

# Cambridge Charity Launches Community Centre Share Campaign

## New Community Centre in central Cambridge to be bought with Community Shares

24 November 2014, Cambridge - The community of Petersfield is aiming to bounce back from the closure of the Sturton Street Methodist Chapel and Hall by buying the site to serve as a new community centre for South & East Central Cambridge.

In an area of Cambridge with a long history of a shortage of community facilities the Methodist Church's announced sale was a devastating blow, but the site's huge potential, the clear local need and registration as an asset of community value has allowed development of a plan to run the site at a surplus as a charitable social enterprise.

Our community share offer is very unusual since this kind of scheme is usually used to save rural pubs or sports clubs which more usually generate income. The business plan is to set a fantastic new precedent with a mix of supported and profit-generating activities in an inclusive vision for a thriving centre run by the community for the community. Returning users will include a critically acclaimed youth dance company, dance school, tango classes and thriving toddler group. Planned new uses of the chapel building include a nursery (for which there is high local demand). In addition, there is an exciting spectrum of new community use including adult classes, arts and crafts, concerts, art exhibitions, social meetings, a gardening club, coffee mornings, performing arts provision, community events, toy & book library, soft play and the hope to bring the guides or scouts to the area. We are actively seeking new ideas.

The project will benefit the whole of Cambridge since the city is acknowledged to lack arts and recreation spaces in the 50-150 metres squared range, of which the site has two, suitable for dancing and including a stage area, plus a club room, kitchen and garden space.

PACT is asking the local community and the wider Cambridge community to invest in this and help do something amazing for Cambridge. The community shares are a long term investment costing £250 each (with a half share available to local residents). They are withdrawable and are proposed to pay interest at 3%. The target is £600,000. The shares will be issued by a new Charitable Community Benefit Society. We are seeking support and funding for other costs from local business.

Petersfield and its surrounding residential area is the most densely populated in Cambridge and has lacked a true community centre and youth provision since a fiasco of local government reorganization in 1997. There are many rentable spaces and religious facilities, but the lack of true community-focused provision has left huge gaps and inequality in local opportunity against a background of an increasing number of families and denser housing.

Petersfield Area Community Trust (PACT) was founded in 1997 and aims to organise supportive structures to foster local community spirit in the Petersfield area of Cambridge, with a key original aim of replacing the lost Howard Mallett centre. It has campaigned in many areas and operated the successful Summer Event on Norfolk Street. It has merged with the "Save Our Space" campaign in recognition of their common aims. The share campaign is the culmination of six months of work, research and discussion with local people. This is our chance.

Sturton Street Chapel and Community Hall has been serving the Petersfield area for the past 140 years, and have been built and funded by the local community since the chapel was originally founded in 1875.

Please support us. To pledge to buy shares or keep up to date with the latest news please visit [www.sturton.org](http://www.sturton.org)

Contact: [chair@pactCambridge.org](mailto:chair@pactCambridge.org)