Historic Cardiff landmark to become cornerstone of



Tywysog Charles yn cwrdd â staff sy'n gweithio yng nghaffi newydd Cornerstone

Located on the well-known site of Ebeneser chapel, right in the heart of the Welsh capital, Cornerstone was officially opened today (Friday, 16 December) by HRH Prince of Wales following a £1.2million grant from HLF.

Originally built in 1855, much of its impressive stonework is thought to have been sourced from coal ships arriving in Cardiff's then bustling docks from the Middle East. Over the years the building has been home to many groups, most recently a Welsh speaking independent church that at its peak had a thriving congregation of over 250 members. However as numbers dwindled, the need for increasing repairs and maintenance to the chapel became apparent.

Thanks to extensive redevelopment made possible by the Heritage Lottery Fund and National Lottery players, the Grade II listed chapel has now been transformed into a centre for community activities and learning, providing services relevant to our lives today while ensuring its historic fabric is conserved.

With the restoration now complete, Cornerstone boasts a range of rooms available for community groups, meetings, large scale conferences and weddings.

During his visit, The Prince of Wales had the chance to meet members of the local community who will use the new facilities, as well as people involved in the Chapel's restoration.

Award-winning caterers have opened a cafe at the new-look venue, creating several full and part-time jobs, while Cornerstone will also become home to the Royal National Institute for the Blind as the charity develops the external gardens to be used as a dog training facility.

Baroness Kay Andrews, UK Trustee and Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales, said: “Thanks to National Lottery players, our financial support for this project means that not only can the historic fabric of this much loved landmark be preserved, it enables the chapel to throw its doors open once again and actively engage with the local community. Our constant aspiration is to fund projects that, while keeping our heritage and culture alive, will also have a positive impact on the local community and wider economy by creating employment opportunities and developing innovative ideas to ensure their long term sustainability.”

Many of the chapel’s original elements are featured in the new renovation, including stained glass windows, high vaulted ceilings and gallery space, all retaining the chapel’s rich historical links within a functional, beautiful space.

Christian Brown, project manager at Cornerstone, expressed his delight at the completed centre: “What we have succeeded to create here at Cornerstone is a contemporary and modern practical space that has managed to maintain many of its original features. In addition to the structure our proposed oral heritage project will ensure the past is most certainly not forgotten and I hope it will give us a living picture that will chart the history of the area during a crucial period in Cardiff’s history. I’d like to thank His Royal Highness for attending today and making this opening a very special day for all involved.”

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