

Planning Statement

How the change of use from the Former Schoolhouse Building to A Residential Property relates to the wider Chapel Building:

We purchased Gorphwysfa chapel with the intention of converting the old Schoolhouse into a residential space; preserving the chapel from decay and using the chapel space for community use.

Our plan is to preserve, maintain and repair the whole Grade 2 listed building, liaising with CADW. However, we are aware that some of that work may take time. This gives us the time to research a proper management model for the building as well as develop a plan for repair and alterations that community use may require. This is why we have not outlined our aims for the Chapel space in the application for change of use to residential for the schoolhouse.

Since expressing an interest in purchasing Gorphwysfa we have met with MR Paul Clements, the most recent building manager & former congregation members. We have spoken to members of the community who are keen to use the building for their Chai & Chat and other social uses. We have corresponded with the two Coedffranc councillors, NPT planning and CADW.

We have introduced ourselves to the neighbours and local businesses and are planning an open day for the community and former members of the congregation once we have cleared the space and have it in a suitable state for public access.

Our first step was to gather, identify and preserve written and printed records, pictures, books and other markers of community interest such as an enlarged photograph of Methodist evangelist and preacher Evan Jones and negotiated placing over 100 of them with the Glamorgan Archives to be available for public use.

A fuller, more formal consultation, run by ourselves who have managed community arts teams and arts development will be undertaken once we are in a position to offer the space as a community asset.

We have engaged James Nicholas as architects to guide us through the planning process and advise on the development process. We have consulted with chartered surveyors, structural engineers, building regulations specialists, specialist builders and carpenters who work with heritage buildings, engineering companies and building inspectors to get an overview of the ramifications of maintaining and bringing this building to a state that is suitable for community use.

Regardless of this we are able to say that the management model will likely involve the creation of a CIC, company limited by guarantee or other non-profit body that manages community access and use and is able to manage moneys and resources, including asset locks that may be necessary.

We are also clear that separating utilities and other works, properly negotiated with CADW and planning will be needed to make the chapel suitable for community use.

