



# St John's church reopens as dual purpose building after £800,000 renovation

By NICOLE KEMBERY

**A CHURCH in Donisthorpe has reopened as a dual purpose building for the community after 13 months of renovation work.**

St John's church has been central to Donisthorpe since the 19th century but now, after approximately £800,000 worth of renovations is now a multifunctional space that serves both spiritual and practical needs.

The project, which was supported significantly by the National Lottery which provided £235,000 towards the work, came to a conclusion with a grand reopening weekend on Saturday, August 31, and Sunday, September 1.

On the Saturday, a family fun day was held which showcased the newly transformed community space with live music, games, food, entertainment and a ribbon cutting ceremony against the scenic backdrop of the National Forest.

The ribbon was cut by Vivien Elphick, the former vicar of Donisthorpe and one of the original members of the project group who now runs the community space called The Village Heart working group.

Local MP for Hinckley and Bosworth, Dr Luke Evans, attended the opening and shared his admiration for the project.

He said: "A brilliant day at the Village Heart Donisthorpe to celebrate the opening of their new community space, which is incredible!

"The community has come together and raised over a whopping £700k to create a beautiful space for the community to use and worship too.

"The blend of modern and



heritage is just brilliant. Over a decade of work came to fruition, and I was honoured to be there to see the ribbon cutting and

carnival celebration. A huge well done to the entire team. You should be proud."

The Sunday marked the first service in the newly transformed church, a service of thanksgiving and rededication, led by Bishop Saju, the Bishop of Loughborough.

Reflecting on the day, Bishop Saju said: "What really struck me was the relationship between the community and the church, and what a brilliant job had been done.

"Here is a church full of en-

ergetic people - there really is hope for the future."

The funding for the transformation came from a combined effort with money being raised through:

- £280,000 from the sale of the original church hall which closed in 2007.
- A significant £235,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.
- Additional contributions from local and national funding bodies, including the Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust.
- Personal donations and proceeds from the sale of the old wooden pews at St John's.

A number of events have been lined up for the newly opened community space for September, including a Holy Communion, Lay-led Worship, and Team Services however The Village Heart St John's is now fully open and able to take booking for religious services and community events.

For more information, or to book the space, visit: [hallbookingonline.com/village-heart](http://hallbookingonline.com/village-heart) or contact The Village Heart @ St John's at [villageheartdonisthorpe@gmail.com](mailto:villageheartdonisthorpe@gmail.com) or 07759 404226.



Michael Kendrick

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[editor@ashbytimes.com](mailto:editor@ashbytimes.com)  
[editor@coalvilletimes.com](mailto:editor@coalvilletimes.com)  
[editor@swadlincotetimes.com](mailto:editor@swadlincotetimes.com)

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[editor@swadlincotetimes.com](mailto:editor@swadlincotetimes.com)

**SPORT:**

[luke.evered@ashbytimes.com](mailto:luke.evered@ashbytimes.com)  
[luke.evered@coalvilletimes.com](mailto:luke.evered@coalvilletimes.com)  
[luke.evered@swadlincotetimes.com](mailto:luke.evered@swadlincotetimes.com)

**Telephone: 01530 813101**