

Public information document

**Proposal for restoration of St Francis Friary as church  
and community centre with multi-functional facilities**

City Church Dundee

Registered charity SC038936

January 2012

## Summary of Proposal

- City Church Dundee (CCD) is a Christian Charity which aims to serve the community of Dundee in areas of acknowledged need, especially poverty, social welfare and education.
- Our intention is to redevelop St Francis Friary into a facility that will provide a self-supporting base for CCD activities and become a thriving community centre.
- We shall redevelop The Friary in three phases to provide significant social benefits to the local community and beyond.

## History of the Friary

The Friary holds a special place of affection in the hearts of many who have been brought up in Dundee. The buildings were constructed in 1933/34 by the Order of the Friars Minor to continue the longstanding service of the Franciscan Friars in Dundee. They continued in the facility until reducing numbers forced the order to leave in 1989. The Catholic diocese of Dunkeld took the facility over in order to serve the congregation of St Francis Church but left in 2010. Many of the community have enjoyed the gala days held by the congregation of St Francis and the Hall has been enjoyed for functions for some years. For many, as the Courier reported, it was a sad day when the Friary closed. It is our hope that those folk will once again see it as a place where they and their community can feel at home.

## City Church Dundee

City Church Dundee (CCD) is a recently established (Jan 2006) church in Dundee, a registered Scottish charity, SC038936. Our primary motivation is our Christian faith. We are affiliated to the *Newfrontiers* group of churches ([www.newfrontierstogether.org](http://www.newfrontierstogether.org)) with over 200 Churches in the UK and many more beyond. We aim to provide, as well as the normal activities of a worshipping congregation, facilities for all sectors of the community. With a strong commitment to improving the lives of those around us we are taking opportunities that allow us to increase our involvement in the community in Dundee.

In order to bring this vision to practical reality, we have sought a facility capable of accommodating a congregation for a Sunday service but also with flexibility for a multiplicity of weekday activities.

The driving rationale of the church is to be part of the local community, serving those from all walks of life at their point of need. We have a vision to provide, for example, activities for mums with pre-school children (a service we are currently providing in partnership with Menzieshill Parish Church), parents, students, unemployed and low wage earners, the elderly and the lonely. Nor would we want to exclude outreach to the wage earner – just as much part of the community as those on low-income.

To date the church has been somewhat restricted in its ability to serve the community in Dundee by a lack of appropriate premises. The acquisition now of the premises at

St. Francis Friary brings closer to reality the enthusiastic fulfilment of the Church's mission to serve.

In an effort to respond to real community needs and aspirations, not merely our own perception of them we consulted the Dundee public to try and gain some understanding of what are the facilities the community wants and would use. The conclusion of our "2 minutes for a better Dundee" exercise, a city centre survey consisting of approximately 500 face-to-face interviews conducted at Easter 2009, was that the Dundee population is understandably very supportive of any efforts made to better the community and is well-informed of current facilities. In particular the exercise highlighted concern for provision for the elderly in our city and the need for better social integration generally. People want more clubs and activities, particularly for youth, and also they want to see action to tackle anti-social activities, notably substance abuse. These strongly expressed local views have helped us shape and refine the vision we already had for responding to the aspirations of the people of our city. The facility that we now have available promises to be a great asset from which to make these things happen.

The question may arise as to why should a church want to, or be encouraged to, provide these facilities? Historically, people of faith, driven by the love of God, have often risen to the challenge to meet society's need. Particularly when public funding has been restricted, church volunteers have provided a service that has filled a gap. This applies in education, health, homelessness and substance abuse, in short, the church has often made a positive and necessary contribution at times of need.

### **Strategic location of the Friary – A diverse community**

Historically there have always been centres of worship and community support in the area to the north-west of the city centre between Hawkhill and Lochee Rd. However over post-industrial years people left the area and churches closed or at least lost their original community function. The area has been re-populated with new developments, particularly in the Brook St area. This residential development has not been matched by provision of churches or by community facilities. In fact, the opposite is true; church closures have continued in the north west/centre area leaving a deficit in the church and community facilities in the area..

Students form a significant part of our church community. Many of them currently live in the part of town close to the Friary. The more we can respond to their needs the more they are likely to want to continue living in this city. That is good for Dundee. The needs of students, along with the rest of the very diverse groups in, especially, West End, Lochee and Coldside, will, therefore, feature strongly in the activities we offer to our community. In short, the location of the Friary is ideal for a ministry seeking to cross social and cultural boundaries and we believe we can play a part in promoting contact and integration between the different local communities.

## Appendix: Nature of Proposed Development

### CCD's vision for the Friary

The Friary is bricks and mortar. We want to fill it with life and bring help, encouragement and hope to as many neighbours as possible, whoever they are.

The overall aim in City church's proposal is to restore the Friary into a church/community based facility that will;

1. Meet CCD's needs for a meeting place and offer excellent facilities for up to 400 people, with large church/conference room, break-out meeting rooms, offices, volunteer accommodation, function suite and catering facilities.
2. Provide an all age educational and recreational facility that will serve the community by bringing people together and creating a genuine place of safety and friendship through various activities.

A further benefit will be the preservation of Dundee heritage by reclaiming a vacant listed building and securing it for its originally intended purpose.

The property has four distinct areas:

- The St Francis church building is the most recently constructed section and lies parallel to Tullideph Road.
- Adjacent to the church, with direct internal access, is the Friary, with a variety of rooms arranged around an open quadrangle.
- The Friary Hall lies at the north-west corner of the site by the City Road/Tullideph Road traffic lights, has direct access from Tullideph Road and is connected to the Friary by a corridor.
- The fourth area is the extensive garden grounds mostly to the south of the buildings.

We will re-develop the Friary in three phases:

#### Phase 1 - 2012

Establishing City Church Dundee in the Church and the Friary.

Phase one will involve upgrading **the church and Friary accommodation** for both church and community use. The kitchens, toilets, shower rooms, bedrooms, church, library and halls will be renovated as necessary. The goal is to make the facility suitable for use by children, mums and toddlers, pensioners and other small to medium sized community groups. There are two self-contained flats within the Friary which we intend to renovate for use by live-in staff.

Phase one Friary upgrades will make a premier church facility. The small upstairs chapel will be used for a prayer room. Kidszone, band, alpha and other meetings will all be conducted within the upgraded Friary. The aim is to complete phase one during 2012.

**Funding;** due to the generous donations and ongoing commitment of the City Church congregation, we are able to purchase, conduct the essential parts of the initial internal renovations and to maintain the facility. We are seeking external support to help with some upgrading costs.

#### Phase 2, 2012 to 2014

##### **Growing community involvement and development of the facility**

During phase two it is hoped that significant ministry to the marginalised in society will be conducted, including;

- A drop-in for homeless and substance abusers (currently operating in partnership with Bethany Christian Trust at our venue on Riverside Drive).
- Provision for mums and toddlers (currently operating in partnership with Menzieshill Parish Church, at Menzieshill).
- There is a vision for services to help with debt relief, single parents and pensioners.
- Development of the garden ground, accessible gardens and play areas. The gardens will also be used for events such as fun days, community BBQs and fetes.
- Possible development of back-to-work schemes for ex-offenders.

The Friary will also house business initiatives that will contribute to maintenance and upgrading of the facility. Various business ideas will be considered within the constraints of the charitable aims. The Friary Hall will also be available with some great space for kids, youth and community events in return for reasonable charges.

**Funding;** further development will be contingent on the successful generation of revenue from business initiatives based in the Friary, funds from community grant awarding agencies and other bodies as well as support from the City Church congregation.

#### Phase 3, Further development of community facilities

Phase three will be for more substantial development, on the foundation of an established sustainable ministry in the rest of the building. We are not yet in a position to publish ideas but it is anticipated that some new construction may be appropriate.