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DUMFRIES



Dumfries Baptist  
Church Centre



# A vision of faith & hope

The combination of church and community was always central to the vision for Dumfries Baptist Church's innovative new £4.7million centre, which has a spectacular 400-seater auditorium, café, sports hall, meeting and conference rooms, and is open for all

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Blacksmith Nate Robinson, associate pastor Reverend David White, senior pastor Alistair Purss, youth & community worker Andy Feather and depute centre manager Naomi Platt



opening in April. “Now we are here, we’re really excited.”

David says the combination of church and community has always been central to the vision: “In recent times some churches have been quite insular. This is an opportunity for us to interact with, and offer something of ourselves back to, the community. It’s a great thing.”

Dumfries Baptist Church almost closed in the 1960s due to decreasing numbers but a small, determined group kept it going and the congregation started to grow during the 1980s and 90s. Gradually it began to outgrow its church in Newall Terrace, built in 1873, and for the past 10 years morning services have been held at Dumfries High School.

The site for a new church on Gillbrae Road was identified in 2012 and a 16-strong Building Project team was formed, led by Stuart Platt. Fundraising began and the site was bought later that year.

Following community consultation and the granting of planning permission, building work by Ashleigh (Scotland) Ltd started in February 2017 on the design by McLean Architects Ltd of Glasgow. The keys were handed to the church’s Project Manager Alan Sloan four weeks ahead of schedule on February 22, 2018.

The £4.7 million cost of the site and the build was raised by the congregation, from grants and benefactors. The Newall Terrace building has been advertised for sale and all profits generated by the commercial arm of the centre will go back into the church.

The new Baptist Church is the only church in the area – a community of around 8,000 people – and its members were determined that it would meet that community’s needs and desires.

“We have been open from the start,” says church member Barbara Mearns.

“We held a summer fete on the site in 2014 and holiday clubs, ceilidhs and other activities in a marquee in July 2015, 2016 and 2017.

“Now it’s here, the centre is open to all. The doors are open for people to come and have a cup of coffee and a scone and look around.” ►

***‘This is the fulfilment of a vision that’s been around for a long time. Now we are here, we’re really excited’***

“A home for the congregation and so much more,” is the guiding principle of Dumfries Baptist Church’s innovative new multi-million pound centre.

Built on land on the town’s Gillbrae Road over the past year, the centre is designed to serve its neighbouring communities, and Dumfries as a whole, with a café, sports hall, meeting and conference rooms, as well as a spectacular 400-seater auditorium.

All of its spaces can be hired by individuals and groups, for one-off events or regular meetings.

“This is the fulfilment of a vision that’s been around for a long time,” says the church’s associate pastor Reverend David White, ahead of the centre’s

## Dumfries Baptist Church



The £4.7m church on Gillbrae Road includes a sports hall equipped for a variety of sports and other events

### *'Almost everyone in the church has been involved in some way. It's not just the work of a few people'*

The church has appointed a centre manager, Jason Stoker, and deputy manager Naomi Platt. They have been busy making the building operational, setting up the café and taking bookings for the various facilities.

A stunning venue for the church's Sunday services, the first of which was held there on March 25, the 425sq m Gillbrae Auditorium can also be hired for large conferences, weddings, funerals, films, lectures, theatre performances and concerts.

Its centrepiece is a contemporary stained glass window by architectural glass artist Sarah Galloway and it has a hi-spec sound system, projection facilities, stage lighting and hearing loop.

The light, bright Cornerstone Café, which seats about 40 and serves snacks and drinks, is open Tuesdays to Saturdays, from 10am to 4pm. Along the building's interior 'Avenue' is an unsupervised pre-school play area where parents can also sit and enjoy refreshments. Two avenue rooms have sound-proofed partition walls making them flexible spaces for a variety of functions.

The 325sq m Gillbrae Sports Hall, which has connected changing rooms and sprung floor is equipped for badminton, volleyball, basketball, netball and table tennis but it can also be used for dances, gymnastics, martial arts and exhibitions.

The centre's upper floor is fronted by a glass-panelled gallery and incorporates the Newall Boardroom, four well-equipped, flexible meeting rooms and The Loft: an informal, comfortable lounge area with its own kitchenette.

The whole building is fully accessible and has a Changing Places toilet with hoists.

Outside, a striking grey steel cross, forged by 22-year-old Nate Robinson from Dumfries, takes pride of place on the centre's front wall.

"So much work has gone into this building, it's mind boggling," says Naomi, who has moved back to her native Dumfries & Galloway from Edinburgh where she was an events manager for Edinburgh

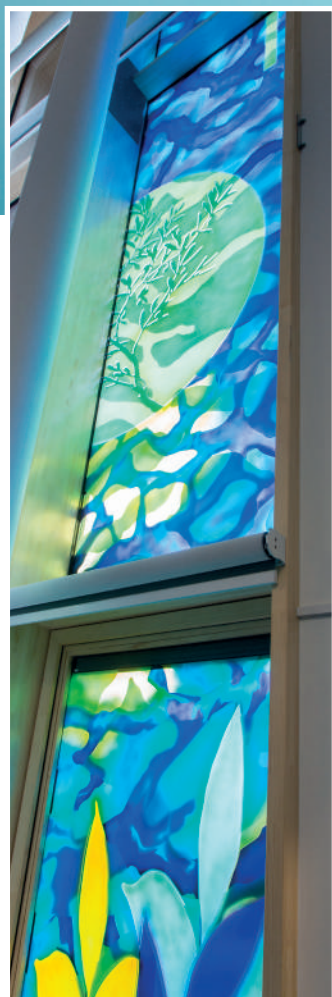


Pastors David White and Alistair Purss





'One of the things that appealed to me about this job is that it's such a pioneering project': Depute manager Naomi Platt



The contemporary stained glass window has been designed by artist Sarah Galloway. Below: the church was packed for the first Sunday service in March



University's sports complex.

"One of the things that appealed to me about this job is that it's such a pioneering project, and I wanted to work for the church in a church environment. It's a lot of work but we have such an amazing support group behind us."

Barbara stresses: "Almost everyone in the church has been involved in some way. It has been a whole church project, not just the work

of a few people."

Jason first came to the region 14 years ago to run Abernethy Barcaple outdoor adventure centre and is a member of Dumfries Baptist Church. Previously he was a factory manager, a scuba diving instructor in Zanzibar and the Caribbean, and latterly worked as a chef.

"This job is such a great opportunity to serve in such a wonderful place as we reach out to the local community," he says. "The mix of church, community, commercial and coffee, makes it so interesting, such an exciting and fluid job. You wouldn't get that anywhere else."

For more information about hiring space for a single occasion or regular events email [office@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk) or call 01387 268926. Following preview tours for the local community in March, Dumfries Baptist Church Centre opens for bookings on April 14, and a Dedication Service is scheduled for May 12.