

2022



ANNUAL REPORT

**INTERACT CHURCH AND COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP**

www.interact.uk.net

2022 was as much a time of returning as building on what was born during the time of the pandemic. Whether through old or new activities, it's been great to see people coming back together again.

The Pantry has grown significantly in membership and local support. Over the course of the year, the membership trebled in size and 1463 visits were made, feeding 90-110 people each week. We have a fantastic team of volunteers from the local community and churches, all of whom getting to know their customers well and building some great relationships.



The Pantry is a good place to make new connections, share cooking tips, experiment with new foods, save money and reduce food waste. We try to live out the national Your Local Pantry network's motto of Dignity, Choice and Hope, and we're grateful for all the food, finance and time donations that help us make this work.

“You've helped me out so many times so thank you and keep up the good work you are doing a great job for the community 😊”

Pantry Member

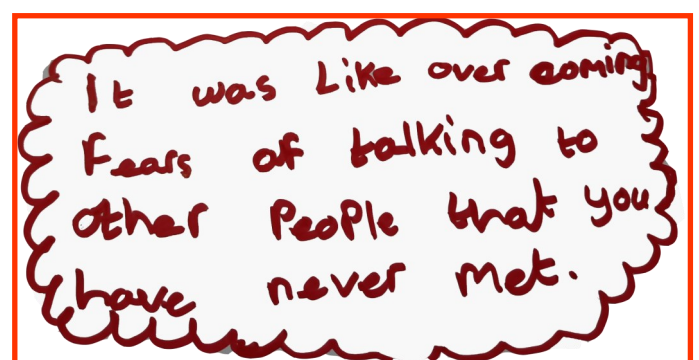
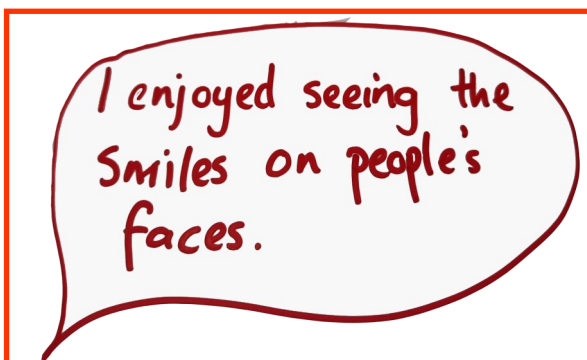
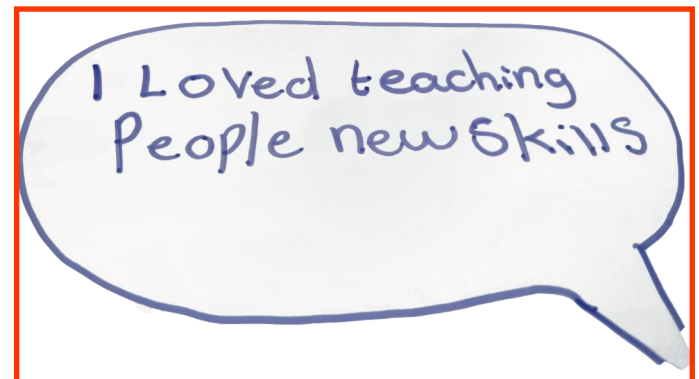
We're now working in partnership with Thrive Leeds* to develop a new youth project focusing on supporting young people to lead and volunteer in the community.

We spent much of the year seeking funding for a modular building on the grounds of Stainbeck Church, which will be a base for the project. At the same time, we've been working with a small group of young people to develop their leadership skills.



In April, they ran a family event, planned by themselves and open to the local community. It was a good experience for the young people involved, and they have continued over the course of the year to grow their confidence, take a lead and step out of their comfort zones. We're very proud of all they're achieving, and from the feedback they shared with us after the event, they're rightly feeling proud of themselves too!

*<https://thriveleeds.org.uk/>



We were delighted to receive funding from Leeds City Council for **asset based community development work (ABCD), focusing on the Beckhills.**

One of the core principles of ABCD is that you cannot know what a community needs until you know what it's already got, so we've enjoyed seeking out treasures we've not yet discovered on the estate.

Traditional approaches to working in communities have tended to be 'top-down' interventions by outside agencies to resolve problems like poor housing, high unemployment, high crime rates, low education attainment, etc. What we love about ABCD is that it recognises what's strong in a community already - it begins with questions about what local residents care about and are best placed to do themselves. Sometimes, all it takes is a connection with a neighbour who shares the same passion or has the right skills, and things start to happen! Our job is to help people make those connections and to offer support when residents need a little assistance.



Connecting activities in 2022 included a Queen's jubilee celebration, our first Beckhill newsletter, and enabling residents to take days out with their neighbours using West Yorkshire travel cards.

August saw our first **Meanwood Olympics** in two years — 3 days of family activities – sports, games, competitions, dance, crafts and stalls based at Woodhouse Cricket Club. We welcomed hundreds of people, new faces and old; so many pleased to be back. As always, it was good to create space for families to have fun together, but even more than usual, we were aware that the simple and old fashioned games won the day. Sometimes that’s all that’s needed to have a good time!

During the summer, we also enabled 100+ people to go on trips within and outside the city. These are valuable times of connection and memory-making that we’re honoured to facilitate.



**“Yaaay I've missed going to this event
looking forward to going !!”**

Local resident



Our **Men Shed** continued to grow through the year, and we also began to make connections with other men's groups in the area that we didn't previously know about. The Shed is based at Meanwood Urban Farm, and a group now meet weekly, mainly to make and build. Projects this year included bird and bat boxes for a local school, creation of a fake speed camera as part of Meanwood Road project (this one caused a stir in the media!), and making and selling items at the Farm's Christmas fair.

Social events are steadily building that include a wider number of people, and there's lots of potential to develop use of the Shed further as we move into 2023.

We are constantly receiving requests for more information, so we know that there's interest and a need for these activities.



I've seen the difference the Shed's made to my dad. I want to volunteer so others can also benefit.

Shed volunteer

We continued to work with Holy Trinity Church to run a community café every Wednesday.

The café was able to continue through much of the pandemic, and we're pleased to say that we moved into the larger space at Holy Trinity Hall this year. It is a comfortable space for the number of people we now have attending. We registered the café as a warm space, an initiative supported by Leeds City Council and Voluntary Action Leeds, to help people find somewhere free, warm and welcoming in the face of increased living costs.

As with almost everything we do, we love that local people come together as volunteers and visitors to make this a real place of community. It's also one of the places from which we can offer help and support to those who need it, from local information to more specialist advice with finances and signposting.



Christmas was another busy time for us. With the help of so many individuals, businesses and organisations, including Neil's Greengrocer, Leeds Beckett University, The Junction Meanwood, St. George's Crypt, Burmantofts Housing Office, Leeds Rhinos, Michael's Bakery Harehills and Moortown Fire Station, we delivered over 100 hampers to local people. The hampers themselves were well received, but it was also the contact made at this often vulnerable time of year that was so welcome.

This was also a year of more **strategic developments** as we began to emerge from the pandemic and consider our role in the community going forward. For example, we now lead the newly formed **My Meanwood Community Anchor**, a legacy of the partnership working that's been strong in our area for many years. Representatives of resident groups and Third Sector organisations meet regularly to work out what we can do better together to improve and strengthen our neighbourhoods. We're part of the Leeds Community Anchor Network, and this has meant we've overseen the distribution of Government Household Support Fund money, intended to help people through this period of significant increase in living costs. This helped us get fridges, freezers, microwaves, cookers, food and fuel to people who have been struggling without. Working with others is a vital part of doing this well.



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 find out more, 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; Housing Leeds through our local Housing Advisory Panel; MICE money; ABCD grant); The National Lottery Community Fund; Leeds Christian Community Trust and Unity in Poverty Action; Leeds Community Fund Resilience Grant; Leeds South & West Methodist Circuit; Stainbeck United Reformed Church; Meanwood Valley Baptist Church; St. Matthew's Church; and Holy Trinity Church.

We're also grateful for the many donations and standing orders from individual donors, businesses and groups. Support comes in material goods such as food and gifts, as well as money donations. Donors this year have included The Barn Coffee Shop, Meanwood; B&M staff; St. George's Crypt; Leeds Irish Centre; Meanwood Primary School; Lloyd's Bank; Neil's Wholesale Fruit and Veg; Sainsbury's Local, Meanwood; Leeds Rhinos; Moortown Fire Station; Richmond Hill Elderly Action; East Leeds Rugby Club; Beckett University; St Matthew's Primary School; Holy Trinity Guides, Rangers and Scouts.

If you'd like to be one of our supporters, in whatever way, please let us know.

Structure

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

We're formally a partnership of four congregations: Holy Trinity, Meanwood; Meanwood Valley Baptist Church; St. Matthew's, Chapel Allerton; Stainbeck United Reformed Church. We are additionally supported by Leeds South and West Methodist Circuit.

www.holytrinitymeanwood.org.uk; www.mvbc.org.uk;

www.saintmatthewschurch.com; www.stainbeckurc.org.uk;

www.lswmethodists.org.uk/meanwoodmethodistchurch.aspx