

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



**INTERACT
CHURCH AND
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP**

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Summary

Vanessa Brown

Over the last few years, we’ve been working to connect better with other spaces in Meanwood. Now we have a Men Shed at Meanwood Farm, a community café at Holy Trinity Community Hall, a food pantry at Meanwood Community Centre, a shared youth space at Stainbeck Church, and run Meanwood Olympics annually at Woodhouse Cricket Club. From our base at Stainbeck Church, making these wider connections help increase awareness of InterACT, encouraging a larger number of people to have a sense of ownership and belonging, and ensures we are working in partnership with others.

Partnership working has continued to be a key element of the philosophy and practice of InterACT. We believe it’s an important way for us to be as effective as possible, bring a faith voice to the table, stay relevant and support others. We chair Moortown Ward’s community anchor as part of Leeds Community Anchor Network and attend interagency and network meetings where possible. We’re also connected to other organisations through the Council’s ABCD network, Your Local Pantry, Leeds Food Aid Network, Men’s Health Unlocked and more.

The after-school drop in on a Thursday at Stainbeck Church, run in partnership with Thrive Leeds, is now well established, and young people from the 2023 cohort of leaders have been supporting their younger peers to take over through the Autumn term. Around 25 young people attended each week, primarily from Carr Manor School, who support with a staff member and publicity. We look forward to continuing our work with others, building relationships and sharing resources to play our part in making our local area that best it can be for the people that live and work here.

INTERACT PANTRY, MEANWOOD



“It’s really helped save money on my weekly shop. It’s a friendly and welcoming space. I enjoy chatting with other shoppers about the different foods. The volunteers are great.”

2248

individual visits to the Pantry in 2024

**191 adults,
95 children**

supported as members

15

regular volunteers, including young people

2024 saw the highest number of visits to the Pantry since it opened. This reflects the difficulties people are having with the cost of every day living but also, on a more positive note, the community and friendship people find when they visit. Reducing food waste is also important to our members.

“The pantry is amazing!!! I love the place, it’s full of friendly people and I appreciate the food prices. I look forward to coming here, having a chat and making friends in the community. It’s a hub of my community. The staff are brilliant.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Whilst this is not the main purpose of InterACT, providing help, advice and signposting to those in need is an important and inevitable part of what we do. Partnership working is key to this, as is having a dependable presence in the area and drawing on our experience and knowledge as a team. We’ve also held the Govt’s Household Support Fund for our Ward over the last few years, intended to help people struggling with daily living costs. This has made a significant difference in enabling us to give practical help such as food and fuel.

One of the most rewarding things about this element of the work is seeing people get back on their feet, very often keen to give back through volunteering or giving in other ways. It’s such a good reminder that we all need a helping hand from time to time, and that we all have something to offer too.

HOLY TRINITY COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Welcome Spaces offer a safe and warm place for anyone to enjoy for free.



The below data comes from **estimated** numbers reported by Third and Faith Sector organisations who are part of the Welcome Spaces Network in Leeds. This snapshot of figures highlights the positive impact of the scheme across the city.



Between December and March this winter



181 Welcome Spaces delivered



3,886 Sessions



65,653 Visits

Thank you to all Leeds Welcome Spaces for all your hard work.



For help with the rising cost of living please visit:
www.leeds.gov.uk/welcomespaces



We're grateful that café visitors continue to support the Pantry through their weekly pay-as-you-feel contributions. It's a great way to link these two community food initiatives, which also share volunteers and members.

The café continues to be a safe space, where local people meet on a regular basis, and where we can welcome those we come across in other parts of our day-to-day work. For another year running, we were part of Leeds' Welcome Spaces initiative. Numbers of visitors have certainly grown over the past year and we have had to make some adjustments in order to meet demand. For some of our 25-50 visitors, the café is a very special part of their week, and we're aware of the part it plays in helping to combat isolation.

MEANWOOD MEN SHED

The Men Shed has also struggled to keep up with demand. So much so that by the end of the year we were establishing a waiting list of men who wanted to come along.

The Shed is a place for socialising as well as creativity and craftsmanship.

Again, we're also aware of the part it plays in helping to combat isolation as well as skills sharing, peer support and wellbeing.



YOUTH WORK WITH THRIVE LEEDS

Our new youth building finally arrived in February after what felt like an age of fundraising and planning applications, waiting and readjusting.

Two plain white buildings on the back of a truck slowly transformed into one space, with an accessible toilet, kitchenette, furniture, furnishings and cladding. Young people have been involved throughout, marking out the space, digging holes for soil testing, choosing carpet colours and furniture. We are excited for the official launch in January 2025 after which they will be central in planning how the building is used and cared for. In the meantime, young people continue to lead our after-school drop in, where last year's leader cohort are working alongside their younger peers as they take over the reins.



BECKHILL COMMUNITY GARDEN

Also making its mark on Stainbeck's vista is the community garden that is well and truly establishing at the corner by the nursery.

For the past two years, InterACT has been funded by Leeds City Council as something they call a Pathfinder organisation. The commission is specifically for community development on the Beckhills that has strengths and assets as the starting point (known as Asset Based Community Development, or ABCD). Through this emerged Lynn, a local resident who'd connected for some time through Team Beckhill, and with funding through the ABCD work, was able to get the garden started.

Lots of people have been involved since its early days in Spring, watering it through the summer, taking part in action days, weeding, growing, harvesting and chatting in passing. It's been a fantastic point of connection and a great space that will only keep growing, developing and seeing fruit in many senses of the word.



HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES, DAY TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

From Meanwood Olympics to sea and countryside trips, Christmas parties and fairs, one-off events and trips are great ways for people to make memories.

For some, these are rare opportunities to leave the city. For others they are a way of making new friends and spending time with loved ones at an affordable cost.

We feel very privileged to be part of these occasions, sharing happy times with people of all ages.



SUPPORT AND STRUCTURE

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; Household Support Fund via Voluntary Action Leeds; Welcome Spaces via Voluntary Action Leeds; Capital Funding); Windmill Community Transport Ltd; The National Lottery Community Fund; Leeds Christian Community Trust and Unity in Poverty Action; Leeds Community Fund Stay Well This Winter Grant; Wharfedale Foundation; Making a Difference Locally; John Lewis Waitrose; Gary Chappelow; Headingley Orphanage; 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; Mears Group PLC; Leeds Irish Centre; Meanwood Primary School; Lloyd's Bank; Neil's Wholesale Fruit and Veg; Leeds Rhinos; Bankrupt Beds, Meanwood; Richmond Hill Elderly Action; East Leeds Rugby Club; Beckett University; St Matthew's Primary School; Holy Trinity Guides, Rangers and Scouts; Sainsbury's Local; St. George's Crypt; Hope Project, Leeds; Junction Bar, Meanwood; QBE Insurance.

Can you help us?

The number of activities we 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:

Acc. Name: InterACT Church and Community Partnership; Acc. No.: 00030580; Sort Code: 40-52-40; Name and address of bank: CAF Bank, 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. Please ask us to send you a gift aid form.

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