

JANUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER - Horsforth Chaplaincy Project

Working, praying, networking to help Horsforth flourish.

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We, Rhoda, Rose and Duncan, are excited to write our **first newsletter together** in this new season in the life of Horsforth Chaplaincy Project.

There has been much going on and we hope you feel there is much to be encouraged by as you read about what we have been involved in, together with you. We really appreciate your ongoing support.



Primary Schools

The **Open the Book** team enjoyed acting out 'God's Friend', the story of Abraham trusting God and leaving his country to go to a place God led him, followed by the colourful and epic adventure of 'Joseph the Dreamer.' The children are often enthusiastic volunteers who join the acting team, and it is wonderful to see how much they love taking part. We are grateful for new people joining the team last term but always welcome others. Do get in touch if you would be interested in observing an assembly to see what is involved.

Horsforth High School



Aneta, Fui and Duncan run **Connect groups** for year 8 and 9 pupils on Tuesday lunchtimes. We have also been visiting the year 7's as they settle into school life. On Jan 20th we will start a year 7 Connect group, so please pray for this. As a team we were invited to lead five back-to-back **Christmas assemblies** at the school. Exhausting but great fun, and we hope it got the message of Christmas across to the young people.

Supporting Local Businesses and Building Community

Horsforth Farmers Market celebrated its' 10th birthday in October. It remains a popular part of Horsforth town life. It recorded over 1000 visitors in the last footfall count, many regulars but also those who invite their friends or family to pick up a treat or just to sample the atmosphere and have a friendly chat. The **Horsforth Matters** stall continues to provide opportunities for local ideas to be shared and recently Horsforth Town Council have made it a base for their surgeries.



This Christmas we helped organise the **Christmas market** at the bottom of Town Street which was a huge success with very good numbers. After many years of talking about it, this is the first time Town Street has been shut for a community event.

Refugee Support

Rose was appointed as **Refugee Support Worker** in August 2022 working 9.5 hours a week. Utilising her extensive experience and links in the world of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support, she has been able to support existing work and catalyse new opportunities and links. It has been very encouraging to see lots of things happen in recent months, as people interested in these issues have also given generously of their time and donated items or money to help.



Rose says: 'The local response to supporting people seeking sanctuary has been incredible. To be honest it has made my year and I am inspired by all of you.'

Friendship Group for Refugees at local hotel

Members of St Mary's church and its parish (Our Lady of Kirkstall) responded to the needs of a **group of 120 men seeking asylum** housed in a local hotel by setting up a Friendship Group. Every



Monday they provide a Conversation Club, sort and give out donated items, organise trips out and build relationships where all learn from each other. Rose was already part of this group and continues to support them by training volunteers and linking with other agencies across the city to provide lots of new opportunities. The men have often come from traumatic situations and only have £8 a week, plus they are not allowed to work, so they really appreciate activities to keep them occupied and learn more

about society in the U.K. Activities have included a drumming workshop (Opera North), use of football pitches at Leeds Trinity University, bike safety training and a 5-week course on 'Finding your Voice' run by Rose to help them tell their stories in front of a group.



Trips Out/Visits Through the generosity of several organisations wishing to help refugees, **many trips and visits** have taken place including:



- Trip to Deer Shed Music Festival in Thirsk,
- Day trip to Settle (People and the Dales)
- Celebration of Refugees Day at Leeds Trinity University,
- Day at Yorkshire Cricket Club (tour and cricket lessons)
- Coppicing in Nidderdale (NAONB)
- Volunteering to deliver Christmas cards

"I have enjoyed this place, it is a very beautiful place. In hotel I was very upset. When I came here I feel so good".

Collecting donated items

Many wonderful donations have been received and distributed, including bikes, bike accessories, clothes, prayer mats, Christmas presents and touching cards written by school children.

Working towards Horsforth becoming a Town of Sanctuary

Three meetings have taken place so far with up to 22 people attending – people who are interested in learning more about refugees and people seeking asylum and **how we can be more welcoming and supportive**. We have met and listened to 'experts by experience' telling their story, discussed ideas for what Horsforth can do more of, and heard a bit about the nationwide City of Sanctuary movement. Further meetings will look at how Horsforth can work towards becoming a **Town of Sanctuary**, please see the HCT website [Upcoming Events page](#) for details.



Celebrating Christmas in Horsforth

Rewind to Christmas

Around 300 Yr 4 school children from 6 Horsforth Primary Schools were immersed in the Christmas story through meeting characters from the story, watching videos and having fun with quizzes and craft, run by an excellent team. **Feedback** from teachers was excellent: *"The children were mesmerised by the storytelling", "Excellent – really well led by the adults and engaging for the children", "all children took part and had fun – led well and supported well by helpers"*.



Christmas Cards

Approximately 7000 Christmas Cards were delivered to houses in Horsforth over two days, as over 50 volunteers turned postmen and women to ensure all of Horsforth was wished a Merry Christmas and invited to join the celebrations. At the Sunday session we were helped by 9 refugees and enjoyed games and a nice homemade Thai curry together afterwards.



Carols in the Park

A cold but gloriously dry night greeted all who came to Carols in the Park. Around 450 – 500 people were greeted by a wonderful team to welcome them and ensure everyone had a hot drink, mince pie and a Carol Sheet. Nigel led the service and people joined in with the carols aided by the live band. As always, the 'live crib' and donkey helped to bring the Christmas story to life!



Nativity Scene Horsforth

Now a feature of Horsforth Town Street during Christmas week, the star shone over the nativity scene for all to see and ponder.

Carols in the Pubs

5 pubs plus Morrisons were greeted on the Thursday before Christmas with the invitation to join in some Carol Singing.

"It made my day," said the Morrisons manager who was on till midnight.



Warm Welcome Spaces

With utility bills at an all-time high and a cost-of-living crisis, churches and community organisations have been very aware of the difficulties faced by those struggling with their bills this winter. Following the national and local initiatives of Warm Welcome Spaces, churches discussed

what they could do to help. We collated information about free or low-cost activities/spaces already available across Horsforth and published these in one place on the website, and churches have added more opportunities for people to enjoy a warm space when the building is already being heated for other purposes. For details please see the Warm Welcome Spaces page on the HCT website: www.horsforthchurchestogether.co.uk/warm-welcome-spaces/



Communications



Rhoda joined the team in September 2022 in a new role which is partly focussed on **Communications**. She was quickly put to work with refreshing the website with current news and pictures, setting up a new Mailchimp list for sending out updates, creating flyers for events and liaising closely with administrators in churches. Feedback so far is that

the website is clearer, informative and dynamic, and emails are getting the information across effectively. Monitoring of the HCT website has shown a significant increase in people visiting the website as can be seen in this graph.

Rhoda says: 'I am really enjoying getting to know people and building relationships across the churches and community. If you have any suggestions for Communications please do get in touch'.



Looking Forward

As we go into this New Year, we are already busy thinking about **events and initiatives** coming up in the next few months – please pray that we will be ‘in step’ with the Spirit in all that we turn our hands to, so that we see His Kingdom come in many different ways in Horsforth.

Here are some to look out for: (the [Upcoming Events page](#) is the best place to check for updates)

- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: incl. Day of Prayer Tuesday 24th Jan @ The Grove
- Horsforth Town of Sanctuary meetings
- Perfectly Pitched (16th Feb, 16th Mar, 18th May, 1st June, 21st Sept, 23rd Nov)
- Holy Week: Nine words of Jesus @ Leeds Trinity, Walk of Witness etc
- Celebration and Volunteers Event – date TBA
- Horsforth Gala and summer events

Thank you for your continued support and prayers!

Please note new Contact Details - Duncan : duncan@horsforthchaplaincy.org
Rhoda: rhoda@horsforthchaplaincy.org Rose: rose@horsforthchaplaincy.org

How to Support us at Horsforth Chaplaincy Project

We are deeply grateful to the many people who give generously to the Project, without which we would not be able to function. Currently approximately 80 % of our income comes from individuals who give monthly or one-off donations. **Could you help us** to continue and also develop our work?

You can do this via online banking **using the details below**, OR download a **giving form** at www.horsforthchurchestogether.co.uk/horsforthchaplaincyproject/. We can also send the form by email on request- please email Duncan at duncan@horsforthchaplaincy.org Thank You!

Giving Using Online Banking:

- a) Please set up a payment with the REFERENCE: HORSFORTH, using these bank details:
Payee Name: **Leeds Christian Community Trust (LCCT)** Account no: **20129563** Sort code : **60-83-01**
- b) Please email Duncan at duncan@horsforthchaplaincy.org with your full name for our records and ask for a Gift Aid form if relevant.

Horsforth Chaplaincy Project is part of LCCT (Registered charity no. 1096860)
and endorsed by Horsforth Churches Together