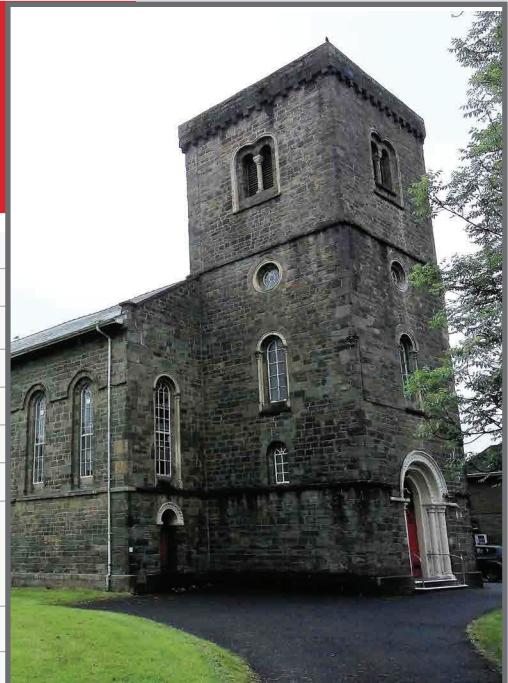




Case STUDY

REPAIR GRANT St George's, Tredegar, Wales

Address:	Church Street, Tredegar, Blaenau Gwent, NP22 3DU
Denomination:	Anglican
NCT grant awarded:	NCT £40,000 Repair Grant, June 2016
Setting:	Small town or suburb
Architect:	Tim Pitt-Lewis RIBA
Contractors:	George Adams Building Contractors
Project cost:	£398,000
Opening hours:	Monday 6-8pm, Tuesday 11am–2pm & 6.30pm–8.30pm, Wednesday 10am–11.30am, Thursday 6.30pm–8.30pm, Sunday 8.30am–1pm
Visitors in 2017:	19,500
Website:	www.facebook.com/stgeorgeschurchtredegar



St George's is a handsome, neo-Norman style church built between 1835 and 1837 to serve the rapidly growing ironworks town of Tredegar in South Wales.



In 2015, it became clear that the church was in desperate need of repairs to its tower; the roof was leaking and water ingress had caused internal damage to three levels of the tower structure. In addition to this, with almost 20,000 visitors a year, there was a need to improve facilities and access to both the church and the upstairs community hall.

The church set about an ambitious restoration project which included tower roof and stone repairs, the installation of a lift, refurbishment of the hall, kitchen and toilets, and disabled access.

The total cost of the project was almost £400,000 and was raised through a mixture of parish fundraising and grant funding. Following a successful outcome from the LPOW Roof Repair Fund, the church applied to the National Churches Trust and was awarded a £40,000 grant towards the tower repairs.

"The National Churches Trust Grant gave us the confidence to believe that a church at the heart of the community, open to all of the people of our town, could be a reality... We believe in community, and our community is enriched by all of our partners who chose to share our church and work with us."

Father John Davis, Vicar: Tredegar St George and St James

Project challenges: Cash flow was undoubtedly the biggest challenge faced by the project team; they had to keep a very close eye on the budget to ensure their outgoings did not exceed their bank balance. The key to their success was in raising £150,000 before they began, which cushioned them against the gap between contractors' invoices being issued and grant awards being paid.

Impact:

- The condition of the building has been enhanced - the tower has a new roof and the building is watertight,
- The project has benefited the congregation and community - the community can access the building and disability is no longer a barrier; hall use has increased, with more people attending the lunch club, and new community groups using the hall. The building is fit for purpose and conferencing facilities are an asset for mission planning activities too.

Key lessons learnt:

1. Use a good architect and be prepared to negotiate fees – don't be afraid to tell a contractor that their bill is too high!
2. Have a small steering group to oversee the project as too many people tend to slow down progress.
3. If you don't invest in your project don't expect anyone else to - be prepared to pay for surveys, specifications and structural reports before anyone will give a grant.

New uses: Since the work has completed, the building is used for: Community Choir Concerts, Cinema Club, Extended Lunch Club, Yoga Class, Armed Forces Support Group, Drugs Awareness Training

New users: The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have returned, and local schools are once again visiting. A qualified instructor is hosting yoga fitness classes at the church. A local drugs support agency has started using the hall to train local businesses and council staff. A local tenants group is also using the facilities in partnership with an Arts Council project.