



WINTER NEWSLETTER

Jan 2024

HORSFORTH CHAPLAINCY PROJECT

Welcome to our winter newsletter!

At our Team Christmas Breakfast we asked each other about **our highlights** of the last 6 months - read each of our pages below to find out what we chose! We are so **grateful to God** for his good hand upon us, enabling us to continue with well-known activities whilst also **stepping up** to the plate to respond to unexpected events which impact our community.



As we look ahead, there will be changes as Rose steps down and a new role is created (fixed term) and no doubt there will be other **new opportunities and changes** around us. Do pray we will be **in step with Christ** as he walks among us in our community of Horsforth.

Highlights

Cafe of Hope



The Cafe of Hope meeting in October brought together 30 of us from all the different churches to celebrate what we already do together and share ideas about **'what is on our heart for Horsforth'**. We watched a new bespoke **video 'Horsforth Stories of Hope'** and had great discussions on themes of Young People, People struggling, Later Life, Children and Families, Refugees, Climate, Communication and others. We look forward to seeing the ideas come to fruition at the right time.

Town of Sanctuary



The Great Get Together in September was an informal gathering of 65 people with a mixture of those seeking sanctuary and local residents including police and local councillors, filling the Parish Centre room at St Margaret's with a buzz of chatter as people ate international food and **made connections**. Three people gave short talks reflecting on aspects of their life here, **enabling increased understanding** of those seeking sanctuary, and then we finished with some spontaneous dancing!

Christmas events



Rewind to Christmas was a great success with 300 Year 4 children fully engaged in the story of the first Christmas through interactive activities. We were devastated to have to cancel **Carols in the Park** this year, but the stormy weather and unsafe ground were just too dangerous to go ahead. However, a new **Wreath Festival** plus a Kids Christmas Trail and other activities at The Grove (alongside the Lights Switch On) was very busy with hundreds of visitors.

Helping Horsforth Flourish



It's a popular sporting saying, 'teamwork makes the dreamwork' and my **highlight of the last 6 months** is the way that I have seen our **teams working so well** across all areas of the work. When I took up the Cragg church role, I confess I was nervous as to how it would affect HCP, but it has proved a wonderful opportunity to breathe new life into our work, as Rhoda and Rose have brought **new gifts to HCP** and so enriched what we do, including stretching our reach to new groups such **refugees**, helping get **communication** flowing across churches and wider community through a great website and eye-catching information, and so much more.

Connection, Connection, Connection

Connect is the name of our **Secondary school groups**, and this term we succeeded in getting 'four in a row' as we started our **fourth Connect group**, meaning every fortnight we spend a lunchtime sharing sweets, a game, a bible story and a prayer, **building connections** with Year 7's, Year 8's, Year 9's and Year 10's. The secondary school team has also run **lessons** on "Religious Experiences" for 6th formers and "Who is Jesus and Why do I follow him?"

It's where I stop and know God loves me

It's a space I can really be myself

for year 7's, plus doing a marathon of 5 **Christmas assemblies** in a morning. The **Primary School team** continued our **Open the Book** assemblies, connecting with 1700 children sharing the miraculous stories of how God gave his people unusual wisdom to bring down the walls of Jericho and help Gideon defeat the Midianites. This January we will take Open the Book into **Newlaithes** for the first time meaning we will be in **all 7 Horsforth Schools**. In December 300 children visited our wonderful **Rewind to Christmas** events.

These connections which we build throughout children's school life are precious and a privilege, and when difficult things happen in our community as it did this Autumn with the **tragic death of Alfie Lewis**, we were able to **offer help and a listening ear** to those who were grieving and work with all the agencies together to offer the best support possible.



Building Community



The Farmers Market is now in its 12th year and going strong. The recent survey only affirmed the impact. A small group of volunteers organise the committee and another group from HCT welcome people at the gate with a smile and a leaflet about all going on in Horsforth. This year we will be focusing on **bringing new faces** into the FM team, but we also we want to

BUILD PLANNING TEAMS for events like the GALA and CAROLS in the PARK, alongside teams for projects such as the FOOD PANTRY.

PLEASE PRAY for those who can come and join in and breathe new life and energy into all we do.



Looking Forward

Here is a reminder of things coming up in the next period of time:

- **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** events
- For smooth recruitment of a new **Refugee Support Worker**
- **Lent Talks:** Hear people **wrestle with what faith means** in the world of **Refugees** (28th Feb), **Education** (7th March), The **Environment** (12th March) & The **NHS** (19th March)
- **Easter - Walk of Witness, Easter Services, Rewind to Easter**
- **Summer GALA** and **Walk of Art**



Rose's Reflections

As my husband has recently finished working, I have decided to **step down** from my role as Refugee Support Worker this



March to spend more time with family and also travel more; however, I will definitely **continue to be involved** in the work as a volunteer. We have been successful in obtaining funding for a new post of 2 days a week for 15 months and are currently recruiting for this role, so please pray for the **right person to be appointed**.

As I reflect on the past 18 months, I have been **deeply moved** by all the **amazing people** I have met - the **men seeking sanctuary** at the local hotel who despite their horrific experiences are so willing to volunteer and integrate into our society, - the **volunteers** who have ventured out of their comfort zone to connect with others and help in so many ways, - the **local community** and **Horsforth Churches** providing donations, welcome, ideas and support, - the many **school children** lovingly creating hundreds of cards, pictures and gifts which have been distributed all across Leeds, - the **local Town Council** which is now working to become a Town Council of Sanctuary, - the **Steering Group for Horsforth Town of Sanctuary** who bring enthusiasm and work so well together, - and the **Horsforth Chaplaincy Project team** and Steering Group who have given so much support and structure to myself and the work to enable it to thrive. All these people have been able to **'see the person and not the label'**, and in welcoming these people they have welcomed the very spirit of Christ, (who was himself a refugee), enabling him to **find a home** here in Horsforth.



I truly feel that Horsforth is a town that welcomes people; that is who we are, it's our identity and we should be proud of it.

Recent Activities



The Great Get Together, Sept

At this lovely collaborative event funded by the Jo Cox Foundation, 4 of the men were so glad to be able to cook their own dishes for everyone, and there were great conversations. Three people who had attended the **Finding your Voice Training** gave short talks on what it is

like coming here from another country. St Margaret's has kindly offered space (under Warm Spaces) for **Monthly Socials** every 2nd Friday, with music, dance and opportunity to cook food.

Practical support and Advocacy

The **distribution of clothes** is now done every 6 weeks at Holy Name Church with a limited number of men from the hotel which is a much improved system and funding has been obtained for some clothes and bus tickets. A **local MP** has been very helpful when petitioned about men who have been removed to another city instead of being rehoused in Leeds where they have made links and friends. The **conversation club** continues and **new volunteers** have joined.

Christmas gifts and cards

Hundreds of **school children** made cards with lovely heartfelt messages, such as the one you see here: 'It's O.K. to shed the tears, but don't let the tears tear you'. Other children gave **gifts** for refugee children, and the men at the hotel received gifts.



Helping Horsforth Flourish

Collaborating, Celebrating, Communicating



For me, the highlight of the last 6 months was organising and facilitating the **Cafe of Hope** meeting in October, seeing everyone engage with the discussions with such enthusiasm. I also wrote up a **handy summary** to enable us to take the ideas forward.



In preparation for the meeting, I co-ordinated the production of a short video '**Horsforth Stories of Hope**' highlighting personal stories from 'woodworkers' at Horsforth Shed, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan, and volunteers from Open the Book /Rewind with Primary School children. It is a **great resource** and has been really well received by all who have seen it.

In September / October I designed, ran and collated results of **Customer Surveys** for the **Farmer's Market**, which had a great response rate yielding many lovely comments validating the hard work of the team, plus making suggestions as to how it could be even better.



My weekly work of **communications** involves updating the **Horsforth Churches Together website**, trying to create **eye-catching and easy to read** images/posters/newsletters, designing our **monthly mailings** and putting together the **Market Newsheet**. This year I re-designed the Christmas Card in an easy to read **calendar format** which seemed to meet with general



approval. I can often be found searching for **just the right image** to get the message across - for instance, how do you depict a Victorian Christmas Event including a barrel organ? (!) Or how do you get across at a glance the idea of 4 Lent Talks about important issues, with an image which will attract people from all backgrounds?

I also **support with events and projects**, sharing the load with Duncan. Recently I helped to co-ordinate a **new event** (running alongside the Christmas Lights Switch On), with a stall on Town Street giving out the Christmas Cards and a Trail for kids taking them into The Grove, where people the enjoyed the **Wreath Festival**, music, a cafe, Tots area and Climate Action stalls.

Many thanks for taking time to read this and for supporting us - from all of us at HCP: **The Steering Group:** Peter Mawson, Rozel Daltrey, Jo Bailey, Jane Linley, Pete Gillions, and **Duncan, Rhoda and Rose**

Our Support

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.

If you would like to support us, please **email Duncan** at duncan@horsforthchaplaincy.org, or follow the guidance on our **Giving Form** on our webpage: horsforthchurchestogether.co.uk/horsforthchaplaincyproject/. **Thank you!**

Feel free to **contact us** at:

duncan@horsforthchaplaincy.org, rhoda@horsforthchaplaincy.org, rose@horsforthchaplaincy.org

Helping Horsforth Flourish