



‘Our calling to fulfil...’

The Hub and the Mission of Christ in Truro

For 200 years the Methodist church has had a kingdom presence in the centre of Truro – Cornwall’s only city. In that time, the heritage of the church here has been threefold.

- Firstly, a worshipping community. There has been a commitment to the worship life of the Church, which has been expressed through a preaching and music ministry that seeks to offer God the very best that we are able. We have been a city-wide and regional resource for worship.
- Secondly, a celebrating community. There has been a recognition that part of our experience as disciples and our offer to community, is life in all its fullness offered by Christ. This has been worked out through a full and varied programme of activities for the cross-section of folk both within the church and from the wider community. We have been a hub for vibrant community life.
- And thirdly, a serving community. Our mission has reflected a commitment to social holiness – evidenced in a church family that is committed to serve and a willingness to partner with others to enable the kingdom principles of justice, integrity, welcome and kindness to flourish. We have been a place of refuge, compassion, help and service

We believe that the Truro Community Hub develops this historic commitment for a new generation, but also enables the Methodist people in the heart of Cornwall to embody the priorities of the Connexional Church ‘to respond to the gospel of God’s love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission’ (Methodist Membership Ticket 2021/22)

Jesus said to him: ‘You are not far from the Kingdom of God’ (Mark 12.34)

We are committed to share with Christ in building a kingdom community in which every person finds their place, all are cared for, and all can fulfil their God-given potential: where barriers that separate are removed and justice and hope thrive.

Whilst in the midst of the pandemic, and looking to the kind of Church we believed God is calling us to become, we have adopted the NHS ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ strategy developed by MIND and interpreted it for a mission context to build community, promote fullness of life and encourage discipleship conversations.

The Truro Community Hub project is a key expression of this mission strategy and has a significant role to play in the development of Kingdom Community at the heart of the city.

In the pages that follow, we will explore each of the ‘Five Ways’ and relate them to the mission potential and vision for The Hub.



Five Ways To Well-being

BE CONNECTED – worship and fellowship

Koinonia is the Greek word most often translated ‘fellowship’ in the New Testament. It described the sharing together in the holy things and in the deepest of ways. It is evidenced in the life of the early Church in which ‘no one had a need’. Koinonia was a description of - and a way by which - the ‘connectedness’ of humanity was worked out with one another and the Divine.

How does The Hub fit it?

Truro Methodist Church remains one of the larger Methodist Churches in the Connexion and a key worship and fellowship resource for the city, the circuit, and the District. There is a busy programme of Church related activities and the existing premises present significant operational challenges. It is not well suited to the requirements of safeguarding; there are considerable maintenance and running costs due to the nature of the building; and its current configuration means that some parts of the premises cannot be used if others are occupied.

Our business case profile confirms that the delivery of The Truro Community Hub in its revised form, will reduce some of those ongoing costs (though not to the degree that the original scheme would have delivered), enable greater use of the premises by the church and community, improve our eco-credentials and promote increased income from lettings and leases, bringing a degree of financial stability going forward.

Truro Methodist church is worshipping community of significance in the Connexion, and it is important that we retain a vibrant worshipping community on this site. The Truro Community Hub delivered as envisaged will provide medium-term security for the worshipping community here.

But the life of any church is so much more than its connection with God through worship. The Incarnation has linked forever the human and divine in Christ, and as the Body of Christ in the city centre, we have a calling to connect with one another and the community around us.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we have been brutally reminded of the negative impacts (social, physical, and mental) of human isolation, and the need for connectedness. The Community Hub will be a key space at the heart of our city for people to meet, learn and share together.

It is vital that the Hub provides attractive and flexible accommodation for a variety of individuals, groups, and activities. The Hub will provide ‘drop in’ spaces for social interaction and conversation, promoting good mental health and well-being.

The Truro Community Hub will be a vibrant expression of the Gospel Table vision that has emerged during lockdown: a gathering place; a place of welcome; a place of interaction, conversation, and transformation. In essence, The Hub will be a catalyst for connection where we can listen to one another, support one another, inspire one another, and recognise within one another the presence and life of God in our shared humanity.

CONNECT

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It’s clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

How do we encourage and enable people to ‘connect’ with one another?

The people called Methodist are committed to WORSHIP

- We will pray daily
- We will worship regularly
- We will look and listen for God each day

(The Methodist Way of Life)

BE ACTIVE – healthy living

During the pandemic, it has become clear that one defence against the worst impacts of COVID is to be healthy.

In the UK, two-thirds of adults and a third of year 6 children are either overweight or obese¹.

At Truro Methodist church, we recognise the need for holistic care, and so will promote physical wellbeing alongside spiritual and psychological health as a key Kingdom aim.

How does The Hub fit it?

The Truro Community Hub will provide a venue for a variety of activities and events. The Well – a neighbourhood club for retired and isolated folk - is already properly established and offers a diverse programme including Music for Well-being and Armchair exercise, as well as conversation and board games encouraging continued mental dexterity.

Improved facilities will allow for development of young people's activity and sports groups onsite in a safe and inviting context. There is scope of aerobic classes and healthy living groups.

We already have a partnership with Slimming World which can develop further as The Hub offers increased space and flexibility for community use.

Within the Car Park we will provide bike parking with secure (internal) lockers. We hope that this will encourage people to leave their cars at home and take to the bike and would look to provide these resources in partnership with other sites around the city as their emphasis in the neighbourhood begins to switch away from motorised transport.

The Hub will include shower facilities which could be made available for individuals wanting to exercise during the day or take the opportunity to run or walk to The Hub at the start of the day.

Truro Methodist Church has in the past had an effective 'Ministry of Sport' programme which encouraged a variety of sporting and exercise activities, including 'Prayeroabics'. The Truro Trundlers is our Church-based running Club.

We have plans to launch a Sunday activity Club Sparks and a midweek edition with be sport for those who don't do sport. All these things, along with all our uniformed work with young people – will benefit from renewed facilities.

Once we have improved and more versatile facilities, we would hope to expand this sporting ministry to include members of the local community as a significant aspect of our 'Be Active' programme.

Within the Car Park we will provide bike parking with secure (internal) lockers, encouraging people to leave their cars at home and take to the bike.

The Cornwall Music Service Trust (CMST) is providing music education opportunities for a wide range of school age children. The Trust - which according to their website "aspires to become a leading Music Service in the United Kingdom" - is actively working towards a formal partnership with The Hub and looking to establish its HQ within the new facilities. This will build on links already established with the Cathedral, Truro School, and the Cornwall County Music Festival to create a centre for music culture, education, and participation. Since the pandemic, we have been able to collaborate with several community choirs but are now finding that space is at a premium.

The development of The Hub will give us a proper opportunity to offer a Dementia Friendly environment for church and community users and the opening of a Wellbeing Suite will enable the further expansion of the city-centre 'drop-in' clinics that provide a vital service to some of our more vulnerable neighbours

The people called Methodist are committed to LEARNING AND CARING

- We will care for ourselves and for those around us

BE ACTIVE

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being. But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

(The Methodist Way of Life)

¹ NHS, Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, England, 2020

BE LEARNING - Discipleship

The benefits of 'life-long learning' has long been appreciated in the secular world but is also an excellent model of discipleship within the Christian context. Jesus said that he came that we might have life in all its fulness (John 10.10) and that means that we immerse ourselves in far more than just overtly spiritual learning. 'Life in all its fulness' can include anything and everything.

How does The Hub fit it?

A diverse and extensive array of clubs, groups, organisations, and activities can provide a life-enhancing environment to learn new skills and discover new experiences. The Hub can provide accessible, safe, and inviting accommodation that can be used flexibly, according to need.

During lockdown we have discovered the richness of online art and book clubs which will transfer well to the new premises. There are plans to include IT provision to help with job applications, but also to increase digital literacy in the community.

Our successful and over-subscribed Toddler Group could partner with local providers to deliver parenting courses and the developers of Dadpad – the hugely significant resource for new fathers - have expressed their support for the development of The Hub. There are really no limits to the groups, activities and courses that could be run in a state-of-the-art facility.

Representatives from The Hub are in conversations with Truro and Penwith College to develop a partnership focussed on delivering apprenticeships, offering training opportunities to young people and economic benefit to the city

The significant presence of the Falmouth University (linked to Exeter) campus in the neighbouring £170 million regeneration of the Pydar area of Truro (immediately over the road from the church site), offers immense potential for partnership if The Hub can deliver the hoped-for facilities. In the plans for The Hub there are large spaces for lectures, concerts, and conferences – and smaller spaces for teaching and tutorials. University representatives have expressed interest in using The Hub, including the 650 capacity Sanctuary space for large lectures and ceremonies. The Pydar development which is due to begin in Spring 2022 includes student accommodation, the University digital and screen education centre, as well as retail and residential elements. Cornwall Council have removed a community facility from their own redevelopment plans and have publicly and officially supported The Hub as the key provider of community provision in the Pydar development, releasing £500,000 of funding for the project.

Alongside a variety of learning opportunities for community and church members, the Church itself offers a wide variety of disciple-based groups and studies.

We have brokered some initial conversations with Gary Tregidga, the Heritage consultant working with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Methodist District. As well as helping us formulate our Heritage Lottery bid, we want to work with Gary to develop a Methodist Heritage Hub for Cornwall on site. At this stage, it is too early to outline what that would entail, but we would want it to dovetail with the work that we are already doing with schools and the 'sense of place' aspects of the national curriculum, as well as offer an augmented reality learning opportunity for adults.

The people called Methodist are committed to LEARNING AND CARING

- We will learn more about our faith

We will practice hospitality and generosity

LEARN

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

(The Methodist Way of Life)

BE GENEROUS – stewardship and service

How do we live life as a 'Thank you' to God for all that he has done for us in Jesus Christ? We read in the Old Testament that the LORD longs for his people to "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly".

Jesus himself said that God people needed to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"

So, this is the section where we learn to live generously, to find opportunities to serve our community and to build a neighbourhood, community and world built upon kindness and justice.

How does The Hub fit it?

Truro Methodist Church has already attained the Eco-Church bronze award and is well on its way to achieving silver status. However, the existing building offers serious obstacles to the development of a truly eco-friendly facility. Truro Community Hub aspires to be BREEAM "Very GOOD" and will significantly enhance the eco-credentials of the site in line with Connexional policies. It is anticipated that The Hub will provide electric vehicle charging points in the Car Park and secure storage for bikes to encourage the use of the soon-to-be improved cycling routes in the Truro area.

Key elements of the scheme are the provision of enhanced facilities for the Street Pastors who operate in the city-centre at weekends and the Food Bank who are currently distributing around 2 tonnes of food each week.

There will be a community-facing 'Changing Places' facility -open to the public even when The Hub premises are closed and the brand-new Community Café planned for The Hub will offer a meeting place and good quality, good value local foods and refreshments. Truro Methodist Church is committed to using fairly traded, locally sourced, and ethically produced products wherever possible.

We are committed to providing low-cost facilities for self-help and support groups and have experience of working in partnership with survivors of abuse and grief counselling teams. Through our ecumenical partners we have access to Christians Against Poverty resources and advice. We have a track record of campaigning, working, and striving for justice and for supporting the more vulnerable members of the community and beyond.

The ample and adaptable community spaces anticipated in The Hub will allow us flexibility in hire costs within the premises, allowing us to offer generous subsidies to those groups and associations working with the marginalised and vulnerable in our community.

The Hub would be a designated Safe Place in the city.

"It is the Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of the place of welcome, hospitality and openness which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all. Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied and life in all its fullness is a gift which is offered to all people. There are no distinctions based on race, gender, disability, age, wealth or sexuality, or any discrimination associated with this gift"
(from Truro with Tresillian Methodist Church Mission Statement)

We would expect that same sense of inclusive welcome to be reflected in management and activities within The Hub and will look for injustice to be challenged wherever and however it is evidenced.

The people called Methodist are committed to SERVICE

- We will help people in our communities and beyond
- We will care for creation and all God's gifts
- We will challenge injustice

(The Methodist Way of Life)

GIVE

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research.

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

BE ALERT - spirituality

Brother Lawrence, a 17th-century Carmelite Friar, spoke of 'Practicing the Presence of God'. In essence, he encouraged people to sense the reality of God around us all the time. So, breath becomes prayer and activity becomes divine service.

In more secular settings, this 'alertness' to the moment and an enlivened sense of the 'now' is often referred to as mindfulness.

As we develop our spiritual alertness, we begin to remove the separations between the secular and the sacred in the world. We believe that God is present in our 'now moments' and long to help people see the fingerprints of God around them

How does The Hub fit it?

Central to the design of The Hub is natural light and glass providing a bright and welcoming facility in which to spend time. The removal of shadowy, narrow and uninviting corridors between meeting spaces will encourage a sense of peace and space and the protected vistas through the Union Place faced towards the Cathedral retains that sense of awe and wonder of Cathedral Spire and open skies.

There are ample walks from The Hub site that allow space for reflection in the open air and the Community Café will provide a 'Welcome Home' at the end of the journey.

The Hub will provide a variety of rooms which could be used for reflective conferences, prayer, and meditation times or (the already very popular) spirituality and art club which currently meets off site because there is no suitable room available.

A key aspect of The Hub as a mission resource will be the extent in which service users will recognise that they are present in a faith-based building, without feeling that they are being subjected to 'religion.' As previously noted, The Hub will be a gathering place where there are spaces to sit comfortably and share together: to spend time perhaps, with people we would not ordinarily know.

A crucial part of our vision for the Hub is the idea of an open invitation to everyone. Throughout lockdown God has planted amongst his people here, the longing for a place of welcome and encounter to which all are invited. One key Bible-picture which has shaped our project is the story of the great banquet where the king invites the forgotten and the outcasted to the feast. The story concludes with the words, '*...and there is still room*'.

That is the gospel invitation of The Hub to the community around us. We share a message of good news that there is always room; always a welcome; always compassion; always kindness; always opportunity; always sustenance; always warmth; and always acceptance. What we have begun is a small way by setting a gospel table in the car park, we long to see flourish to its full potential in The Hub.

It is our hope that as we listen to one another and share stories with each other, then Jesus will be the guest at the table and the love of God will be experienced.

"This is what God's kingdom is like: a bunch of outcasts and oddballs gathered at a table, not because they are rich or worthy or good, but because they are hungry, because they said yes. And there's always room for more."

Rachel Held Evans

TAKE NOTICE

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'The moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities. Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations. Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you.

The people called Methodist are committed to EVANGELISM

- We will speak of the love of God.
- We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.
- We will share our faith with others

(The Methodist Way of Life)



Coming out from covid so much remains uncertain. But what is assured is that the social needs that were evident before the pandemic have grown during it. In addition to existing foodbank and health provision, we are already being approached by support groups, mental health projects, youth provision, poverty, and justice schemes: and we believe that this need will grow and grow as the impact of covid, and its economic consequences take hold.

Alongside our commitment to meet the actual, real-life economic, social and health needs evidenced around us, is an equal desire to address the causes of those issues. This requires us to make a positive response that builds community and strengthens personal and collective well-being. Here too then, comfortable, flexible, welcoming, and adaptable premises are a key resource in building resilience. Our mission is not simply to serve those who suffer, but to address the root causes of that suffering. This is a basic principle of the social justice at the heart of the Gospel and central to Methodist DNA.

We do not believe that we can meet these needs without a radical reordering of our premises that allows for better use of the footprint, provides economic stability, and ecologically improvements.

The Truro Community Hub offers a significant increase in usable community space (100% plus under the proposed scheme) without drastically increasing the physical footprint of the building. This illustrates not only the excellence of the scheme proposed, but also the basic flaws in the current building: an indication that simply the building does not work!

The Truro Community Hub project is not primarily a building project.

Neither is it an add-on to the ongoing mission of the Church here.

The Truro Community Hub is a key element in the development and delivery of that mission.

It is an outworking of our mission statement.

It enables the delivery of our mission plan.

It reflects the missional principles of the Methodist District to work “in partnership with others, wherever and whenever possible, for the growth of God’s Kingdom and the expression of God’s love.”

The Truro Community Hub Project embodies the missional priorities of The Connexion as reflected in the ‘Our Calling’ principles adopted as a framework for the Methodist Church by Conference -to worship, to learn; to care; to serve; and to evangelise.



FIVE WAYS TO A KINGDOM COMMUNITY

Be connected—**Worship & Fellowship**

Be active—**Healthy Living**

Be learning—**Discipleship**

Be generous—**Stewardship & Service**

Be alert—**Spirituality**

Jesus said to him,

“You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Mark 12:34

TRURO

with Tresillian



The Methodist Church

