



Making Dreams Happen

**A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LOUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH
& THE CHRISTIAN DRAMA RESOURCE CENTRE**

The Story So Far

Our dream is that the combined energies of the Christian Drama Resource Centre and Loughton Methodist Church will enable the Christian arts to flourish in a new Creative Arts Centre that provides a catalyst to people of all ages to explore faith through the arts.

The Christian Drama Resource Centre (CDRC) is a charity that supports dramatic arts in scores of community groups in the local area. It works through the loan of theatrical costumes and through the provision of educational services, storytelling and drama. It includes groups from a broad spectrum of the community, such as schools, churches, sports/leisure/drama groups and elderly people. In over thirty years of operation, it has enriched the lives of thousands of young people and children and, through its consistently high standards, has created a reservoir of goodwill among those it serves. Its clients simply know that CDRC is there for them, alongside them.

Loughton Methodist Church (LMC) is a lively high street church, positioned in the centre of a vibrant town. There is an engaged and active congregation, and it is from this congregation that CDRC was born – and continues to thrive. LMC currently supports a myriad of community activities, with well over a thousand people visiting every week. Hosting CDRC at LMC would provide the ideal opportunity for both to develop their passions, but there simply isn't room.

And there the dreams would have stopped. Except that someone sensed the powerful synergy that could be created by bringing CDRC and LMC together. They offered the church £250,000 to build a permanent home for CDRC. That magnificent gift was met with equal enthusiasm by the Methodist Forest Circuit, which pledged £167,000.



The Design



This plan shows the new Creative Arts Centre in the middle, in pink. It comprises two new creative arts studios, a new office for CDRC, toilet and kitchen. It is positioned between the existing church (green) and the Wesley Hall (blue) with storage for the impressive collection of costumes and props on the right (yellow). The entrance is articulated by a curved wall, which guides people to the centre and forms a visual link to the Wesley Hall.

The intention is to create versatile spaces that provide good natural light for visual arts but also have high-quality sound and lighting systems for dramatic arts. The two

creative arts studios can be used separately or be fully opened up to create one big space. Both rooms have large glazed areas overlooking a new courtyard space and the larger of the two studios fully opens onto it; the courtyard can be used separately, as an attractive outdoor space, or in conjunction with the studio. The Creative Arts Centre is connected to the existing Wesley Hall, which has a proscenium arch stage, with good sized wings and green room. It has large windows that provide good natural light and it also contains toilets, a kitchen and a further community room.

The Wesley Hall has the potential to work very much in sympathy with the new Creative Arts Centre; however, it is dated, inside, outside and technically, and the internal acoustics are poor. These are simple issues to solve and the intention is to update the building, such that it benefits the existing users and can become a good quality, contemporary performance space, working in conjunction with the Creative Arts Centre.

The design inspiration for the new Creative Arts Centre is very much taken from the existing church, while keeping in mind our concern about protecting the environment and our consideration of others. The pyramid-shaped roof, supported on soaring timber beams, echoes that in the existing church. Built with a high level of insulation throughout, the distinctive pyramid turrets are features that will allow passive ventilation as well as incorporating rooflights for each of the studios. There will be solar panels – sufficient to provide all water heating in the summer months and to augment water heating in the winter months – and we are also committed to using ethically sourced materials.



The building project is managed by a team of eight, appointed by Church Council and under the leadership of Jill Angold-Stephens.

The lead project professional is Andrew Lismore, and the architect appointed is John Inkpen. Both are highly experienced practitioners and bring great flare and drive to the project.

It is anticipated that it will take nine months to build.

A Word from Andrea Moles, Director of CDRC

CDRC began thirty-five years ago when four members of LMC prayed and dreamed big dreams. Since then CDRC has created a huge reservoir of goodwill, earned over many years of service, among local schools, churches and community groups. I believe that this partnership can only strengthen LMC's already strong ministry in schools and the community.

Working with so many different churches and youth groups ecumenically has given us an incredible overview of the power of Christ at work in so many places. We have also been able to provide training for churches and Christian groups to give them the confidence to use drama and storytelling in their own churches.

More and more we feel that the creative arts continue to have meaning for all ages and all denominations in the 21st century, especially when led by the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps now is the time that God is calling LMC and CDRC together to reach out into the community by means of the creative arts in all forms, for the benefit of our church family and the local community – but most of all to declare the love of God to all.

We are not just talking about bricks and mortar – we are talking about real creative, spirit-filled mission!

Isn't it exciting?



What Do You Think of the Plans?

We put this question to some members of LMC and friends from the wider community and this is what they said:

David Wixley, Loughton Town Mayor: *"I am happy to support this Loughton project because it will enrich the lives of young and old. It will be for the good of the local community."*

Anna Savage, Assistant Head-teacher, Roding Valley High School Performing Arts College: *"This is a fantastic opportunity, not only for the members of the church, but for the whole local community. It will give people the chance to explore the arts and share and nurture their individual interests and talents. I can't wait for it to be up and running!"*

Megan Reeve, GCSE student: *"I love the arts as they help me express myself. I have used CDRC on many occasions from dressing up as a Victorian school child in year 5 at Staples Road School to putting on a guild play at Davenant Foundation School depicting the ten plagues of Egypt. Andrea and her team have always found costumes that help and inspire me."*

Barbara Martin, church member: *"Much more inspirational than I had thought. Well done."*

Wayne Dulson, Minister at Loughton Baptist Church: *"The help we have received from CDRC has enhanced the work that we do and it is great to have them as a resource in our community. The new centre will be a real blessing and asset to the community."*

Margaret Hart, church member: *"Exciting design – particularly the ideas for sliding doors to exterior paved area and the entrance area. Pleased to see the 'wind tower' technology for ventilation in roof."*

Chloe Purchase, Children and Community Worker, LMC: *"Creative arts bring so much freedom to express feelings and emotions in individual ways. Christian arts are a fantastic way to be able to explore individual and community values, thoughts and faith in non-threatening ways."*

A Word from Revd Tony Morling, Minister at LMC

Looking through the archives I came across a brochure that was created prior to the building of our current church twenty-five years ago. The then minister wrote some words that seem apposite and real for our situation now:

"To be building a new church is an act of faith. We believe that there will be a tomorrow and that, as Christians, we must be ready to point tomorrow's generation to Jesus Christ who is our Peace, our Hope, our Beginning and our End. I feel greatly honoured to be associated with this project. I am confident that all who read this brochure will catch some of the excitement and faith that it conveys. And also that they will feel the privilege of supporting the project in whatever way they can."

It seems to me that the vision and courage of those days has been amply rewarded with a vibrant, mission-focused church community. Now, it is our opportunity to respond again to a new challenge. I commend this scheme to your thoughts, prayers and attention.

Together, I believe that we can make this new dream come true.



Loughton Methodist Church...

is a Christian community seeking to worship and serve God faithfully, to work together with other Christians to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ and to make full use of our resources to express the love of God for all people.

Contact us at: www.loughtonmethodist.org.uk

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