and community cohesion.

8. How was the project delivered?

The project has been managed overall by Creetown Building Preservation Trust, including decisions on the capital redevelopment. CBPT Chair has taken responsibility for meeting funding requirements and CBPT Treasurer (an experienced, retired accountant) has been responsible for authorising payments, managing the budget with the Chair and reporting monthly to the rest of the Board. Support has been provided by project officers from Creetown Initiative, including some of the more technical aspects of

LARCs and any other third sector or funding queries. CBPT has worked very closely with the architects, ensuring that the project is progressing as required. The architects, who report to CBPT on a regular basis, have managed day-to-day construction activities, including the specialist and technical elements of the capital project.

9. What marketing was undertaken?

The venue is not quite operational, so until now marketing has been aimed at communicating to the community about the progress of the project. This has included articles in our community newsletter, posts on social media and articles on the Creetown Initiative website on behalf of Creetown Building Preservation Trust.

10. Who benefitted from the project?

The whole community will benefit from the project, including children, youths, families, working age people, people with disabilities and health issues, retired and elderly people. Local community groups will be able to use the new venue, including youth groups, senior citizen groups, performing arts groups, health and wellness groups and there will be many accessible events and performances taking place in the new arts centre. Barriers to participation, such as costs and accessibility, by providing a range of performances through out the day and evening with full disabled access. A large proportion of events and performances will be free of charge or a very nominal amount and there will be a range of performances that are autism friendly, toddler friendly, elderly friendly etc, to ensure no one is excluded from participating.

11. How did the final budget turn out?

The final total eligible costs were £299,499.98, with £135,000 of match funding and the final amount from LEADER was £164,499.98.

12. What lessons have been learnt?

We have learnt that it is difficult to manage a community project for a small charity with very limited reserves and cash flow difficulties, when grant instalment payments are retrospective. We've also learnt that a global pandemic can increase overall project timescales!

13. Will the project be mainstreamed or transferred?

The project will stay in the hands of Creetown Building Preservation Trust.

14. Detail the sustainability of the project and/or the exit strategy

The project will be sustainable in the longer term as the overheads are much reduced due to a new, economic heating system, new insulation, installation of LED lighting and income to cover the running costs will be generated by the local arts and community groups who have indicated their wish to use the venue on a regular basis.

CBPT has been successful in securing some funding for a Guest Programmer for the new venue. This project is completely separate to the LEADER funded capital redevelopment project. The Guest Programmer will be responsible for programming launch and taster events and performances for the official opening of the arts centre and then programming the following 6 months. This will enable the new Quarrymen's Arts Centre to increase its public awareness and also generate some income for CBPT Board to book more performances and bring high quality arts to Creetown.

Targets

Non Participant Activity Target Result LAG	Target No.	Achieved	Comments
Number of businesses supported to grow	1	1	Creetown Building Preservation Trust has grown in strength and capacity to develop, manage and run the new venue.
Number of projects supporting the development of tourism businesses across the region	1	1	The new arts centre performances will attract visitors from across the region and beyond.
Number of projects supporting the development of the arts or cultural sectors	1	1	The centre is a dedicated performing arts space.
Number of community facilities created and new services provided	1	1	An arts centre in Creetown is a new facility for the community.
Number of community facilities improved and new services provided	1	1	The former St Joseph's Church has been in community ownership since it was built and now benefits from refurbished facilities and services.
Number of projects demonstrating a commitment to community capacity building	1	1	The community now has the capacity to provide a venue for a range of arts and cultural activities from within the redeveloped building.
Number of projects promoting volunteering opportunities	1	1	Creetown Building Preservation Trust can promote a range of volunteering opportunities from the arts centre, including Board/ Management, front of house, programming, back stage, technical roles, performing arts roles, marketing and branding etc.
Number of projects developing urban/rural relationships	1	1	The redeveloped venue is now able to host performances from touring companies from urban areas. It will attract people from urban areas to visit our rural area and will also encourage our community to visit urban areas to visit other kinds of arts and culture.