



Address:	11, Old School Lane, Hankelow, Crewe, Cheshire CW3 0JN
Denomination:	Methodist
NCT grants awarded:	NCT £15,000 Community Grant, December 2015
Setting:	Rural
Architect:	Gary Chesters BSc, MRICS Chartered Building Surveyor
Contractors:	JF Properties of Hankelow, Cheshire
Project cost:	£103,000
Opening hours:	The building is available seven days a week
Visitors in 2016:	Visitor footfall is up to 75 a week, a 50% increase
Website:	www.cheshiresouth.org.uk/churches/audlem/hankelow.html

The Methodist Church in Hankelow is a small unlisted brick building constructed in 1935. It is the only publicly available building in the local rural area. The project was planned to help mission in the local community through the provision of a modern and accessible community building, open to all, as well as to make maintenance, heating and financing of the church building more sustainable.

The proposals were to modernise and upgrade the church premises including the provision of two modernised toilets, an enlarged and modernised kitchen and new double glazed external doors to suit disabled people as well as providing new lighting in the hall to help people with low vision.

“The National Churches Trust grant enabled us to complete the whole refurbishment project.”

Project challenges: To coordinate the project with the builder and architectural surveyor and to source and agree the materials and equipment required. Maintaining the cash flow of grant claims from many funders to be able to pay invoices was difficult at times.



Impact:

- Condition of the building improved - through the provision of fully refurbished and extended premises.
- Benefited the community – the project mobilised local community spirit and effort. Increased use has been fully supported by Cheshire East Council’s Nantwich and Rural Hub community development team who are now helping market the premises for a variety of new uses.
- Greater public engagement – Hankelow Amenities Group, which organises village events, trips out and village upkeep, helped with fundraising as did Audlem & District Community Action which runs the weekly older people’s day club.
- Benefited the congregation and previous/existing users – the attendance both at church services and events, as well as use of the building has increased. Cheshire South Methodist Circuit has also supported the project as it fitted with the Circuit’s Mission to Small Rural Churches to ensure full community use in modernised premises.

Key lessons learnt: That it is always going to take a bit longer than planned, even when the building work has started. That if you want to achieve quality and get just what you want, then you have to have a good and flexible contractor and keep in close touch on site. That an active project coordinator can keep an eye on the cashflow, keep costs in check and get alternatives agreed if there are potential additional costs to the build.

New uses: Concerts are being organised on a quarterly basis including choirs, good old days and brass bands. Also day time activities such as beetle drives and carol singing are being planned. A carer’s education course is also currently being run over a six week period.

New users: Prior to the project, the total footfall was about 2,500. The aim is to double this after the first year. There was a 25% increase in the first two months. 150 people attended the Open Weekend in June 2016 and all commented on how comfortable, spacious and welcoming the new premises are.