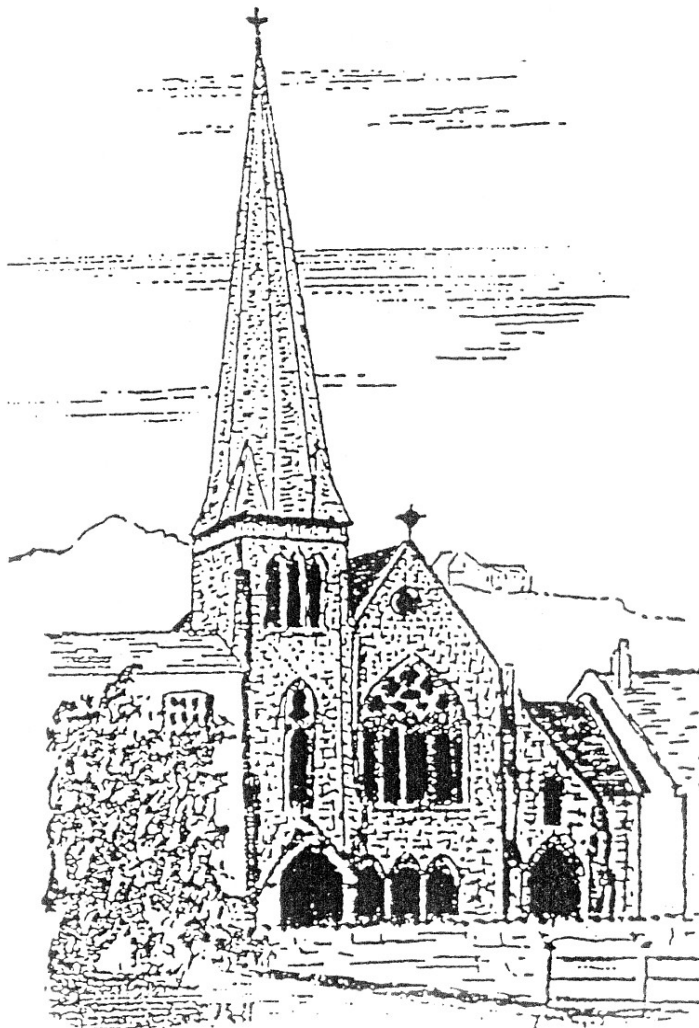


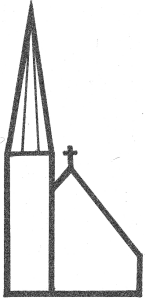
DAWLISH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

the church with the spire



Our plans for the Future

offering a resource to the community



DAWLISH UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

32 The Strand
Dawlish

www.DawlishURC.org.uk

Nearly 140 years ago our predecessors sold their building in Albert Street and bought the York Hotel in The Strand which they demolished in order to build the present Gothic style church. Since then the church has been prominent in the life of the Dawlish community not only because it is a Grade 2 listed building with a remarkable spire, but because its members have been fully engaged in activities in the town. Recently we listed over twenty wide-ranging organisations in which our members are active participants.

We live in changing times, and our congregation has decided we need to change to continue the work that our predecessors started, though how we do it will be very different.

Firstly we must change our building to make it useful for the 21st century. What this means is set out opposite. The likely cost is £650,000 and we are confident that, with grants and the money which the congregation members can raise, we will meet the target.

Secondly we recognise that the Christian church is only one small part of the caring work which goes on in the community. Most is done by professional people and small and large charitable organisations. We want to join in partnerships with others to care for and support our community, guided by the expertise which abounds in Dawlish.

So we would like your advice on the best uses to which our building can be put and whether it might help you with your work. Is there anything we could do as we plan the changes to make the building suitable for your use?

Roger Whitehead

Minister

Plans for part of the downstairs and gallery are on the church's website www.DawlishURC.org.uk, Click on 'building plans'

OUR PLANS FOR THE REFURBISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

Good disabled access will be provided. We plan to lower the floor throughout the whole building to provide access without steps, so it will be easy for wheel chairs to enter every part of the building. Lowering the floor will also make it easier to install effective under floor heating.

The existing entrance will be retained (without the steep steps) with a glass front door into an inviting space. This space will give access to the Chapel through a side door and to the foyer through an enlarged doorway also with a glass door.

The Chapel will be in the 'bay' area of the existing foyer seating about a dozen people. It will be open all day for quiet, meditation and prayer. There will be a glass wall separating it from the rest of the foyer, which will remain a space for meeting.

The foyer area will be an attractive meeting space for social gatherings of up to 12 people, with a service hatch enabling the kitchen to provide hot drinks and snacks. It will be also used coffee mornings and serving afternoon teas. There will be toilets and also stairs and a lift to the gallery.

The pews will be removed from the worship area to provide a large open space for up to 100 people downstairs on comfortable chairs and 40 in the gallery. It will be available for many uses as well as Sunday services. This congregating area will be the hub of activities in the building.

The gallery will be levelled and extend into the existing worship area providing a large conference room for 60 people (which can be subdivided into two rooms for 30 each) and a suite of computers. Some seating in the front of the gallery will be retained. There will be a toilet and small kitchenette on this floor.

Underneath the gallery there will be a medium sized conference room (20 people) and a catering standard kitchen. Elsewhere there will be two small rooms (about five people in each).

The present toilet in the north (far) end of the building will be upgraded for baby changing etc.

The building will have a **public entertainment licence**; it will also be possible to obtain an occasional licence for the consumption of alcohol on the premises.

DEVELOPING THE USEFULNESS OF THE CHURCH

In our thinking we see the church building as having the following potential.

A place of meeting

Because of the church's position in The Strand and because it will have good disabled access, the church will be the principal meeting place in the centre of the town. We plan to be open each morning for tea, coffee and cake, sometimes with a theme (eg one day with the daily papers, another day a pianist playing). In the past Coffee Mornings have been good fund raising occasions and so the congregation wants to invite other groups to take responsibility for running coffee mornings on different mornings of the week to benefit their work.

A place to confer

Many charitable organisations already use the church for their meetings and we want this to continue. The two conference rooms, provided with the most modern equipment, will be the best conference facilities in the town. Buffet or set meals will be available for meetings.

A place to celebrate

Conscious that the cost of weddings inhibits some couples from getting married, we will offer 'affordable weddings', including the wedding breakfast if desired. The congregating area will also be a desirable place for 'the special occasion' such as a significant birthday or wedding anniversary.

A place to exhibit

The congregating area will also be a suitable place for Arts & Crafts sales and exhibitions, as well as a variety of fairs.

A place to perform

The church is said to have the best acoustics of any building in Dawlish. With its high quality grand piano, the congregating area will provide an ideal venue for concerts, plays etc, with a seating capacity of around 150.

A place of quiet

Dawlish lacks anywhere in the town centre for quiet amidst the bustle of shoppers and holiday makers. The Chapel will be a place for quiet and reflection, and it will also be the centre of a praying ministry.

A place of worship

Whilst retaining its Gothic features which visitors find so attractive, the congregating area will provide a more adaptable worship area not only for Sunday mornings but for lunchtime services and major civic occasions.

WE HAVE OTHER IDEAS TOO

We would like to explore with other organisations a number of ideas which we have been discussing.

Work with the aged

We already run a Keep Fit class for the elderly, and we host The Third Age Project (TAP). We run a Christmas Day lunch for people on their own.

We would like to develop this work, possibly with a weekly Lunch Club for those on their own.

Our Knit & Chat Group provides knitted garments to orphans in Malawi and around sixteen women attend this purposeful meeting. We believe that other such groups focused round a project could be attractive, and we want to consult about this.

The meetings rooms will also provide space for support groups.

A study centre

Silver surfers are said to be the biggest leisure users of the internet, but many older people are hesitant to learn about computers. Our computer suite will provide an ideal opportunity to learn about computers, and we have had two offers of help to run a learning group. In addition, groups which need internet access such as those researching family trees will find the suite invaluable. We would also like the suite to become the home of an Oral History project on Dawlish. Experts would be available to help the groups.

We are planning to use it for adult leisure education.

An indoor facility for holiday makers

Most holiday makers come to Dawlish for the day, and there is nothing to do on wet days. We are planning with the leisure interests to provide a summer programme with visitors in mind (eg family films, bingo and indoor bowling) and a winter programme for local residents (eg tea dancing, beetle drives and afternoon concerts).

A family centre

We would like to see the development of our existing Playgroup.

With the possibility of a large television screen, the church could offer a place for families to gather to watch great events (eg the Olympics or the FA Cup Final) with the excitement of being with others but in an alcohol-free venue. This environment has proved popular in other places – could it do so in Dawlish?

We are also planning to show films regularly and holding a film festival, starting with Christian films leading up to Easter.

These are some of our ideas – we want to know whether you think they are worth investigating or should be discarded straight away!

A COMMUNITY CENTRE

We want the building to be used to its full potential and we want to see it used for caring and supportive work in the community. We know that this can only be achieved in partnership with other organisations. So we would like to form a separate charitable trust to develop a programme of activities and meetings and encourage the use of the church building. The trust might be called The Strand Community Trust and its trustees might be a group of leaders in the community, with representatives from the organisations forming the management committee. This would bring together a wider range of interests and resources in the town to ensure that the church building is run for the community.

The congregation has taken the decision to offer to lease its buildings to such a trust..

The congregation wants to have the right to use the building for Sunday services, and for weddings and funerals, but at other times it would take its place alongside other users. The congregation, like other users, would pay towards the maintenance of the premises and the costs of any staff which were needed .

We very much want to explore whether this idea has the support of groups in Dawlish, and we ask you for your comments. If the idea is to be successful, it needs the commendation of community leaders and the promise of participation by potential users.

Contact us

Please get in touch with one of us with your comments:

The Minister
28 High Street
Dawlish
EX7 9HP

01626 889 098

Minister@DawlishURC.org.uk

The Church Secretary
3, Sampson's Cottages
Brook Street
EX7 9AQ

01626 862 620

secretary@DawlishURC.org.uk