

## **MISSIONAL VISION**

Victoria Hall Methodist Church and The Foundry Sheffield have a shared vision to be able to welcome in the people of Sheffield, to enable them to engage with different styles of worship, to meet with God individually and collectively. We are currently restricted in what methods of worship we can engage in with larger numbers as around 65% of the floor space has fixed seating; a member of the congregation is either stood in a small space or sat – there is very limited space for kneeling or bowing down. Throughout scripture, there are multiple examples of worshippers not only lifting their hands, but also dancing, kneeling and bowing down with faces to the ground. Biblical worship, for the most part, gets expressed physically as well as internally and part of our mission is to enable the congregation to be able to worship the Lord in how they wish to without any constraints on that.

Without a set format, we will be able to better consider the needs of families. There will be space to allow small children to gather, or for people to come and kneel. Spaces can be reserved for families with small children or nursing parents who may need to come and go without disturbing other congregants. Currently the style of worship is more informal, with a large circle of chairs. When the full congregation attends, the layout is very cramped and there isn't the space for individuals to partake in their own individual expressive worship style. Enlarging the space available will help the congregation feel less cramped and enable them to have more space to worship in their own.

Sheffield City Council are planning to increase town centre living with 40,000 new central residents predicted. We want to be ready and able to welcome new families and individuals into church. A recent trend in society is a shift into more intergenerational activities. The trend is occurring because, as pressure on families mount – with an increase in working parents, time spent together as a family is becoming more scarce and more valued. To encourage and engage with new families entering church, there has been a pattern across the UK of intergenerational worship. The main church hall with fixed seating, is entirely unsuitable for intergenerational worship – which involves a variety of activities; movement, discussions, creativity, sharing and experimentation in prayer.

There is a challenge throughout the UK with a decreasing church membership, however with the large open space we will be able to host outreach events, encouraging more individuals to engage with God in a way that they can relate to. We have the space to be able to host circuit and district events within the church. It will enable events such as 'messy church' where we can engage with families and practice inter-generational worship.

Victoria Hall was built as a missional hall to reach out to the inhabitants of Sheffield and provide those living in poverty with some comfort, and to this day this work continues. 'Oasis' is the innovative outreach worshipping community that meets weekly on a Sunday evening. This invites those who are living in poverty to share a meal and engage in informal worship and a message. Currently this is held in the entrance of the Main Hall as it's the only space that is suitable within the main worship area. The outreach work Oasis does will be able to expand with the use of a bigger space without any constraints. We want them to feel part of the church and not outsiders sitting on the edges.

The Foundry is the appointed charity created by the church to ensure the Hall and its facilities are efficiently run, to keep Victoria Hall as a home to the church as well as home to several charities working with those who feel marginalised, vulnerable and those living in poverty. The Foundry uses the income from room bookings, office rentals, shop leases and events to maintain and improve the building, enabling the building and the church to continue in their existence and

their important role in the city centre. The church needs the events which The Foundry enable to function, not only to create the revenue needed to enable the mission, but also to be the mission field from where to invite people to join in the worship. And the Foundry would not exist without the church's essential place in the building.

The Foundry Sheffield's mission is to relieve poverty and advance education, and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare. We provide accommodation to a number of different charities, a main part of that work is supporting refugees and asylum seekers, which is now more critical than ever. We work closely with City of Sanctuary and Assist by hosting a multi agency drop in each Wednesday. *"The multi-agency Drop-in is the advice and information hub for people seeking sanctuary in Sheffield. It aims to challenge the hostile environment and reduce practical barriers to accessing appropriate support by bringing together a range of organisations, including ASSIST, the Red Cross, and the SHU Refugee Rights Hub, in one easily accessible and central location."*

There are opportunities to connect further with more agencies at the drop in which can further the support that individuals seeking asylum can get. Being able to come to one location and get all the information is key to these people, many of whom will be feeling extremely lost, vulnerable and confused about how and where to find help. Knowing that all their needs are met at The Victoria Hall will reduce anxieties and worries of the clients. This is something we cannot currently accommodate as there is not the physical space in the Hall to put any more tables. We have recently included an NHS screening service which is taking place elsewhere in the building.

The additional income generated from room hire of the main hall once the chairs have been removed will be substantial to The Foundry and how it serves its mission. Recovery since COVID has been slow, and we are just seeing room bookings and rental increase to almost pre-pandemic levels. We don't just hire out rooms to the charities, we work alongside them, providing the facilities their clients need. For example, we are currently in the process of seeing how feasible fitting a shower in the building to help give back some dignity to those who are sleeping rough and in need of a wash. The increase in revenue will help more projects such as that.

## **MAKING YOUR PROPERTY FIT FOR MISSION**

The Foundry Sheffield, as leaseholder of Victoria Hall Methodist Church, would like to apply for a grant of £6,900 towards the costs of removing the fixed rows of seating out of the main hall and introduce stackable chairs to enable multiple seating configurations. The current fixed seating severely constrains the potential of the hall, limits accessibility and is unsafe and often unsuitable for children or individuals with limited mobility.

These improvements would offer better accessibility to existing facilities, they will offer flexibility for the uses of the hall, thus furthering Victoria Hall Church's and The Foundry's shared mission, and increase usage of the beautiful space.

These changes will not improve our Eco Church status, however our Building Manager is currently undertaking a piece of work to see how we could further our eco status, as part of this we have reduced our carbon emissions by 34% in the last 3 years.

The Foundry have worked closely in partnership with Westminster Central Hall (WCH) to provide a long-term vision for Victoria Hall.

The study set down the statement of need and offered an outline design response to address issues.

It concluded with a proposed way forward, with an outline phasing plan; the removal of chairs being the first stage of this. The study also considered the impact of altering the building to accommodate its users' long-term aspirations and to make the building more physically accessible.

The long-term sustainability of Victoria Hall is dependent on us reacting to the changing needs of our city and the economic world, whilst ensuring the building is continuously being maintained and improved. The subsequent income generated from the removal of the chairs, will not only enable us to improve the facilities we currently offer to our current clients but will allow us to work with them to provide more well-suited facilities to meet their needs. Research carried out in partnership with WCH indicated a need for additional affordable, accessible spaces for organisations to meet in a conference setting. The income generated from this will enable us to move into the next stages of the building development plan, thus furthering the opportunities for mission and engagement with the people of Sheffield.

We have secured all planning permissions needed for this project. Property consents number **48155**

## **JOURNEY**

In 2018, consultation was undertaken with members of the congregation to determine the key issues with the existing church space. The key findings in relation to the fixed seating were as follows:

- That the fixed seating prevented flexibility of the use of the space, and that the seats were cramped and uncomfortable, particularly for long periods of use. Moveable chairs would broaden opportunities for use of the space and enable flexibility.

A subsequent Church review of June 2019 also noted opportunities for future development summarised as:

- A significant need to refurbish the main hall to remove the fixed seating from the main floor, to enable flexible use of the space for differing church services.
- Whilst formal rows of seats are appropriate for some church services, more informal seating is needed for other events, particularly outreach events and services meeting the needs of the marginalised and needy.
- A need to have chairs laid out so that wheelchair users can sit with their friends and loved ones.
- The need for the main hall to be flexible for worship uses, to further mission and to host differing events. By these means it can be used to generate major income to sustain the charity users, and to maintain and upgrade the building.

## **TEAM**

Rose Durant, the manager of The Foundry, alongside the board of Trustees, is responsible for the project being viable, both financially and to ensure the project fits the needs and values/aims of the organisation. Rose was recently hired as organisation manager at The Foundry, part of her role is to fulfil the business plan whilst ensuring it is still relevant with the changing conditions of the world. She has a wealth of experience leading organisations in times of change. Tom Rattigan, the Building manager at The Foundry alongside the Building Committee and the board of Trustees, are

responsible for sourcing the contractors via a tender process and then managing the contractors whilst on site. Tom has a great knowledge of properties within the Methodist district and a very detailed knowledge of the Victoria Hall building.

Rev Jonathan Haigh and Rev Phillip Borkett regularly meet with Rose Durant to discuss and pray for the future of The Foundry and Victoria Hall Methodist Church. The Foundry and Victoria Hall Methodist church meet quarterly to discuss updates on the future and to share their mission with each other. Although we are two separate entities with slightly different missions, our heart is the same; For the people of Sheffield to experience God's love, to come to know Jesus through our actions here at the Victoria Hall.

87% of The Foundry Trustees are representatives from The Methodist Church/Circuit, this ensures that The Foundry continues to work closely alongside Victoria Hall Methodist Church and that our missional aims and objectives continue to be aligned. The team at The Foundry are accountable to The Trustees of the Foundry, who have approved this project. We are still a Methodist building subject to all the same planning and permissions as any other Methodist church, despite being ran by a separate organisation.

## **RISKS**

1. **Loss of event income during building works** – Work is planned to commence in August, which is traditionally the quietest month for events. This will be reflected in the budget. The increase in income once we can hire out the main hall without the constraints of the chairs will offset any income lost whilst the building works are happening.
2. **Delays due to Methodist processes** - E.g., Conservation/TMCP delaying change we want and/or need to make and impact on staff time in working through the processes. We do not anticipate an issue as there has been very close cooperation with the Conservation Officer and to date, all approvals and permissions needed have already been granted.
3. **Health & safety issues eg serious accident by customers/ staff/ member of the public/ contractors** - Health risk to staff, public and reputation risk. Contractors will be asked to provide risk assessments prior to commencing any work. Area will not be open for public use, signage to be displayed to avoid confusion. The Foundry team will help direct clients when room bookings have changed to accommodate.
4. **Safeguarding issue with contractors on site whilst vulnerable clients using the building** - Safeguarding policy in place. The likelihood of contractors encountering any vulnerable individuals is low - emphasise to contractors the importance of following processes and ensure they fully understand safeguarding issues and the complexity of the building users.
5. **Major damage to the building. Eg. Flooring damaged** - Ensured building is adequately insured. Bid for work is going to tender to ensure the contractor who completes the work is fully able and qualified with experience of working in buildings of a historic nature.

6. **Works take longer than estimated** - Contractors have estimated a 3 week completion date. We have booked a 4-week window to allow for any issues. If this ran over further, the works would have to be completed in 2 stages, the second stage being as soon as physically possible.

## FINANCES

The Foundry Sheffield are requesting a grant of £6,900.

Unity Trust Bank

Bank account number: 20355544

Bank account name: The Foundry Sheffield

Bank Sort Code: 60-83-01

### Budget

#### **Main Hall Project Budget & Costings**

##### **Income**

Sale of Chairs	£	3,000
Fundraising	£	2,500
Victoria Hall Church Donation	£	20,000
The Foundry Unrestricted Funds	£	20,000
Grant Income *		

Gross Income	£	45,500
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##### **Expenses**

Replacement Chairs	£	26,112
Unbolting Seating	£	705
Sanding and Sealing of floor	£	22,637
Supply and fit carpet	£	16,213

VAT	£	7,911
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Total Expenses	£	73,578
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Current Shortfall	<b>-£</b>	<b>28,078</b>
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\*Grant income is yet to be secured. No work will go ahead unless enough funding is in place.

\*\*Fundraising concert planned in July in partnership with SPO

\*\*Please see table below for funders applied to so far

As of 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022, the charity total unrestricted net funds stand at £139,489. Our reserves policy is to have reserves of £60,000, we are putting £20,000 into the project from our unrestricted

funds. We are currently budgeting a shortfall of -£16542 between February and June '22. The footfall within the building is steadily increasing, along with our bookings, but there is still a gap in our income in comparison to the income we were generating prior to COVID. Currently we have £139,489 unrestricted net funds, minus our reserves, budgeted shortfall and the project work would be £43,000. The Foundry doesn't want to risk leaving less than £43,000 in case of unforeseen circumstances - the building is over 100 years old now and we cannot always predict every eventuality. We will also lose income from events and room bookings whilst the work is being completed.

### **Fundraising Plan**

Victoria Hall Methodist Church	£20,000		Funding confirmed
The Foundry Unrestricted Reserves	£20,000		Approved by Trustees
Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra Fundraising Concerts	£2500 approx		Concert to be held on 16 <sup>th</sup> July, all profits to be donated to The Foundry.
Sheffield Methodist Circuit Trust Fund	£20,000		Awaiting a decision, unlikely to be granted full £20k
The Benefact Trust (Methodist Insurance)	£15,000		Awaiting a decision
The Sheffield Town Trust	£6,000		Awaiting a decision
Bernard Sunnley Foundation	£20,000		Declined
JG Greaves	£3,000		Awaiting a decision

If we are unable to secure the funding prior to August, there will be discussions with Victoria Hall Methodist Church as they have suggested they would contribute any shortfall, although this on top of their existing contribution would restrict their ability to fund other missional initiatives. This may result in the works not going ahead until August '23 or August '24 when a more in depth fundraising plan could be implemented. The current fundraising plan is constantly being reviewed and new funders considered. There are issues with a lot of funders that want a longer lease on the building and are not willing to give a grant via the church if they are not paying for the works to be completed. The Foundry trustees are aware of the need to address this issue, but it will take time to get right.

Alongside this application, I have attached a document detailing how Victoria Hall Methodist Church and The Foundry can achieve missional strategy together. I have also attached The Foundry's business plan so as to see the steps the organisation is taking to ensure we are sustainable and moving forward in an ever-changing world. [Note from Neil Harland – missional summary follows, business plan (20 pages) and financial statements to June 2021 received and available on request]

## **Victoria Hall Methodist Church and The Foundry.**

### **Achieving Missional Strategy together**

The Foundry and Victoria Hall work closely together. There is a newly formed quarterly meeting with representatives across the different congregations at Victoria Hall that meet with the Foundry Manager and a representative from the Trustee board. This gives opportunity for open discussion of where we can further work better together. This has increased our lines of communication and has been beneficial for both The Foundry and the Church. We are currently working together to see if there is scope for fundraisers working collaboratively to organise an event to promote both the works of the Church and the Foundry. Our hope is to create a group of supporters of the Hall that can help encourage our outreach and raise awareness of what goes on within the building.

The Church and the Foundry want to build on our recent success of hosting The World Methodist Peace Prize and look for further opportunities for more visible cooperation and partnership, making use of the excellent facilities available at The Victoria Hall for large scale circuit and district events. This will help encourage further connections to Methodist work in the heart of the city.

There is a legal separation between The Foundry and Church Council, which is needed. The Foundry needs to focus its expertise on the building, whilst helping enable parts of the church's mission. And equally, The Foundry helps enable Church to remain focused on fulfilling the mission without being burdened with the running of the building.

#### **Partnerships**

The Foundry work with several organisations based in the building, there is opportunity to engage further with these and the clients that access the services provided by these organisations. Although not all are faith-specific in their mission, there has been an expressed keenness to engage more closely with the Church.

In 2011, 17,000 people, with an average age of 25, lived within 1km of Victoria Hall. The city centre population has since grown rapidly, with many new apartment blocks marketed at home and international students and young professionals.

The Foundry and Victoria Hall Church can work together to attract the individuals living in these city centre homes. The Foundry are forming strong links with the universities, inviting students to work alongside them in various projects and tapping into the volunteer network at the university. This enables opportunities for outreach, inviting the students into the building and then exploring the different activities that happen here at the hall. The hope is to become part of Freshers Fairs where we can jointly reach out to all new students arriving in Sheffield; welcoming them to the Church at the heart of its city. It has become apparent that although we are a large building, we are so often walked past and not noticed. In April 2022, The Foundry briefed a group of Sheffield Hallam Students to come up with how we can get more engagement with the footfall in the city centre. Their response to the project was highly innovative and we are looking into the practicalities of implementing some of their suggestions.

Despite a number of city centre initiatives, central Sheffield continues to face challenges, not least the growing problem of homelessness in which it acts as a regional magnet. Sunday Centre are one of the charitable organisations that call the Victoria Hall home. They are one of the only provisions open on Sunday for those sleeping rough or living in unstable accommodation. Sunday Centre offer a

sit-down meal and some shelter and warmth for an hour on a Sunday afternoon. Connecting with some of these clients and inviting them to Oasis could help further the Church mission.

In 2019 when Victoria Hall Church reviewed their mission strategy it was noted that there were already established networks of refugee and homeless support charities based in the building who felt welcomed by the church and 'at home.' The Foundry are in a great position to be the enabler of these relationships blossoming and becoming a base for evangelical outreach. Using existing methods of communication, we can reach out to the clients of these groups and give them information on routine church services, as well as missional outreach events, inviting them to come and be a part of it.

### **35 Chapel Walk**

Within the 2019 Victoria Hall Church Review, it was noted that a major inhibiting factor was the location of the midweek groups being hidden away in the middle of the building, alongside minimal publicity. The Foundry and Victoria Hall Church have worked together to enable the use of 35 Chapel Walk for church use. This is a shop on the pedestrianised chapel walk, boasting a large shop front window, where the church services and meetings are visible from the street.

The Foundry use a TV screen with a rolling slideshow advertising all things happening within the building. We have linked with church to ensure their upcoming events and services are advertised on there. This captures regular users and clients of the building, as well as anyone walking along Chapel Walk.

### **Sunday Worship**

The evolution of worship is necessary if children are not to lose interest and new members are to be attracted. Better use of the physical space could make worship more inclusive, with the congregation able to make better use of the space, rather than being confined to a small area at the back. fixed seating is beyond the control of the church when The Foundry took over the lease. The starting point of the 10-year building plan is to remove the seats from the main sanctuary, creating a large open space for multiple opportunities, both for The Foundry and Church.

### **City Centre Ministry**

There is a huge need and opportunity for city centre ministry, part of that opportunity is connecting with the business community. Since The Foundry was created, it has formed strong links with a number of key organisations such as Sheffield City Council and local colleges. The Victoria Hall is becoming more well known as a respected conferencing and events venue within the city. This presents multiple opportunities for outreach to the organisations who The Foundry are connected to, as well as their employees on a personal level. The Foundry can help Victoria Hall Church connect with both the daytime and night-time economy, helping to identify unmet needs and opportunities where we can collectively help to bridge some gaps. The Sheffield Circuit has invested in a city centre deacon in response to these opportunities.

Please note, this is a draft document compiled by the manager of The Foundry noting observations of where and how The Foundry and Victoria Hall Methodist Church can align strategies and support the overall mission. This has been seen and agreed by Rev Phillip Borkett and Rev Jonathan Haigh.