

Officers Report
Planning Application No: WL/2025/00865

PROPOSAL: Planning application for change of use from a Social Club (sui generis) to a Place of Worship (F1(f)).

LOCATION: 17 GAINSBOROUGH SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB TRINITY STREET GAINSBOROUGH DN21 2AL
WARD: Gainsborough South West
APPLICANT NAME: Mr Alistair Wearing (Hope Church Gainsborough)

TARGET DECISION DATE: 14/11/2025
DEVELOPMENT TYPE: Change of Use
CASE OFFICER: Richard Green

RECOMMENDED DECISION: Grant with conditions attached.

The application is referred to the planning committee for determination in line with the constitution as the applicant is an employee of West Lindsey District Council.

Description:

The application site is a social club (Gainsborough Sports and Social Club) located within the developed footprint of Gainsborough on the eastern side of Trinity Street close to the northern end of the street. There are commercial uses on the ground floors of buildings to the north, west and to the south of the site with some residential accommodation on the first floors. There are residential dwellings to the rear (east) of the site. There is a Grade II Listed Building (No. 70 Beaumont Street and No.1-3 Southolme) located approximately 52 metres to the north.

The application seeks permission to change the use of the building from a members only Social Club (sui generis use) to a Place of Worship (F1(f) use). The social club is approximately 464.5 sqm floor space on 2 stories with a flat situated on the 1st floor and extending into the attic. On the ground floor there are two toilets, a bar lounge, a games room, a function room and a pump room as well as several storerooms, on the 1st floor is a large snooker room, more storerooms and a kitchen and bathroom for the self contained flat, in the attic is a bedroom for the flat and a storeroom.

The place of worship (Hope Church Gainsborough) currently operates from 'The Pattern Store, Station Approach, Gainsborough'. The proposed church on Trinity Street will provide a place of worship (Sunday Services etc) as well as space for youth work, parent and toddler groups, coffee mornings and to continue to run the "Hope Kitchen" providing weekly lunches to the community. Internal alterations only are proposed to create a lounge, creche room, lounge, sanctuary with stage, kitchen, toilets and store rooms on the ground floor, a Sunday school, youth room, toilets and store rooms on the first floor and store rooms on the second floor. No operating hours are proposed.

Relevant history:

PRE/2025/00132 - Pre-application enquiry for change of use from a Social Club (sui generis) to a Place of Worship (F1(f)). Following advice given 18/07/2025 *'It is my opinion that with the appropriate evidence that the Social Club is no longer fit for purpose or the service provided by the social club is provided elsewhere within Gainsborough then the loss of the social club could be supported in principle.'*

Furthermore, in terms of the new church/place of worship in this location it is considered that the principle of development can be supported for this community facility as per Policy S50 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.'

W33/984/91 - Planning permission to change the use and alterations to shop to form extension to club in accordance with amended plan received 30 January 1992. Granted 04/02/92.

GU/127/69 - MAKE ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING CLUB AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REVISED PARTICULARS RECEIVED ON 18TH AUGUST, 1969.

GU/92/65 - ALTER CLUB AND SHOP PREMISES

Hope Church, The Pattern Store, Station Approach, Gainsborough

131385 - Planning application for change of use from B1-offices to D1-public place of worship. Granted 31/07/2014.

Representations:

Chairman/Ward member(s): No representations received to date.

Gainsborough Town Council: Support the application.

Local Residents and Occupiers: No representations received to date.

LCC Highways and Lead Local Flood Authority: The site is located in a central urban area which can be accessed via sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling and public transport. Future users of the site will not be reliant on the private car but if they do decide to drive, there are public car parks in close proximity to the site, therefore it will not have an unacceptable impact on the public highway.

Having given due regard to the appropriate local and national planning policy guidance (in particular the National Planning Policy Framework), Lincolnshire County Council (as Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority) has concluded that the proposed development would not be expected to have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety or a severe residual cumulative impact upon the local highway network or increase surface water flood risk and therefore does not wish to object to this planning application.

Archaeology: 17/10/2025 - Given the information provided (internal photographs showing that no historical features remain) I retract my initial recommendations.

29/08/2025 - According to Kelly's Directory of Lincolnshire (1905) "the Liberal Club, registered under the Friendly Societies Act in 1875, was transferred in Dec. 1889 to premises in Trinity street, containing billiard, smoke, game and reading rooms, and a library of over 2,000 volumes." This building has been used since 1889 as a member's club and would have formed part of the social and political history of Gainsborough.

There are internal alterations proposed which will affect the existing fixtures and fittings associated with the historic use as a club. Internal modifications may also impact the historic fabric of the building. The change in use will also mean an exterior loss in the legibility of the historic use of the building as a club.

I recommend that, if permission is granted, the standard archaeological scheme of works conditions set out in the Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook are placed. This condition wording, would allow for the preparation of an historic building recording that would aim to preserve by record the building as it currently stands, as well as any changes there have been to its fabric since its erection.

It would be beneficial to have a public record of the history of the building, and its evolution, prior to its change of use and its internal modification, given the role the institution would have had in the town's social and political history. I also recommend that there be a condition for the inclusion of an inscription or plaque in the exterior of the building, to be agreed with this department, which would indicate the buildings historic use. This will help towards creating a sense of place and contribute to local character and distinctiveness.

Conservation Officer: No representations received to date.

Relevant Planning Policies:

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Here, the Development Plan comprises the provisions of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted in April 2023) and the Gainsborough Town Neighbourhood Plan (adopted in June 2021).

Development Plan:

The following policies are particularly relevant:

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP):

Policy S1: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy
Policy S2: Growth Levels and Distribution of Growth
Policy S13: Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings
Policy S21: Flood Risk and Water Resources
Policy S47: Accessibility and Transport
Policy S49: Parking Provision
Policy S50: Community Facilities
Policy S53: Design and Amenity
Policy S56: Development on Land Affected by Contamination

Policy S57: The Historic Environment

<https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire>

Gainsborough Town Neighbourhood Plan:

Policy NPP1: Sustainable Development

Policy NPP5: Protecting the Landscape Character

Policy NPP6: Ensuring High Quality Design

Policy NPP7: Ensuring High Quality Design in each Character Area

Policy NPP18: Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning/neighbourhood-planning/all-neighbourhood-plans-west-lindsey/gainsborough-town-neighbourhood-plan>

National policy & guidance (Material Consideration)

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions. The most recent iteration of the NPPF was published in December 2024.

National Planning Policy Framework

- **National Planning Practice Guidance**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

- **National Design Guide (2019)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

- **National Design Code (2021)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

LB Legal Duty

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/66>

Relevant Legislation

- Use Classes Order 1987 (As Amended)

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987

- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended.

[The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015](#)

Main issues

- Principle of Development
- Residential Amenity (including noise)
- Visual Impact
- Highway Safety and Car Parking
- Listed Building
- Other Matters

Assessment:

Principle of Development:

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Firstly, the proposal is for a new community facility (a place of worship) to operate from 17 Trinity Street, Gainsborough. Policy S50 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan supports new community facilities subject to the following criteria:

- d) Prioritise and promote access by walking, cycling and public transport. Community facilities may have a local or wider catchment area: access should be considered proportionately relative to their purpose, scale and catchment area;*
- e) Be accessible for all members of society;*
- f) Be designed so that they are adaptable and can be easily altered to respond to future demands if necessary; and*
- g) Where applicable, be operated without detriment to local residents: this especially applies to facilities which are open in the evening, such as leisure and recreation facilities.*

The proposal will be located within the developed footprint of Gainsborough in a highly sustainable location close to the train stations serving Gainsborough and the bus station. The Hope Church operates an open door policy and the current building can be adapted through internal alterations only to meet the needs of the Church. Finally, the proposal will replace an existing social club on a commercial street and could therefore operate without detriment to local residents. Therefore, the proposal for a new church can be supported in principle as it accords with Policy S50 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

However, the Church already operates close by in Gainsborough and the proposal would lead to the loss of a Community Facility (a Social Club). Therefore, the following criteria/section of Policy S50 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan must be considered.

Policy S50 of the CLLP states that the loss of existing community facilities (or sites with such a permitted use) will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- a. The facility is demonstrably no longer fit for purpose and the site is not viable to be redeveloped for a new community facility; or*
- b. The service provided by the facility is met by alternative provision that exists within reasonable proximity: what is deemed as reasonable proximity will depend on the nature of the facility and its associated catchment area; or*

- c. *The proposal includes the provision of a new community facility of similar nature and of a similar or greater size in a suitable on or offsite location.*

It is noted that the social club is a private members club and that the social club is not listed within Appendix B – Schedule of Buildings providing community services or facilities of the Gainsborough Neighbourhood Plan. It is also noted that the social club is not listed on the following list of Assets of Community Value:

[Community Right to Bid and Assets of Community Value | West Lindsey District Council](#)

Gainsborough has approximately 12 public houses and social clubs within the town, with the nearest Public House (The White Horse, Silver Street) located a 0.5 kilometre walk away and the nearest sports and social club (United Services Club, Bridge Steet) located a 0.6 kilometre walk away. It is therefore considered that the service provided by the social club is provided elsewhere within Gainsborough.

It is therefore considered that the principle of development is acceptable in accordance with the NPPF and policy S50 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

It is proposed to change the use of the building from a members only Social Club (sui generis use) to a Place of Worship (F1(f) use), with internal alterations only apart from signage.

Policy S53 of the CLLP requires that development proposals do not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity. This includes considerations such as compatibility with neighbouring land uses, noise, vibration, odour, and the creation of safe environments amongst other things.

As the proposal will convert and redevelop an existing building there are no issues of loss of light, over dominance or overlooking. The building subject of this application is located in a predominantly commercial area with no operating hours proposed as the Church wish to remain open 24/7 for prayer, support and emergency pastoral care. No operating hours were imposed on the existing place of worship on Station Approach, Gainsborough under planning permission 131385 and the planning permission relating to the current use of the site as a social club also have no operating hours imposed. There will be no external gathering, noise or sound proposed for outside the building and bearing in mind the location close to the defined Town Centre and surrounded by predominately commercial uses the proposal in regards to residential amenity is acceptable.

It is considered that the development would not have an unacceptable harmful impact on the living conditions of existing neighbouring uses and would accord with Policy S53 and the provisions of the NPPF.

Visual Impact

Local Plan Policy S53 states that all development *‘must achieve high quality sustainable design that contributes positively to local character, landscape and townscape, and supports diversity, equality and access for all.’* Development

must 'relate well to the site, its local and wider context and existing characteristics including the retention of existing natural and historic features wherever possible and including appropriate landscape and boundary treatments to ensure that the development can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area'.

It further states that development should 'contribute positively to the sense of place, reflecting and enhancing existing character and distinctiveness', and should 'be appropriate for its context and its future use in terms of its building types, street layout, development block type and size, siting, height, scale, massing, form, rhythm, plot widths, gaps between buildings, and the ratio of developed to undeveloped space both within a plot and within a scheme.' In addition, development must *'achieve a density not only appropriate for its context but also taking into account its accessibility.'*

It is proposed to change the use of the building from a members only Social Club (sui generis use) to a Place of Worship (F1(f) use), with internal alterations only. The building subject of this application is located in a predominantly commercial area.

It is therefore considered that the proposal will not harm the character and appearance of the street-scene in accordance with the NPPF and Policy S53 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Highway Safety and Car Parking

Local Plan Policy S47 and S49 requires well designed, safe and convenient access for all, and that appropriate vehicle parking provision is made for development users. Policy S49 states that all development apart from residential should incorporate a level of car parking that is suitable for the proposed development taking into account its location, its size and its proposed use, including the expected number of employees, customers or visitors.

The application seeks permission to change the use of the building from a members only Social Club (sui generis use) to a Place of Worship (F1(f) use). The site is located close to the Town Centre of Gainsborough and can be accessed via the Central and Lea Road train stations, the bus station and cycling and walking. If future users do decide to drive as is the case with the current Social Club use of the site there is existing car parking on Trinity Street and surrounding car parks in the centre of Gainsborough which can be utilised.

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that in assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
- c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

The Highways Authority have no objections in relation to impacts upon highway safety. Overall, the proposed highway arrangements (car parking) are acceptable and the proposal is considered to accord with Policy S47 and S49 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and the NPPF.

Listed Building Setting

There is a Grade II Listed Building (No. 70 Beaumont Street and No.1-3 Southolme) located approximately 52 metres to the north.

S.66 of the Listed Buildings Act 1990 places a legislative requirement that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities in determining applications, should take account of:

*'a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'*

Policy S57 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan states that *'Development proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will, in principle, be supported where they make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of the Listed Building.'*

The proposal is for a change of use of the building from a members only Social Club (sui generis use) to a Place of Worship (F1(f) use) with no external alterations.

It is therefore considered that the proposal will not harm the setting of nearby Listed Buildings in accordance with the NPPF, Policy S57 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and the statutory duty.

Other Matters:

Comments on energy efficiency and biodiversity net gain policies

The proposal being a change of use application is exempt from biodiversity net gain.

As a change of use proposal, Policy S13 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan will apply. The policy encourages the improvement of energy efficiency as stated below:

'For all development proposals which involve the change of use or redevelopment of a building, or an extension to an existing building, the applicant is encouraged to consider all opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of that building (including the original building, if it is being extended).'

Therefore, as part of any future formal planning application an informative will be added to the decision notice encouraging the applicant to use PAS 2035:2019 Specifications and Guidance (or any superseding guidance) for this proposal.

Foul and Surface Water

The proposal will utilise the existing system at the site.

Contaminated Land:

The site is located within a contaminated land buffer zone. The proposal being a change of use application which will only involve internal alterations and signage and will therefore have no implications for contamination.

Advertisement Consent

It is noted that any new sign would be subject to the advertisement regulations and have not been considered as part of this application. If it is minded to grant planning permission a note to this effect will be attached to the decision notice.

Conclusion and reasons for decision:

The decision has been considered against Policy S1: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy, S2: Growth Levels and Distribution of Growth, S13: Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings, Policy S21: Flood Risk and Water Resources, S47: Accessibility and Transport, S49: Parking Provision, S50: Community Facilities, S53: Design and Amenity, S56: Development on Land Affected by Contamination and S57: The Historic Environment in the first instance and policies contained in the Gainsborough Town Neighbourhood Plan (Policy NPP1: Sustainable Development, NPP5: Protecting the Landscape Character, NPP6: Ensuring High Quality Design, NPP7: Ensuring High Quality Design in each Character Area and NPP18: Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets) and Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance, National Design Guide and National Model Design Code has also been taken into consideration.

In light of this assessment it is considered that the proposal is an acceptable development as it conforms with the NPPF and Policy S35 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development will not harm the character and appearance of the locality, nor the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal will also not be detrimental to the highway network or harm the setting of nearby Listed Buildings.

RECOMMENDATION- Grant planning permission with the following conditions:

Conditions stating the time by which the development must be commenced:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Conditions which apply or require matters to be agreed before the development commenced:

None.

Conditions which apply or are to be observed during the course of the development:

2. With the exception of the detailed matters referred to by the conditions of this consent, the development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents: Proposed Floor Plans dated August 2025 and Block/Site Location Plans (showing the red line) dated August 2025. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on the approved plans and in any other approved documents forming part of the application.

Reason: To ensure the development proceeds in accordance with the approved plans and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy S53 of the Central Lincolnshire Local.

Conditions which apply or relate to matters which are to be observed following completion of the development:

None.

Notes to the Applicant

Advertisement Consent

It is noted that any new sign would be subject to the advertisement regulations and have not been considered as part of this application.

Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings

Policy S13 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan encourages the improvement of energy efficiency as stated below:

‘For all development proposals which involve the change of use or redevelopment of a building, or an extension to an existing building, the applicant is encouraged to consider all opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of that building (including the original building, if it is being extended).’

The applicant is therefore encouraged to use PAS 2035:2019 Specifications and Guidance (or any superseding guidance) for this proposal. Please see the link below:

<https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/retrofitting-dwellings-for-improved-energy-efficiency-specification-and-guidance-1/standard>

Human Rights Implications:

The above objections, considerations and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's

and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

Legal Implications:

Although all planning decisions have the ability to be legally challenged it is considered there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.