

Case Study 1: a church building under community control

The starting point:

- Small, plain church in a city centre area with high population density
- Worship space, small hall, and some meeting rooms
- Full building use on Sunday mornings, very light use in the week
- Dwindling congregation with few volunteers
- Gas boiler providing central heating for all spaces



The change:

- Lease the building for 25 years to a new charity with community service mission
- church rents space within it just like other clients
- Church has a minority stake on the board
- Pews out, allowing the largest space to be used to host support services for the elderly in the morning including an NHS-supported clinic, and children's groups in the afternoon
- Heating changed to be infrared flat panels, so that the energy costs are proportional to the building use
- Changes phased over ten years using a mix of income, donations, and small grants