

2023 REVIEW

New Community Network

newcommunity
NETWORK



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NEW COMMUNITY REVIEW 2022–2023

Our mission is to change lives and transform communities.

Our vision is to see the whole church following the way of Jesus, making disciples, bringing life and transformation to every area of Southampton and beyond.

Join our community

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-  77 St Monica Rd, Sholing, Southampton SO19 8ES

Our values

PRESENCE

We prioritise God's presence

GROWTH

We equip and empower one another to grow

COMMUNITY

We create environments where healthy relationships flourish

OWNERSHIP

We serve, take initiative and give of our best

CONFIDENCE

We are confident in the power of the Gospel to transform lives

OUTWARD LOOKING

We reach out to others, serving with love and hospitality

INTRODUCTION

2023 has been a year of many new beginnings. Just two months before the year began, we called the church to a season of prayer: over the months of November, December and January, many people of all ages got stuck in to pray and listen to God for our church and the future.

What emerged in that time laid the foundations for much that happened in the following twelve months:

Sholing Congregation moved into a great new building, our young people led us in worship for the first time, we launched our new Life Hubs, Transform Hubs and Grow Hubs, and we invested in Bitterne Park School CU.

At Central Hall, we saw Warm Space flourish and grow, added a classroom to Hope School, and moved the staff team into new offices.

We saw School of Ministries train more leaders in Africa and Asia, relaunched Alpha, welcomed new students into the church, and invited more people to hear the Gospel at Christmas than we have for many years.

All this we underpinned with our new core values of Presence, Growth, Community,

Ownership, Confidence and being Outward Looking.

We also celebrated the wonderful contribution of two initiatives that came to an end in 2023: Bake Club, which had been a great place of community and friendship for the last four years, and CCTS, which had provided much-needed counselling to so many in our city since 1995.

Throughout the year we saw God's faithfulness and experienced his generous provision in so many ways – not least through the wonderful commitment of all of those who gave their time, energy and money so that, together, we could serve God's vision to change lives and transform communities in Southampton and far beyond.

Theo & Sarah
Senior Leaders

CENTRAL

In our church gatherings this year we delved deeper into scripture together, exploring the book of Ephesians and the parables of Jesus, as well as examining the core values that sit at the heart of our community.

In March, we welcomed hundreds of leaders from the UK and across the globe to the Pioneer Annual Leaders Conference, hosted at Central Hall. In May, many of us camped, worshipped and prayed together in sunny Sussex at the Wildfires Festival, which was a great time of encouragement and hearing from God afresh.

In September, we launched our new small groups – our Life Hubs and Transform Hubs - and initiated our discipleship pathway through our new Grow Hubs. It's been exciting to see people come together and engage in new ways through these groups.

Phil Knox inspired us to a fresh confidence in the Gospel at our Church Away Day in November, following which we launched Pray for Five, an initiative encouraging us to pray for our friends, chat to them

about Jesus, or invite them to church and Alpha. This led into a very successful Alpha course.

December was probably our busiest month. Our Nativity Service, Kings Chamber Orchestra concerts, Carol Service and Quiet Christmas Service meant we welcomed more than 1400 people through our doors to hear the good news of Jesus.



SHOLING



Our chief goal for 2023 was to find and establish a permanent new ‘home’ for our worship, discipleship, and mission activities serving Sholing and the surrounding areas.

On Easter Sunday we moved to, and re-opened as a church at, the former Sholing Elim Church building. It was a landmark occasion, having been based temporarily at the Woolston Royal British Legion Club since September 2022.

We continued to serve and engage with the local community throughout the year by distributing free Fare Share food every week and running our monthly quiz night from both locations. We also hosted regular community teas with plenty of activities for children, home baked refreshments, and live music. The Bible Course and the Prayer Course were completed to build our Biblical understanding and support spiritual growth in the life of the church.

The Elim Church have been very generous and helpful in allowing us to use their building in St Monica Road for at least

“New friendships have been formed, and there is a great sense of unity between both groups as if we have been together for much longer.”

three years. New friendships have been formed, and there is a great sense of unity between both groups as if we have been together for much longer. The Southampton House of Prayer is now also based there, with people from churches across the city coming together to seek God each week. We have seen many answers to prayer and grown deeper in our relationship with God and each other as a result.



NEXT GENERATION



2023 brought a lot of change to our Next Generation work, and we want to say a massive thank you to all our Next Generation Team who faithfully serve our children and young people each week.

We started 2023 without a youth leader, and our amazing team

kept all our provisions going, constantly going above and beyond in investing in our young people. In July, Sara Jones expanded her role as Next Generation Lead and Chaplain, overseeing all our 0-18 ministry. This has created exciting new opportunities in the church and beyond, such as helping to run the Christian Union at Bitterne Park Secondary School.

It's been fantastic to see so much life across our Next Generation groups, including our Easter Holiday Club, which was attended by 20 children from the church and local community. Our youth work has had a brilliant year: as well as Thursday gatherings, both our Club Night socials and Youth Jam have continued to grow, with around 25

young people and their instruments now attending the latter! Our youth also attended Youth Fest for the first time, a city-wide cross-church event that has fostered new friendships and passion for Jesus.

Finally, it's been great to welcome more students to our church community. In September, we prayed that we would see five new students call New Community their home while at university. God answered this prayer so faithfully and more than 10 students came to our student Christmas meal.



SO14

Our purpose is to serve the local community, bring relief through practical help and support, nurture hope through belonging and connection, and carry the spirit of God to those in need.

Throughout 2023, Creative English continued weekly, helping students from diverse cultures to improve their English, build confidence, find friendship and cultivate community. We had a total of 30 new students attend in 2023, averaging 10 each week.

Warm Space has grown, thanks to a fantastic and dedicated volunteer team. We open our doors to provide homemade hot food and a warm, welcoming environment, but it is the sense of community, belonging and care that keeps people coming back. We now get 50–60 guests each week, including several Ukrainian families.

Bake Club continued until July 2023 as a place for local women to make friends and improve their wellbeing. We are so grateful to those who served Bake Club faithfully for four and a half years of food and fun.

Community Café welcomed more than 2,800 guests this year. Around eight volunteers assist one of our four team

“It is the sense of community, belonging and care that keeps people coming back.”

leads in serving food to the guests each week, talking with them, and doing what they can to value every person there. Many of our volunteers have no church background but are keen to serve at the Café on a regular basis.

Dockgate and the Park Outreach Team have now combined to become Park Plus, and The Hub has now become 50s Plus. These two groups are now part of the group of Transform Hubs, aiming to provide a space of discipleship and friendship during the week at Central Hall.



CCTS



In December 2023 CCTS closed its doors for the final time, marking the end of a wonderful season of ministry that brought life and transformation to many people.

In 1995, typically only those who could afford to pay private fees could access the psychological help they needed from counselling services. Norma Parrack, with the support of New Community Church, responded to this need by founding Central Counselling and Training Service (CCTS) – an affordable, professional therapeutic service for the community, with an additional bursary for those in financial difficulty.

CCTS developed and provided counselling to thousands in the Southampton area over the past 28 years. The feedback we often received testifies to the enormous value of the work undertaken. CCTS trained a substantial number of new counsellors, some of whom subsequently started similar counselling services in Edinburgh, Bournemouth, and the New Forest, as well as individual practices. We are grateful for the commitment, skills, and generosity of all who played their part in CCTS's success.

In recent years, CCTS underwent significant changes, including the retirement of senior members of the management and tutor teams, and the subsequent closure of the professional qualifying courses previously

run within the service. The pandemic added to these challenges. Access to dedicated counselling rooms became problematic and, in this current cost-of-living crisis, bursary requests increased pressure on the financial model of the service. Whilst individually these challenges were not insurmountable, the cumulative impact was significant.

Despite these recent challenges, CCTS continued to serve Southampton and its surrounding area well in 2023. The team of counsellors, led and supported so well by Victoria Lash, prioritised the needs of their clients throughout this difficult time. It was therefore with sadness that we prayerfully concluded that CCTS in its current form should close, and we wait with expectancy to see a fresh vision for the city emerging in the coming months and years.

“I am hugely appreciative for the excellent professional training I received with CCTS, which prepared me so well to work with clients. It has been such a privilege to be part of this work and to see God transform lives through it.”

NC KIBERA

Post covid recovery has been sharp but the wounds deep. Rampant inflation and government fuelled political riots have been violent and costly, and yet there is still much to celebrate.

Now working independently of any large Kenyan organisation, the projects here are learning responsibility and accountability using their unique understanding of the Kibera ecosystem.

In 2023, a small rented concrete building was secured as a hub and teaching base for the relaunched Kenya Saints Football Academy. Success in the division 2 league brought with it unsustainable costs, so now the focus is on reaching the next generation of footballers from 4–19. More than a hundred meet weekly for training and an excellent female coach now works alongside the growing number of girls. The hub is also a retreat and base for the 12 steps drugs rehab programme and the trash collection programme, which models work and commitment for the unemployable.

800 menstrual cups were carried by us, bewildering Kenyan customs. Challenging traditional views and engaging men in the understanding; the new hub served so well.

Vivian from Kibera writes,

“Our sick old Mama braved the rain to get the 2kg packet of UNGA and 1kg of sugar when she heard we were around. At her 72 years, and no-one to care for her, she had to try all possible ways to reach us even though walking was a problem for old Mama. Once in a while, we are able to make our community smile through you, our UK friends.”



SCHOOL OF MINISTRIES

School Of Ministries (SOM) continued to grow in 2023, reaching out across Africa and Asia.

Over 1,200 church leaders and pastors are now being trained across 36 centres in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Ghana, Tanzania, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria, India, Nepal and the Philippines.

We have almost finished translating the entire training material into French and are working on Spanish and Urdu versions for the launch of SOM in Latin America and Pakistan.

Katrina Mack has been running our wonderful monthly Zoom prayer gatherings and the executive team of Billy Kennedy, Paul Turner, Graham Blake, Lucie Rush and Nethan Wejisinghe are now meeting regularly to oversee developments.



PIONEER

New Community Church is part of the Pioneer network of churches and supports its work in the UK and internationally.

Billy Kennedy was released from the leadership of New Community Church in 2022, partly to focus on the stewardship of Pioneer International. There are now networks or emerging networks developing in over 20 nations, from New Zealand, across Asia, Africa and through to the Americas.

As a church, we're privileged to have played a small part in this great work supporting, training, and standing with leaders across the globe during the past year, as well as hosting the Pioneer International Conference and Annual Leaders Conference at Central Hall.



WTC THEOLOGY

WTC Theology was born out of a desire to provide high quality, Spirit-filled, academic study at a regional level in partnership with the local church.

WTC Theology's Southampton Hub has been a part of New Community since June 2021. The Hub is a partnership with Portswood Church, where it is currently based. Throughout the country, there are now 13 hubs based in local churches, each seeking to serve their vicinity and beyond, with over 200 students studying for degrees or diplomas.

This academic year, the Southampton Hub welcomed five new students and six returning students across all our programmes. The joy of the hub model is building relationships together locally, making space to worship, and discussing teaching and experiences of how God has revealed himself. As part of our time together, in addition to academic teaching, we invite regional practitioners to share with students. This has included Ivan Haigh leading a discussion around the environment, Sim Dendy sharing lessons from his sabbatical, Mikey Powell attending our bi-annual residential, and several prophetic art workshops. These

are highlights for our students to gather together, with each day bookended in worship and praise together.



NEW COMMUNITY VENTURES (NCV)

As the Department for Education prepared for the new Hope Community School building to be built across the road from Central Hall, the existing site needed to expand. Meanwhile, the events business at Central Hall has also grown to meet popular demand.

In early 2023, an additional layer of portacabins was added to the current classrooms at Central Hall. This was far more complex than it sounds, requiring planning permission and road closures! Additionally, the most recent project, to provide offices for New Community Network (NCN) and NCV has just been completed on time.

The events business has continued to go from strength to strength, in what is now a very busy building. We have hosted famous names such as Paul Gascoigne, Matt Le Tissier and David O'Doherty. Large organisations have used our facilities including Ernst and Young, Carnival Cruises, Norwegian Cruises and the Princes Trust.

Furthermore, our niche as a wonderful sports arena has seen grappling and wrestling events, plus a strength competition run by the four times winner of the World's Strongest Man title. We have also welcomed fellow charities in areas of muscular dystrophy, diabetes and autism. And finally, we have hosted musical talent from the City of Southampton Orchestra, Ward Thomas and the Welsh National Opera.



HOPE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In 2023 we continued to look for creative ways to support and partner with Hope Community School through offering chaplaincy, giving practical help, and supporting families through our Community Hub activities. Hope Community School welcomed another 30 families, and now has 230 pupils and 43 staff, making it a full school with children in years R–6.

Our wonderful volunteers have helped on school trips and baked cakes to keep the staff going! Billy has continued to chair the school council (the governing body), and our wonderful group of Hopers led by the Charts continues to provide practical help and prayer support. We have seen many answers to prayer this year.



FINANCE

Thank you. You have shone a beacon of hope throughout 2023, in what has been a difficult year for so many. Everything we do at home and abroad is made possible through your generosity.

It's heartening to see how our church family have come together to make a significant difference in the lives of those facing challenges, both locally and internationally. Let's take a look at how your financial partnership is making a difference...

Amid the cost-of-living crisis, we have been able to respond in extraordinary ways, supporting not only church activity at Central Hall, but the needs of the local area and beyond.

We have seen an increase in donations this year bringing the total to £583k (up from £565k in 2022). Our Gift Day raised £40K

(up from £18K in 2022). Our Warm Space appeal brought in just under £10k across the financial year, enabling us to provide more hot meals and food vouchers to those in need. The swift response to the humanitarian appeal following the earthquake in central Turkey and Syria was also amazing, raising just under £3k of much-needed funds.

Your commitment and generosity have enabled us to support incredible causes:

Amber Charity

Barnabas Ministries

Flowers of Justice

Pioneer Trust

Southampton Christian Network

Southampton Family Trust

Southampton Street Pastors

Steve Lee Ministries

The Firgrove Centre

The Children's Society

Your giving is making a global difference, supporting work in the following countries:

Ghana	Kenya	Sierra Leone	Turkey
Guinea	Liberia	Syria	Uganda
India	Malawi	Sri Lanka	USA
France			

In total we gave away £128k in 2023 (compared to £125k in 2022) to UK and international bodies:

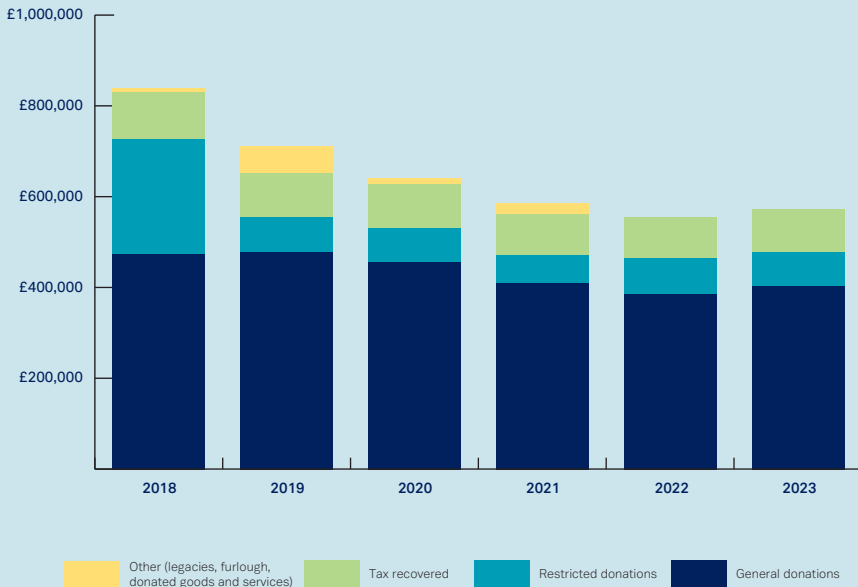
Grants to other organisations £ 92,539

Grants to individuals £ 35,862

Total individual grants £128,401

Overall, the commitment and generosity of this community has undoubtedly made a huge difference. It's a testament of the power of collective compassion and Kingdom vision, here on earth.

Here is a breakdown of the donations and legacies received:



NB: a full set of accounts will soon be uploaded to the Charity Commission's website or feel free to contact the finance team for a copy.

Tax Efficient Giving

Remember you can increase the value of donations/tithes at no extra cost to yourself through Gift Aid. This form of income for the church does not cost you anything if you are a UK Taxpayer. Simply go to our church website where you can

download a Gift Aid Declaration Form, complete it, sign it and return it to us at finance@newcommunity.org.uk. You can also use Churchsuite for both your giving and your Gift Aid declaration.

What better legacy to give!

You can make a huge impact on the work of the church for generations to come by leaving a legacy. A gift in your will would continue to provide for all that we do locally and internationally. No matter how big or small, your legacy gift will give hope and the chance to make a difference now and into the future. Have a look at our website to see how you can leave a legacy.

If you regularly attend New Community Church and are considering tithing, please pray about how much you can start giving to support the work of the church.

If you already give, a huge thank you and please consider reviewing your giving. An extra £5000 each month will go a long way – that's 100 people giving an extra £50!

For more information on different ways to give, please visit our giving page at www.newcommunity.org.uk or email our finance team at finance@newcommunity.org.uk.

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