Venue Sponsor

THE LINK CENTRE



- Tony Walker, Director

The Link Centre & Gateway Lodge

- Business Peak District Meeting
- 6th November 2026

Tony Walker – Ashbourne Link Centre

Background

- Large, well maintained, listed Victorian buildings on a good site in the town centre, but significantly underutilized
- Several challenges:
  - 3 buildings on 3 three different levels with poor external access via difficult steps
  - poor environmental performance, facilities unsuitable for modern use
- Recognised that we needed to improve the buildings and increase usage, to make the premises affordable to maintain and to avoid just managing decline
- Developed a vision to serve the Community by becoming a 7-day-a week church, community hub, cultural and events centre

What we provide

- A modern, accessible Community, Conference and Cultural Centre for those that live, work and visit the town and surrounding area:
  - A new 2 storey Atrium with street level access and internal connectivity to all buildings and levels (including a lift)
  - A flexible 300+ seat performance and events space - Trinity Hall – with good acoustics, modern AV and theatre lighting
  - 2 further flexible halls - Century Hall and Riverside Hall
  - 3 new meeting rooms for face to face and virtual* meetings
  - Affordable, quality, hostel accommodation – Gateway Lodge - plus 2 Airbnb apartments* (total 41 beds)
  - A Community Garden*

- * Work not finished yet

Been a Long Journey

- Started Link Development Team 2015, appointed architect 2016
- Planning & Listed Building Consent for smaller scheme March 2021
- Supported Town Team proposing Ashbourne for LUF funding - January to March 2022. Worked with DDDC on developing the LUF scheme and bid – April to July 2022
- January 2023 – Government announced Ashbourne Reborn bid successful - £15.4 m, £5 m for Link Community Hub (£1.4 from Church, Total £6.4m)
- Building cost escalation required scope review and increased church funding to £2.1m, total project £7.1m, agreed August 2024
- November 2024 main contractor started on site; Practical Completion 15th May 2026

The Courtyard – now occupied by the new Atrium



The new Atrium







The Church – Trinity Hall – as it was





The Church – Trinity Hall – as it is now





Century Hall then and now





Gateway Lodge and the Garden Entrance then and now





A Gateway Lodge bedroom then and now





Gateway Lodge dining area then and now

Community, Cultural and Business Benefits – so far:

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- Nearly 7 jobs safeguarded, created or facilitated
- Over 100 volunteering opportunities (wellbeing benefits)
- Over 1,260sqm of space improved, created or completed
- 2 heritage buildings renovated/restored
- (Safe storage for 10 bikes with eBike charging points)
- 18 cultural events with an audience of 3500
- 20 community groups and our first business users
- Gateway Lodge: guests most nights; regularly full in school holidays and at weekends