

2020 UPDATE

New Community Network

newcommunity
NETWORK

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NEW COMMUNITY UPDATE 2020

New Community Church is a resource church called to serve the city, the nation and the nations.

Join our community



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INTRODUCTION

2020 has been a year like no other in living memory. Closed schools, empty streets, Zoom meetings, travel corridors and lockdown were just some of the concepts and experiences that have now become part of our new normal.

At the start of the year the word I shared with the church was 'lift your eyes.' Months before any indication of the magnitude of the emerging news from Wuhan, China, the encouragement was to fix our gaze on 'the One who sits enthroned forever.' Whatever the circumstances or the challenges that we face, we have a hope and a confidence that sustains and strengthens us.

In AD165 there was a pandemic that swept the Roman Empire. It is claimed that over 5 million people died as the deadly virus rampaged through the population over a 15-year period. Rodney Stark, in his book, 'The Rise of Christianity,' highlighted three

reasons that the fledging church was strengthened during this time. The Christians had a hope beyond the here and now, they had a theology of suffering, understanding its purpose in the process of sanctification and they cared for those in need whether they were part of their community or not.

It has been great to see the way the various teams and ministries across the church have responded during this time, as they have provided multiple connection points for those within our community, continued to serve and care for those both in and outside of our community, and found innovative ways to continue their work in the city and beyond.





LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

We have spent a lot of time in the second half of the year reflecting on our vision and how we adapt to both the current season and the new normal that will emerge as the virus is brought under control. Things may never be the same again, but we can learn from others who have gone before, and we can trust in the God who is enthroned above the earth to lead and guide us.

We hope you are encouraged as you read this year's report and that you will continue to be strengthened and sustained as you seek to follow the way of Jesus in bringing life and transformation to every area of our city.

A huge thanks to all the leaders, staff and volunteers serving across our congregations, ministries and projects and to the many who have provided administrative, pastoral and prayerful support.

I would like to make special mention of Shirley Webster who, in 2020, stepped down from her role on the church leadership team. Shirley has served faithfully for many years and had a massive impact on many people's lives. Although she has stepped down from a formal role on the leadership team, she will continue to be involved with her local



community and make an ongoing contribution to the life of New Community Church. Thank you, Shirley!

We continue to lift our eyes to the heavens because we know that is where our help comes from.

Billy Kennedy

CENTRAL CONGREGATION

At the start of 2020 we set out a fresh vision for Central Congregation, focussing on how, empowered by the presence of God, we could grow as a community of Jesus followers, seeking spiritual, social and cultural renewal within our city.

But we soon had to rapidly adapt how we did things as we entered the first national lockdown. We moved our Sunday services, Connect Groups, and Deeper prayer and worship nights online, enabling us to continue worshipping together and we worked with our pastoral team to ensure that everyone across the congregation had a point of connection and relational support.





Our online services opened up church to many more people, and we have seen an average of 1,000 views per week across our Youtube channel over the past year. We also began holding a Zoom meet-up after our Sunday services – these have been a great connecting point for the congregation and have created a welcoming environment for several new members who have joined since we have been online.

In September we launched Pattern Groups, for groups of 3-4 individuals to journey openly and honestly together in their faith. We finished the year with a successful Windows of Hope campaign during Advent, and a Christmas celebration from Central Hall broadcast online, giving over 2,700 viewers the chance to hear the true story of Christmas.

STORY OF HOPE

WIDER CONNECTIONS

Being online has opened up the walls of the church and enabled many to join our services who otherwise wouldn't have been able to.

This year we have regularly been joined by people from across the UK, as well as internationally. Some are members of the church currently overseas; others were part of the church in the past who had moved away, whilst others are completely new.



SHOLING CONGREGATION



*picture taken before lockdown restrictions

We had three
goals for 2020:

PEOPLE

to develop a greater sense
of belonging and growth in
the church family

PRAYER

to enhance the prayer
life of the church

PRESENCE

to experience more of
the presence of God



Due to COVID-19 our Sunday services, Connect Groups, Alpha Course and The Bible Course all moved on-line.

We started daily Zoom prayer meetings and an online Café Bar to provide places for support, encouragement and social connection. To serve the local community we started distributing free food and baby clothes every week to those needing extra support.

Despite the challenges of lockdown, our relationships with each other and with God have truly deepened this year. Praying together almost every day has helped achieve this, and our weekly online service has reached many more people than expected. We have also continued to create connections and maintain a presence within our local community through the food and baby clothes distribution projects. And for Christmas, the high cross at St Andrews was illuminated, a huge tree put up outside, and nativity displays set up in the windows.

STORY OF HOPE

NEW RHYTHMS

We have successfully developed new rhythms of prayer and worship, which have been key to building community and fostering spiritual growth.

Several people have flourished as active members of the church family bringing life to the local community. The online service has been an excellent way for people of all ages to use their gifts and talents in ways they didn't know they could!

NEXT GENERATION

We hoped to continue and develop our usual activities – including After School and Holiday Club, mentoring, City Worship, the Schools KCO concert and other Christmas events.

However, in response to the pandemic, we moved our resources online, delivered activity packs, filmed



God's House, held Zoom youth and children's sessions, kept to the 'Rule of 6' by doing garden groups, mentored in parks and over Zoom, delivered transition gifts

and helped our young people transition virtually. Later we made it back into Central Hall for in-person connecting points, and in November we made 160 Advent packs and celebrated Christmas online!

Our children, youth and team have done an amazing job of adapting this year. Only a small proportion of what we hoped to do was cancelled totally. We have maintained connection and the pandemic has also given space for new things to begin, like mid-week groups for the children. In March, Dan Desmond was still relatively new to his role with us, and Katie had just agreed to do the New Wine internship with us. Despite the circumstances, they have flourished in their roles, building team, developing programmes, and connecting with children and young people.

STORY OF HOPE

GARDEN GROUPS

Our youth garden groups were a real success.

In the summertime, we were restricted to only having six people in a garden at once. We were concerned this would limit the youth, but we made the most of what we could, and these times were so beneficial. We saw much longed-for connection, and the small group sizes meant the young people could really connect and get to know one another better. It has been an encouraging testimony in using what God gives us, not just wishing for more.



COMMUNITY HUB

At the start of 2020 our aim was to strengthen and build on the connections that we have been cultivating through Hope Community School and beyond.

As part of our worship, we set out to share food, give to and comfort those in need, bring relief, freedom and healing to those who are mistreated and pressed down so that our light will shine out.

In response to the pandemic we had to find creative ways to connect and run our activities. We provided in-person activities safely for those most in need, while moving other activities online, all while looking to respond to the new needs and challenges revealed and accelerated by the crisis.

*picture taken before lockdown restrictions



*picture taken before lockdown restrictions

We recruited a Coffee Shop co-ordinator who, despite starting work on the first day of lockdown, was able to open for the less restricted parts of the year and made some meaningful connections with the local community.

Rachel Comer also joined the team to help develop our Hub activities.

This year 22 learners joined us building their confidence and learning English, and 18 ladies from the local community connected and developed their baking skills weekly at Bake Club. More Bake Club ladies joined us to make and deliver a fresh meal for 70 asylum seekers at Christmas. We have supported and journeyed with individuals facing eviction, fleeing domestic violence, parenting alone, experiencing bereavement, seeking asylum and suffering from both physical and mental health challenges. Special Guardians ran in-person as well as online with approximately 50 families.

STORY OF HOPE

PROVIDING SUPPORT

We were able to provide support for a single mum that we had met through our Creative English classes, who was at risk of losing her home.

With limited English or knowledge of the housing system she has really appreciated the emotional and practical support we have given her.



COMMUNITY CAFÉ

The Community Cafe team made the difficult decision to temporarily stop running the cafe in March during the first lockdown in England.

This was the first time the cafe has not opened since we first began in December 2006. Instead, some of our volunteers helped provide a take-away food service to the homeless on the high street in its place. We were able to re-open the Community Café as a take-away service from early July and then run our first take-away Christmas Café for 2 days in December.

Pausing the Community Café in the first lockdown in 2020 was heart-breaking for the core team and all involved. The café provides a lifeline for many of our guests and volunteers, not only for the food but also for the community and relationships that

have formed over time. Since July it has been a privilege to welcome back many of our regular guests. Offering a take-away service and with social distancing measures in place, we receive from 40-70 guests each Sunday in the Central Hall car park and saw similar numbers at this year's Christmas Café.

We continue to feel humbled to be part of the café. We are incredibly grateful to be part of New Community Church, who have journeyed with us throughout and for the amazing team of volunteers who have kept the café going through the Covid pandemic. Thanks to people's generosity, we were able to give out clothing and chocolates, and even hand-wrapped bouquets of flowers, together with a Christmas dinner on Christmas Day. The café has really made a difference to the lives of the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised in our city, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back inside when it is safe to do so.





INTERNATIONAL WORK

NEW COMMUNITY KIBERA

Two UK team visits and a film crew visit were originally planned this year, though obviously that has not all been possible.

Covid hit the slum hard, particularly in the areas of hunger and suicide, but our Kenyan partners have stepped up to the plate under appalling circumstances. Lines of communication, organisation and financial support continue, and the relationships and trust on the ground that have been built up over the last seven years are really bearing fruit.

Though we have not been able to help in-person as much as we had planned, work has nevertheless continued regardless. Our final training team visit in February before lockdown focussed on menstrual health and business development. During the pandemic, there has been weekly food distribution to Kibera 'no go' areas via Umoja (Unity) group, and our on-going business training has been developing online. We have succeeded in purchasing some slum land for the Kibera washroom project, and one of our football teams were promoted to Kenya's National Division League Two. With much more besides.



STORY OF HOPE

WASTE DISPOSAL

Disposing of any type of waste in Kibera is a huge challenge.

Dumping just out of site and open burning do little to mitigate the problem – survival takes precedence over long-term environmental issues. Always a source of surprise, young Bonface has created unexpected pockets of change and hope, helping to organise communal clean-ups and joint strategies, with Kibera residents pulling together to make a real difference. Ever the optimist, this young visionary is planning the planting of tree saplings in some of the cleared areas to improve air quality and quite literally “bringing life to the city”.



SCHOOL OF MINISTRIES

2020 revolved around an International Conference we held in March, before lockdown.

This was a great success, bringing together delegates from around the world, deepening relationships and seeing increased commitment to the vision.

We had also set out to increase the number of leaders able to teach the

SOM materials alongside our on-going training across the nations, but the pandemic prevented this. In the autumn, some schools recommenced in Africa and in India via Zoom. Off the back of this, we started a project to record all our 36 modules of teaching and make them available through YouTube, which has been our main focus since March. So far we have recorded 80 hours of teaching, and we plan that over half of the modules will be in place by the summer of 2021.



STORY OF HOPE

NEW SCHOOLS IN SIERRA LEONE

A visit by our representative in Sierra Leone in December is resulting in the commencement of four new schools in the east and south of the country, which will reach hundreds of leaders of churches who would otherwise have received no training for ministry.

NEW COMMUNITY VENTURES



In early 2020 we committed to taking a step back from logistically complicated events, which use a lot of staff and expertise, instead concentrating on training, exam and conference bookings.

This decision was fortuitous given the Covid restrictions of the past year, when many of these bookings were able to continue during lock down as 'educational services.' Additionally, clients felt safe due to the space we could offer them.

NCV has now become a settled, profitable organisation. The knowledge gained and the lessons learnt over previous years meant that we have been able to take calculated decisions and mitigate risk.

We have built up a great portfolio of clients with the venue being used on many days from 7am through to 9pm. Essential maintenance tasks have also been carried out. These include the fire and intruder alarm system, as well as the redecoration of the Coffee Shop, the Britannia Suite and the Small Hall.

Success is not just about financial performance, although this period has been profitable. It is also about the services we have provided to the many new visitors to our venue. We have hosted accountancy exams for 500 people, around 3000 people from the local community received their flu jabs in the Small Hall this winter and the venue was streamed to a worldwide TV audience three times this year for sporting events in the Main Hall. We now look ahead to 2021 knowing that we can adapt, and thrive, with whatever adversity comes our way.

CCTS



Our plan for 2020 was to continue to grow and develop the service – both counselling provision and training.

In response to the pandemic, we moved our counselling service, Diploma qualification and our training workshops online, stopped face-to-face work and did not take any new referrals. While this enabled the service to continue, we did see a significant drop in counselling clients in the second quarter, and we had to cancel or reschedule the training we had planned. As the year progressed, we were able to re-open for referrals having implemented new systems and processes, including Walk and Talk therapy for clients or counsellors unable to engage online.

We increased our counselling capacity by recruiting and inducting five new counsellors to the team, bringing the total to 18, and ran a pilot in partnership with Youth Options and Lordshill Youth Project, to provide counselling to young people.

STORY OF HOPE

RESPONSE TO CRISIS

The way that counsellors, clients, students and tutors have made the transition to online in such a short space of time has been incredible.

The feedback we have received from those engaging with the service continues to be positive – 94% of counselling clients said they would ‘highly recommend’ us to others who needed help and 95% of delegates on a recent online training workshop gave it a 5-star rating.



PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout 2020 we have continued to partner with churches and other organisations across Southampton. We believe this is more important than ever now, to help support a city in lockdown, and to avoid becoming isolated.

Through Southampton Christian Network, we have supported a monthly citywide Zoom prayer meeting and partnered with several other churches to lead an online Pentecost celebration.

As part of our relief work, we have also partnered with various charities organisations around the city – working together to help change lives and transform communities.

Through Amber Charity we helped support women in Southampton exploited by the sex industry. Through Bob Light's work with Flowers of Justice we helped to provide for some of the neediest families in our city. Supporting Firgrove Family Trust, we helped providing counselling for those impacted by miscarriage, stillbirth or neo-natal death, unintended pregnancy, loss to adoption or issues surrounding a termination.

These are just some of the local charities we partner with and help to support financially (for a more complete list, see the finance section). We have also taken a more active role in partnering with Love Southampton and Hope into Action this year – along with our continued work with Hope Community School.

LOVE SOUTHAMPTON

Love Southampton is a network of churches, charities and Christian organisations.

They work together as a voice, a catalyst and a brand to help represent the Christian community, to love and serve the city, and to connect and empower people to bring about social transformation. We worked with them to help provide support to a group of asylum seekers, as well as helping deliver food to the most vulnerable during lockdown. Annabel Wright now meets weekly with the team and we are increasingly working together and excited to be partnering together.



PIONEER

PIONEER

We are part of the Pioneer network of churches. Pioneer was established in the UK in 1985 and we have been a partner church since 2010. Billy Kennedy, our Senior Leader, also serves as the International Leader of the Pioneer network currently supporting emerging church networks in 14 different nations.

This year we hosted Pioneer's Annual Leaders Conference at Central Hall before lockdown and, in April, we were part of Pioneer's 'global wave of prayer' as we prayed and raised funds for partner churches in developing nations to help them respond to the Covid crisis in their communities.

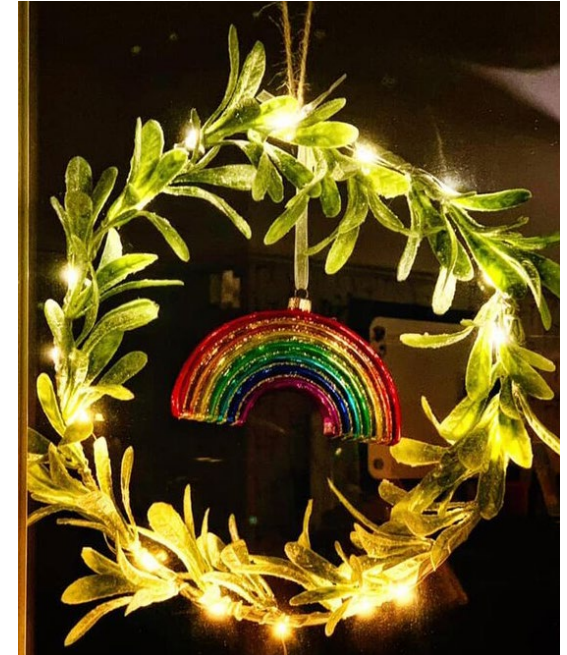


MIRACLE STREET

MIRACLE STREET

We have continued to work with and support our friend Steve Lee in his ministry with Miracle Street, reaching those who do not know Jesus with the good news.

In particular, we worked with Steve to put together an Advent campaign – reaching our friends and communities with stories of hope. We put up windows of hope in our homes, shared a new story of hope every day on social media, as well as three 'big story' videos from Steve himself. These reached about 12,000 views overall.



HOPE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In 2020 we welcomed another 29 families to the school, and now serve 126 pupils and their families.

The staff team grew to 25 and were supported by 37 volunteers from New Community Church. The Church has also supported through providing extra space at Central Hall, as well as support for children with additional needs, and chaplaincy for families and staff.

A group of 'Hopers' have met every month to pray and offer practical

support. In lockdown we started Hope in the Community Facebook group and carried out a survey to find out what were the biggest challenges families were facing and how we could support them. Volunteers have read or prayed with children, prayed with parents and grandparents, met for 1:1 support, and run groups, courses and afterschool clubs. In the first lockdown the church community bought, made and wrote a card of support to every family in the school. Hope is alive and active; love is given and experienced, and we are changing lives and transforming a community!



FINANCE

Last year, Covid-19 brought about its challenges and more than ever your faithfulness and love for Jesus was evident in your financial partnering with New Community Church.

We were amazed at how much we were able to do and how far we were able to reach and support those in financial need.

Thank you for your continued generosity - your donations are changing lives and transforming communities!

We were able to respond to need within our church family, across the city, and beyond our borders. We have provided over 4000 hot meals through Community Café, offered emotional and mental support through our counselling service, supported children, families and staff members at Hope Community School, invested in youth & children's work, seen people come to Christ and grow in their discipleship, trained leaders in developing nations, supported some of the most vulnerable people through New Community Kibera and the list could go on...

Donated income this year totalled £639k (2019: £664k includes restricted donations & legacies received) which is -5% lower when compared to last year. You will see from the chart there was £11K of additional sundry income.

Our general donations have held up well over the past few years with a fluctuation on restricted donations where we received funds for specific purposes.

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

Gift Day

Our Gift Day offering in 2020 raised £42k (2019: £26k).

Generosity Fund

We believe that giving 'above and beyond' reflects the spirit of the Gospel and this is something that we as a church have embraced. We have made a commitment to give away 10% of our donated income to organisations and ministries beyond ourselves. At the beginning of each year, we review our giving and prayerfully consider our commitment to financially support and partner with other organisations and ministries.

These are some of the UK organisations we partnered with and supported in 2020:

Amber Charity, Barnabas Ministries, Hope Community School, Firgrove Family Trust, Flower of Justice, Kings Production, Love Southampton, Pioneer Trust, Southampton Christian Network, Southampton Family Trust, Southampton Street Pastors, Spring Harvest, Steve Lee Ministries, The Children's Society, YWAM.

Your donations have also helped to change lives and transform communities through grants we have made to individuals and organisations in Cuba, Ghana, India, France, Kenya, Liberia, Philippines, South African, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Uganda and U.S.A.

In total we gave away nearly £105k this year (2019: £ 104k) to partners both in the UK and overseas.

Here is a breakdown of what we gave away in 2020:

UK Individual Grants	£4,970
Overseas Individuals Grants	£5,685
Total Individual Grants	£10,655
UK Organisation Grants	£49,451
Overseas Organisation Grants	£44,701
Total Organisation Grants	£94,655

Hardship Fund

At New Community we are committed to caring for those within our church family and we have been able to provide a number of small grants to individuals in need through the generosity of those who have given to the fund. Thank you!

Tax Efficient Giving

You can increase the value of donation/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. All you need to do is go to our [church website](#) where you can download a Gift Aid Declaration Form, complete it, sign it and return it to us at this email address finance@newcommunity.org.uk or simply use our secure online giving portal called Churchsuite for your Gift Aid declaration.

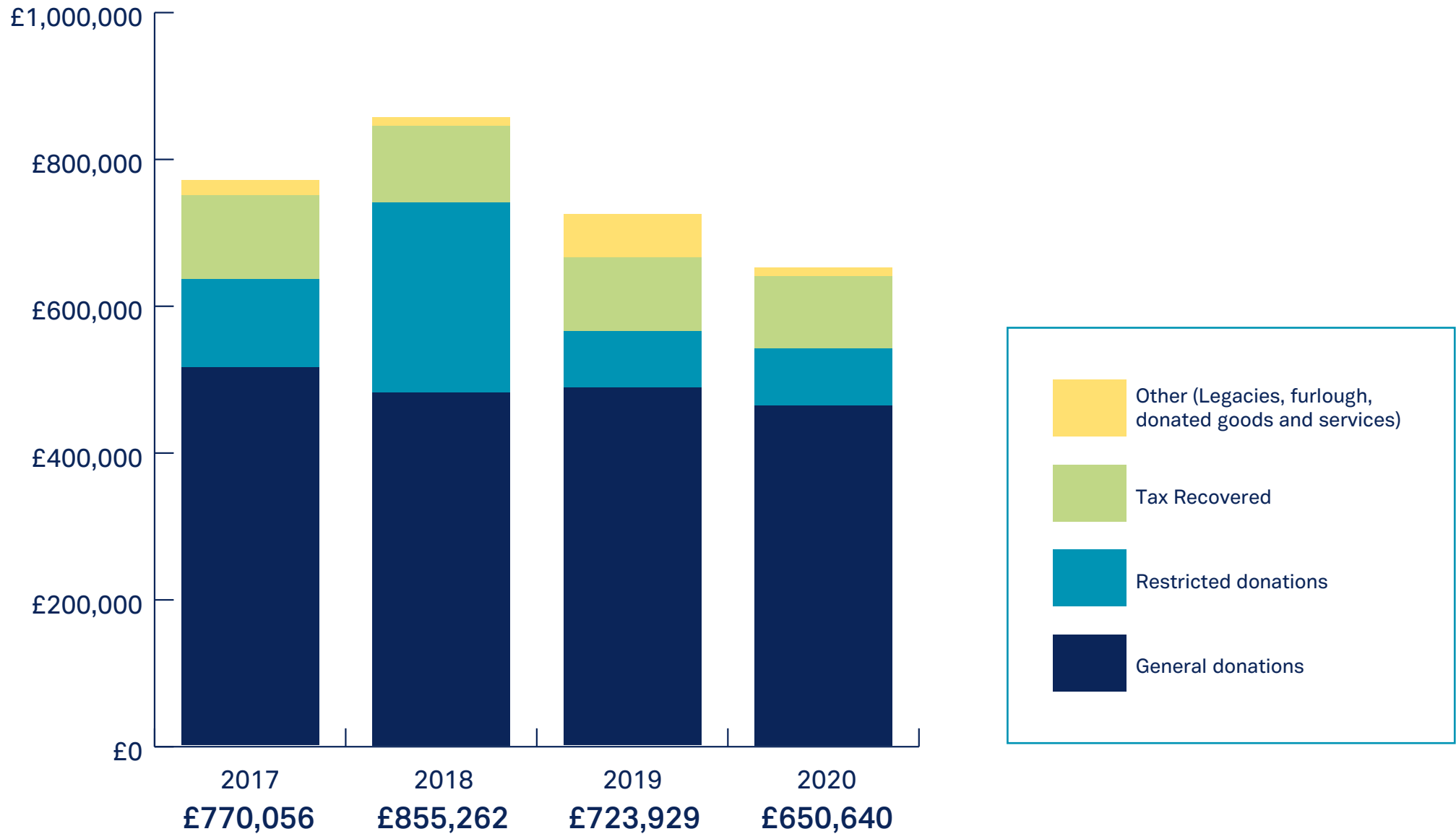
Churchsuite

Churchsuite is our online giving portal that is easy and secure to use. For some, giving in person is your preference. Typically, this is another form of tithe income that is sown into the work and vision for our church. At this time, when we are not able to meet physically, please consider this simple and easy way of giving.

Legacies

Have you considered leaving a gift to New Community Church in your Will? Legacies make a lasting difference and are means of generational transfer and investment for the future beyond yourself and for our children. Check out our website for more information on legacies.

Donation income



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