Beyond Sundays: How the Church of England is helping communities in the Diocese of London

1,000+ recorded projects
10,000+ volunteers
200,000 beneficiaries
£17m raised by churches

www.london.anglican.org/beyondsundays
Introduction

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Made up of over 100,000 worshippers across more than 500 worshipping communities, the Diocese of London maintains a staff of around 1,000 clergy. Yet the Church of England’s activities in London encompass much more than worship alone, and span public, private and voluntary sector activities. These include running 150 schools educating 53,500 children from all faiths and backgrounds, and administering over 1,000 projects of social transformation, impacting the lives of over 200,000 people.

This report takes you behind the scenes of just a few of those projects, and we hope will demonstrate how this unique and growing institution continues to support thousands of Londoners on their journey – as it has done for over 1,400 years.

Foreword

We live in interesting times when strong churches should be beacons and anchor-holds in an ever-shifting landscape. Times when financial stringency and lack of employment for young people will demand a more united and co-ordinated response from the Church in every part of London.

I hope this report will go some way to illustrate the remarkable support that churches provide for so many in their parishes: practically for the mother who can’t afford to put food on the table; emotionally for the young person who is being bullied; spiritually for the family who have lost a parent. The church community gives the opportunity to belong, to be known and for lives to be transformed in a unique and sustainable way.

The report shows that compassion best works its miracles when we are sane and poised enough to try and love without the hidden agendas which all of us bring to our attempts to do good.

Together we are continuing to build a Church for London that is confident, compassionate and creative. Those three words inform our plan for action: Capital Vision 2020.

We want to re-establish a fresh and bold vision for the local church at the heart of fragmented communities: whether newly established or with long histories.

We are determined to speak out for justice and compassion across our city, making a difference as friends and neighbours, demonstrating the love of Christ as we make our Capital Vision a reality in every parish.

“Working with the Church of England on regeneration in Tottenham gave me a real perspective on how the Church is a central part of the community of the future. Its focus on care, education and leadership is outstanding.”

Sir Stuart Lipton

The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Richard Chartres
KCVO DD FSA Bishop of London

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1. Our Ethos

London is the most diverse city in the world: a vibrant mix of people from different nations and backgrounds, classes and faiths.

Local churches organise activities that benefit all-comers, and aim to build up a cohesive sense of community, encouraging relationships between all groups, yet also offering a special helping hand to the most vulnerable in society by addressing local issues of poverty and justice.

The Diocese of London calls these contributions by churches and their members ‘Community Ministry’, encouraging worshippers to be more Christ-like in service; to help build a better society through social and political action. Many do, and the Church is pleased that thousands of its members volunteer every year.

There are numerous examples that show that as churches engage with their communities in an open and welcoming way, they develop innovative responses to local needs and really help individuals to flourish.

This is the first time we have performed an analysis of our Community Ministry work, of the people it helps, and of the incredible army of volunteers and supporters who help deliver it.

Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelters

In 12 of the 18 London Boroughs in the Diocese, there are Church-led projects providing winter night shelters, involving over 50 of our churches.

Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter (ECWNS) is one of these. ECWNS is run by a group of 18 churches within Ealing. They provide emergency dormitory-style accommodation for up to 14 guests: from those who are sleeping on the streets, to those that are at immediate risk of rough sleeping, as well as the ‘hidden homeless’.

On each night of the week whilst the shelter is open a different church opens its doors to the guests, providing a hot meal, somewhere to sleep, breakfast and above all else companionship and friendship.

All guests are referred to the shelter by our referral agencies - St Mungo’s, Acton Homeless Concern & Ealing Soup Kitchen - and are offered a minimum of 28 days in the shelter during which time ECWNS works with these agencies and local housing services to find sustainable accommodation.

Besides alleviating some of the problems of homelessness, ECWNS has a wider impact on the community through the extensive network of volunteers. Over 200 friends and neighbours of ECWNS volunteer their time and resources to provide for homeless people in our area.

Local Sikhs and Muslims have been part of offering food and hospitality and this has been an immensely positive experience for many volunteers who are given the opportunity to work together for a greater cause.

One church describes the impact it had on the local area:

“The first year it raised a lot of local opposition, with a petition from the neighbours and them calling in the fire safety officers and environmental health to try anything that would obstruct its operation. The second year, after they had seen the shelter working, they asked us to work with them on the Jubilee street party and donated half the profits to the shelter.”
2. Our Approach

Our churches deliver community-focused activities locally. Whilst they maintain their strong traditional provision of worship, education and cultural activities, their volunteer work is very varied, and responds to the needs of local communities – whether their economic, physical, or social well-being. For some it is appropriate to hold drop-in cafés where people can build up relationships and trust, whereas for others debt counselling services or a homeless shelter may be more appropriate.

Although our volunteering embraces the whole community, there are specific groups of people who are in need of greater support. Over 70% of the activities recorded were focused on such groups, with a large proportion of these aimed at family well-being and youth provision.

Top 10 methods of meeting need

- Playgroups: 109
- Advice & support (ie Debt advice): 32
- Shelter: 56
- Arts & culture: 109
- Education & training (not church schools): 64
- Uniformed group: 67
- Practical support (ie DIY): 40
- Food & meals: 64
- Drop-in services: 187
- Social activities: 64

Activities by people group

- Children & family: 241
- Specific vulnerable groups: 23
- Homeless: 73
- Health: 34
- Elderly: 69
- People with addictions: 9
- Educationally disadvantaged: 23
- Disabled: 3
- Economically disadvantaged: 46
- Youth: 206
- Uniformed group: 67
- Arts & culture: 109

Top 10 methods of meeting need

Urban Hope

Urban Hope is a project of St Stephen’s Church, Canonbury. It exists for the benefit of children and young people in the community. Accompanying them through the journey of adolescence, it provides safe social spaces, long-term supportive relationships with positive adults, and new experiences to grow and achieve.

Ellie is 16, and has been attending Urban Hope for 5 years. She goes to school locally and lives with her mum. She spends most Monday evenings at Urban Hope, where she learns to cook, plays pool, paints her nails and chats to staff and volunteers. She also meets with a youth worker for one-to-one mentoring support.

“Last year was hard, my mum was in hospital and I was having a hard time with my dad. Urban Hope was important at that time. I knew you guys were there – always – to listen and to advise if I wanted that.

I get on really well with my mum, but it was awkward to talk about some stuff with her because I didn’t want to add to her stress. But I came and talked to you.

I also talked through my college, university and job plans with you guys. We worked out what I needed to do to get there and you’ve helped me with my college applications, and encouraged me. I want to work with young offenders as a social worker because I’ve seen some of that stuff around me, drugs, friends being put into the back of ambulances, people going to prison and coming out the other side.

Me and my friends have matured with you, I’ve been here since I was 11; I’ve grown up with Urban Hope and I’m really different now. I used to be really loud and now I think I’ve calmed down.”

Urban Hope’s food skills project

Intergenerational face painting
3. Our Resources

Every year our churches raise over £17million to run community projects, and over 10,000 people volunteer at them.

Our activities, and staff and volunteer time contribute to an estimated total of £33million - and this is without taking into account that the majority of churches also supply their own buildings and spaces to host the activities, doing so for 89% of projects.

Money matters to our churches wanting to provide for their communities, and they are very cost-effective, with 67% of activities costing less than £2,000 to run annually.

At a time when public sector services must meet the challenge of increased demands against a background of reduced finances, churches in London can demonstrate the ability to make a big impact with relatively limited resources.

Running costs of activities

4. Unemployed men & women

St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe has entered into a partnership with the charity Suited & Booted, which helps the long-term unemployed back to work.

The charity is based in the church and the clients are referred by Social Services or other agencies in order to be given tailored clothing and interview-technique training. The volunteers that make the project possible come from all kinds of backgrounds and include previous clients who are now in work.

The church not only provides space but also connections to workers, companies and City organisations. As word spreads about the presence of the charity, local workers are now coming into the church in order to drop off pre-owned interview clothing and find out how they can offer mentoring and coaching to the clients, a number of whom are entrepreneurs.
4. Our Impact

There are over 500 worshipping communities within the Diocese of London, and from 334 of these we recorded 1,016 local community projects and activities.

Our churches are focused and professional in their outreach, ensuring they do things well, often seeking formal support in doing so. Many of the examples we encountered show churches working with the police and the criminal justice system, as well as the NHS, schools and local government.

Beyond the core of worship services and schools work, the Church’s community activities benefit around 200,000 people. 60% of these activities have up to 50 people attending, the remainder include some very large projects involving as many as 5,000 participants. On average our activities have ten volunteers, many of whom in turn benefit from the experience of helping others.

Yet the value of much of this work is beyond quantification. Building a young girl’s self confidence - as in the SPACE Project - or supportive relationship through difficult times - as with Urban Hope - can make the world of difference to an individual’s happiness and quality of life, even if this cannot be measured in terms of academic grades or jobs found.

Above all else, it is our willingness to take this holistic approach that distinguishes our activities in the metrics-driven modern world.

SPACE Project

Going further than physical needs and addressing spiritual and emotional poverty is an area in which the Church is having a hugely positive long-term impact.

The SPACE Project – a small local outreach project based at St Peter’s Church, West Harrow – is principally a listening service for young women with low self-esteem.

“It’s not aimed at changing people over night. But we have seen some incredible results. Seven of the eight girls who took the course began with measurably low self-esteem and ended with measurably healthy or high self esteem.”

Rebecca Hamer, SPACE project

Hammersmith IntoUniversity Centre

“St Andrew’s hosts one of IntoUniversity’s education centres, which offers an innovative programme helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds enter either university or another chosen field to which they aspire.

Many local Somali families use the community centre as a result of their children being involved. Their coming into the café has meant opening up dialogue between neighbours, and a better understanding for them of Christian life and vice versa.”

“By tracking our students as they left the school system in 2012 we know that 77.1% of these young people have a university place. This compares with a national state school progression of 34%, and 18% for students from a Free School Meal background.”

Dr Hugh Rayment-Pickard
Haringey Winter Night Shelter

Holy Innocents Hornsey became part of the scheme three years ago and since then has provided food, beds and rehousing support for 195 homeless people. In its first winter 95% of those who turned up were helped into permanent accommodation.

Yet volunteering can have as big an impact on the volunteer as it does on the project. All Hallows Gospel Oak’s vicar David Houlding speaks of the effect on his congregation of being involved in their winter night shelter:

“It’s really caught their imagination, they can do the shopping, cooking, laundering and listening and really feel they’re putting their faith into action. It’s made them much more aware of the world outside and removed a lot of prejudice and fear.”

Max Manners, HTB William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse

William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse

This project aims to create a place that provides resources, training and enterprise for men and women who have come through homelessness or addiction.

It gives the recipients a better chance in life by restoring dignity, encouraging independent living, offering friendship, developing skills through structured training and assisting people to build a home and a future.

“One client attended the employability course for a couple of weeks. He was then remanded in prison, but whilst there held onto the seed planted in his mind and attended the chapel whilst in prison. On remand, he came back to the project wanting to get involved and now has a job with Waitrose.”

Max Manners, HTB William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse

Brentford

Serving food at the night shelter

150 people with major barriers to work a year

50 volunteers
+ 10 staff

Gospel Oak, Hornsey and others

30+ from 14 churches

20 homeless men aged 18-60

Brentford

Islington

Soul in the City Festival

This is a week-long programme of events and activities culminating in a street party. The festival aims to promote a sense of community on local council estates.

“We campaign on issues which affect deprived London wards - living wage, inequality etc. - and we seek to challenge the City of London to be more aware of their role in fighting poverty.”

Rachel Lindley, JustShare, St Mary Le Bow

JustShare

JustShare is a coalition of churches and development agencies that seek to address the widening gap between rich and poor in the global economy.

It encourages dialogue with banks and other institutions in the City of London, and holds regular debates and training seminars to promote justice for the world’s poorest.

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Rachel Lindley, JustShare, St Mary Le Bow

Gospel Oak, Hornsey and others

400 people packed the forecourt of St Mary’s for the Islington’s Got Talent show

2,000 adults and children

£12k+

Serving food at the night shelter

Bishop and volunteers serving free Fairtrade coffee to passers-by outside St Paul’s Cathedral

60

Brentford

Storing furniture in the warehouse

50 volunteers
+ 10 staff

Haringey Winter Night Shelter

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Max Manners, HTB William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse

How does volunteering impact the volunteers? Volunteering can have a significant impact on the volunteers as well as the project. According to David Houlding, vicar of All Hallows Gospel Oak, volunteering has helped to catch the imagination of his congregation, making them more aware of the world outside and reducing prejudice and fear. One client attended an employability course, but was then remanded in prison. Despite this, he held onto the seed planted in his mind and attended the chapel whilst in prison. After being released on remand, he returned to the project and now has a job with Waitrose.

What is the William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse? The William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse is a project that aims to create a place that provides resources, training, and enterprise for men and women who have come through homelessness or addiction. It gives recipients a better chance in life by restoring dignity, encouraging independent living, offering friendship, developing skills through structured training, and assisting people to build a home and a future. The warehouse has 50 volunteers and 10 staff members, and has helped 150 people with major barriers to work.

What is the Haringey Winter Night Shelter? The Haringey Winter Night Shelter is a scheme that provides food, beds, and rehousing support for homeless people. It has helped 195 homeless people, with 95% of those who attended being assisted into permanent accommodation. The project has had a significant impact on the volunteers, with one client attending an employability course but then being remanded in prison. Despite this, he held onto the seed planted in his mind and attended the chapel whilst in prison. After being released on remand, he returned to the project and now has a job with Waitrose.

What is the William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse's impact on the volunteers? The William Wilberforce Trust Warehouse has had a significant impact on the volunteers, with one client who attended an employability course but was then remanded in prison holding onto the seed planted in his mind and attending the chapel whilst in prison. After being released on remand, he returned to the project and now has a job with Waitrose. This demonstrates the positive impact that volunteering can have on volunteers, as well as the recipients.
5. The Future

We see increasing poverty in our parishes in the years ahead, and the need for further aid is more urgent than ever.

We remain committed to serving the needs of our communities, and having consulted our churches about what they believe needs doing, we are now developing partnerships to expand the reach and impact of our Community Ministry, building the resources available to parishes to tackle poverty and meet the needs of Londoners.

Based on our common desire for community well-being and cohesion, we are working increasingly with other denominations and faiths to share best practice and resources.

We are also seeking partners who can bring professional skills and knowledge when required. About 20% of our churches told us they work with a partner, with examples including Trussell Trust (foodbanks), Christians Against Poverty (debt advice), Ability Bow (inclusive fitness), as well as Age Concern and the Metropolitan Police.

As this report demonstrates, the Church of England in London uses human and financial capital effectively to achieve real value for money for Londoners. Yet it is also investing in their human and spiritual well-being, and the value of that is something on which no price can be put.

If you are interested in exploring partnering with us, please do get in touch with Matthew Girt
matthew.girt@london.anglican.org

More information about the projects and activities is available at www.london.anglican.org/beyondsundays

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Mini-case studies

St Paul’s Hammersmith runs a Spear centre: a free interactive six-week course for 16-24 year-olds giving skills and experience in CV writing, interviews, qualifications in customer service and increasing confidence. 75% of graduates go on to college or find work.

Research shows that the quality of the parent-child relationship in the first three years of a child’s life has a massive impact. Children are far happier, more socially skilled, can engage more easily in education and have higher self esteem if they have a secure attachment with their parents in these crucial early years. The Circle of Security Project based at St Mary’s Bryanston Square (but working in other areas of London) helps parents better understand how to promote this secure attachment.

The Gateway Centre at St Martin within Ludgate was created to provide space for affordable counselling in the City. The centre is also used for life coaching, spiritual accompaniment and chaplaincy.

Staines Parish Ministry runs DayBreak, a nurse-led day centre. The centre provides specialist care and support to people suffering from long-term illness, disabilities or mental health problems. They give respite for carers and support rehabilitation of those returning home from hospital.

St John’s Hoxton are a member institution of London Citizens, a community-organising alliance that helps give people the skills and confidence to join forces and create change in their neighbourhood and across the country.

Holy Trinity Brompton runs a charity called Caring for Ex-Offenders whose vision is to reduce reoffending by reintegrating ex-offenders into society through the local church. Through training and advice they equip churches across the UK to support ex-offenders in transforming their lives.

The vicar of St Ann’s Tottenham, Revd John Wood, is the organising chaplain for the team that supports Haringey Police Services.

Marylebone Parish hosts a health centre from which they run a counselling service.