



INTERACT CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Annual Report 2020

www.interact.uk.net

Adapting to COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, much of our year focused on responding to the changing situation around us. As an organisation primarily focused on bringing people together, it was saddening to move into a lockdown situation and bring all gathering activities to a close. We're sorry to say this became permanent in the case of Youth Club and Play and Learn, although happily there's still some life to come from these groups in other forms going forward.



We worked with Leeds City Council and an organisation called Voluntary Action Leeds (“a charity that supports communities by helping people and organisations that do good in Leeds”) to help ensure residents in and around the Moortown and Meanwood Ward were able to access food and support as the pandemic progressed. We also maintained links with those already known to us, made welfare visits, phone calls, shopped and responded

as many various needs arose. Hundreds of volunteers signed up to be part of the local response. It was good to work with so many new people, without whom we genuinely could not have helped all the people from our area who



requested it over the months. It was also a little strange working, often intensely, with people we still have never met in physical space. We look forward to the time when we can finally all meet together face to face.

We were able to run a one-off Meanwood Olympics family fun day and a socially-distanced trip to the seaside, great for helping children get used to connecting again (even if at a distance), in readiness for the September return to school. And for a brief window of time, we opened up Holy Trinity Café, albeit in a very different format! It was a space where people could meet safely indoors, distanced but also together. Unfortunately, circumstances did not allow this to continue for long as we went into a second and then third period of lockdown.

The food parcels have been a massive help to me and V...! I am so thankful for everything I have received.

When the first round of shielding officially ended in August, the need in the area also shifted. Financial struggles really came to the fore. We (mostly) moved away from bespoke shopping to giving food parcels to those who couldn't afford to shop. Prior to this, those acute needs had been met directly by Leeds' Welfare Services. We also focused on encouraging people to take steps out into the community again and ran what we called the Twenty-Minute Campaign throughout August. The campaign was headed up by a local resident who had been placed on furlough. She was keen to do something that used her skills. She reflected as many of the other volunteers had done, that doing something

active to help also helped them to face the challenges of the pandemic:

“I’m used to being really busy in my role, so I’ve found being on furlough quite challenging. Not only in the lack of structure and purpose in each day, but also in the loneliness and anxiety it’s created. Although I’ve tried to keep busy with various projects, I’ve felt quite lost at times and as lockdown has eased, I’ve found the idea of going out and returning to a sense of normality quite difficult.”

The campaign was full of ideas of things neighbours and friends could safely do to connect with one another again and was something other projects picked up and used in other areas, including outside Leeds.

The circumstances have been painful and challenging, with lives lost and much loneliness and despair. So we have been honoured and proud to facilitate hundreds of local people to make thousands of shopping trips, welfare calls, prescription pick-ups, dogs walks and more – a community pulling together and bringing hope.

InterACT Church and Community Partnership presents

TWENTY-MINUTE TIMEOUT



Lockdown may be easing, but we understand that life still feels far from normal. It's so important to remember that we're not alone, so we're inviting our local community to take part in the **Twenty-Minute Timeout** this August.

The idea is simple – take at least 20 minutes out of your day for a socially distanced meet-up. You could:

-  **HAVE A DOORSTEP COFFEE WITH A NEIGHBOUR**
-  **GO FOR A WALK WITH A FRIEND AROUND THE BLOCK**
-  **KICK A BALL AROUND WITH ANOTHER FAMILY IN THE PARK**

We can all spare 20 minutes – and those 20 minutes could make all the difference to you and someone else.

 

Produced by InterACT, a not-for-profit community partnership. For more information visit www.interact.org.uk
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A Mosaic for Meanwood, and After-School Sessions

At the beginning of the year, we were enjoying running after-school clubs with children aged 7-11 and their families.

Due to COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown in March, we never managed to complete the full variety of activities we had planned, but we did fit in some "fast food home made" cooking sessions, fun adventures at Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, and the creation of a mosaic to go around the door at Meanwood Community Centre.

It was so exciting to see the mosaic installed at the end of 2020 by Seagulls Reuse, the group who helped us put it together. We weren't able to come together and celebrate as we wanted, but we've loved walking by and celebrating all the different symbols of what Meanwood means to us.



Meanwood Men Shed

We'd been planning to set up a Men Shed in Meanwood for some time and had hoped to launch this new initiative in July. Men sheds are dedicated spaces for men to meet, and they can play an important role in helping to combat isolation and loneliness amongst men in the areas where they're established.



Clearing old buildings to make way for the new

Although the official launch for ours was put on hold, we worked with a small group of men and with Meanwood Valley Urban Farm to start preparing space for us to quite literally put up a shed.

Based at the farm, Meanwood Men Shed will evolve and be shaped by those who become part of it.

Sheds are about meeting like-minded people and having someone to share your worries with. They are about having fun, sharing skills and knowledge with like-minded people and gaining a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. As a by-product of all of that they reduce isolation and feelings of loneliness, they allow men to deal with mental health challenges more easily and remain independent, they rebuild communities and in many cases, they save men's lives. (menssheds.org.uk)



Autumn brought the launch of a 2030 Vision for Meanwood. It was launched under the banner of Love Meanwood, a

project of resident group Meanwood Valley Partnership. We were pleased to be part of the steering group over the two years while the vision was being developed.

The aim of Love Meanwood is to empower and enable people from Meanwood to take part in improving our community. We asked as many people who live in Meanwood as possible for their thoughts and ideas on how we can improve Meanwood and the public spaces in our local area.

Once again, the vision wasn't launched in the way we'd planned - in the end it moved online and was far more low key than we had imagined it to be. However, the document can be accessed online or printed for those who request it. It explains the process we followed and what we have learnt about Meanwood. It is also where we introduce three focus areas that emerged from the consultation process. Each focus area has been broken down further into three projects that contribute to achieving the vision. Printed copies of the document can be ordered but are free to read at www.lovemeanwood.org.uk

Christmas

Hundreds of food bags, Christmas gifts, blankets and hampers were taken out to local people of all ages in the run up to Christmas. We also raised over £1000 from Reverse Advent Calendar donations, which were converted to Aldi food

vouchers, and received many donations of food through Churches Together, Meanwood Primary School and individual donors. It made a big difference during a particularly difficult Christmas period, where families and friends were not able to come together and finances were strained by the pandemic.



What next?

2021 will bring many new opportunities and challenges of its own. The Moortown and Meanwood Hub work will carry on until the end of June, and we will continue to adapt this emergency response according to the community's needs. We will also be looking at more sustainable ways of ensuring local people have access to food and other basic provisions.

Sadly, neither Play and Learn nor Monday Night Youth Club will return as InterACT projects. However, we're delighted that our friends at Meanwood Valley Pre-School are taking up the reins of Play and Learn and will build this into their existing provisions in the community. And we are now working together with other organisations to develop a **new partnership youth project** for the area. We look forward to sharing how this develops over the coming year.

Our Supporters

From practical volunteering to people who pray, to those who help us communicate across the area, there are many who give to us in many different ways. If you would like to sign up to our newsletter to find out more about what we do on a regular basis and how you can be involved, please email vanessa@interact.uk.net, or call 07961 535 767.

Financially, activities this year have been funded by: Leeds City Council (Inner North East and Inner North West Community Committee Funding; COVID-19 Community Hub Funding; Housing Leeds through our local Housing Advisory Panel; MICE money); The National Lottery Community Fund (with thanks to the Government for the Coronavirus Community Support Fund); Charities Aid Foundation; Leeds Community Foundation Stay Well This Winter Fund and COVID Resilience Fund; Leeds South & West Methodist Circuit; Stainbeck United Reformed Church; Meanwood Valley Baptist Church; St. Matthew's Church; and Holy Trinity Church.

We are grateful for a number of donations and standing orders from individual donors, businesses and groups. Donations have been given in material goods such as food and gifts, as well as money donations. Givers this year have included Maria's Café, Meanwood; The Barn, Meanwood; B&M; St. George's Crypt; and Leeds Irish Centre.

Structure

InterACT is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission, number 1171402.

We are formally a partnership of five congregations: Holy Trinity, Meanwood; Meanwood Valley Baptist Church; St. Matthew's, Chapel Allerton; Stainbeck United Reformed Church; and Meanwood Methodists.

www.holytrinitymeanwood.org.uk; www.mvbc.org.uk;
www.saintmatthewschurch.com; www.stainbeckurc.org.uk;
www.lswmethodists.org.uk/meanwoodmethodistchurch.aspx

Can you help us?

The number of activities we now run on a regular basis has significantly grown over the years, and we are an established and well-known part of our local community. We rely on an amazing group of volunteers to make this happen, and we would love more people to join the team! There are so many ways to get involved, from setting up equipment to chatting to folk who attend our activities and much in between. Please get in touch.

And if you feel you can support us financially, you can make donations online at www.interact.uk.net/donate or email vanessa@interact.uk.net for a financial giving form

If you'd prefer to make your own arrangements, our bank details are below:

Our Bank Details

Acc. Name: InterACT Church and Community Partnership;

Acc. No.: 00030580;

Sort Code: 40-52-40;

Name of Bank: CAF Bank;

Address: 25 Kings Hill Ave, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19

Gift Aid: *If you are a UK taxpayer, we can claim back 25p in every pound that you donate, making your gift go further. It can make a big difference.*

Our Gift Aid form is below. Please return it to Stainbeck Church, Stainbeck Road, LS7 2PP or email vanessa@interact.uk.net



InterACT
 Church and Community Partnership
 Office: Stainbeck Church,
 Stainbeck Road, LS7 2PP
 0113 393 0600
 info@interact.uk.net
 www.interact.uk.net
 Charity Number : 1171402

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

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Charity Gift Aid Declaration

(use for one-off donations)

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ to InterACT Church and Community Partnership

(use for multiple donations)

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to InterACT Church and Community Partnership

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and / or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

Title _____ First name or initial(s) _____

Surname _____

Full home address _____

Postcode _____ Date _____

Please notify the charity if you: • want to cancel this declaration • change your name or home address • no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self – Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.