

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2025



**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. 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 are the Community Anchor for the Moortown Ward 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 is run in partnership with Thrive Leeds, and we look forward to the development of a new Youth Community Action Team (YCAT) as part of this joint work.

Last but not least, it's exciting to announce the appointment of Eamon Rooney as our new Men's Worker. Eamon lives locally and has lots of relevant experience. He will support our volunteers at the Men Shed as well as look to develop new activities with local men. This is a much valued role in our times, and we are very pleased to have Eamon on board.

## 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.”

**over 3,300**

individual visits to the Pantry in 2025

**182 adults,  
81 children**

supported through membership

**15**

regular volunteers, including young people

2025 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. As Community Anchor, we’ve also held the Government’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](http://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. In the Winter months, we've been 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.

## MEN'S WORK

We were excited to end the year with a new Wednesday session at the Shed to help meet growing demand.

The Shed is a place for socialising as well as creativity and craftsmanship. It's been fantastic this year to see members become more connected with the wider Men Sheds network, learning from how other Sheds work and bringing ideas and developments to our own Shed.

We also started a 'Green Men' group in the summer, focusing on outdoors work such as gardening and clearing. This group is planned to run throughout the warmer months and bring a different offer to local men.

Like the café, we're aware of the part these activities play in helping to combat isolation as well as skills sharing, peer support and wellbeing. They are much valued spaces that are already sparking new ideas and friendships.



# YOUTH WORK WITH THRIVE LEEDS

We were finally able to launch our new youth building in January after the space had been transformed to include 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. The building is already hosting weekly sessions with young people (led by local group, Shine Bright), as well as regular young volunteer celebration events and youth leader meetings.

Our new Youth Community Action Team (YCAT) are full of ideas on how to use the space, and we can't wait to see what else is to come.



## 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 three-and-a-half 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, with 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, watering it through the summer, taking part in action days, weeding, growing, harvesting and chatting in passing. It now has its own bank account and governing document and is ready for the future! The garden is 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, which sees hundreds of children and their families gather on the grounds of Woodhouse Cricket Club each summer, to sea and countryside trips, Christmas parties and fairs and corporate challenge days, one-off events and trips are great ways for people to make memories, and it's been moving to hear people share the importance of these with us this year.

New to 2025 was a cultural food evening, which we held after one of our Pantry members became inspired to share stories, recipes and meals. A small number of women, all first or second generation migrants to the UK, gathered in the Cabin, sharing, laughing and learning. It was a special night, and we look forward to seeing this initiative develop as we move into 2026.

We're grateful to corporate groups Mears, QBE Insurance and Participate for bringing their teams to us this year. What a huge difference some focused time and resource can make in moving things forward, and we know taking part in these events is great for their teams too.

We also really enjoy our volunteer celebration events, this year held in the summer. We are completely unable to do what we do without a fantastic team of people giving their time and skills. We have so many different activities that it really is great to bring everyone together from across all the work of InterACT and be able to thank them for their involvement.



From summer activity to winter fun, Christmas not only brought a party but hampers and gifts. Supported once again by partners around the city, these were a special way to make connections at a time of year that is not easy for everyone.

Some recipients have been moved to tears, and we know it's not just the material items received that make a difference, but the sense that a community cares.

We feel so privileged to be a part of this.

# 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](mailto: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; MICE money; ABCD grant; Household Support Fund via Voluntary Action Leeds; Welcome Spaces via Voluntary Action Leeds); Voluntary Action Leeds; Leeds Together Fund; Windmill Community Transport Ltd; The National Lottery Community Fund; Leeds Christian Community Trust and Unity in Poverty Action; Wharfedale Foundation; John Lewis Waitrose; Gary Chappelow Fund; 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; Blue Pepper Catering; Mears Group PLC; Leeds Irish Centre; Meanwood Primary School; Lloyd's Bank; Leeds Rhinos; Bankrupt Beds, Meanwood; Richmond Hill Elderly Action; St Matthew's Primary School; Sainsbury's Local; St. George's Crypt; Hope Project, Leeds; QBE Insurance; Participate; Waitrose, Meanwood.

## 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](http://www.interact.uk.net/donate) or email [vanessa@interact.uk.net](mailto: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](http://www.holytrinitymeanwood.org.uk); [www.mvbc.org.uk](http://www.mvbc.org.uk); [www.saintmatthewschurch.com](http://www.saintmatthewschurch.com); [www.stainbeckurc.org.uk](http://www.stainbeckurc.org.uk); [www.lswmethodists.org.uk/meanwoodmethodistchurch.aspx](http://www.lswmethodists.org.uk/meanwoodmethodistchurch.aspx)