



Annual Report 2016



The changing face of shopping in Benwell

The Benwell Christian Shop Project (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016

Benwell Christian Shop Project – A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England & Wales No. 2349218.
Registered Charity No. 701263

Cornerstone has a long term commitment to serve the people of Benwell by working to:

*Include the excluded
Empower the disempowered
Encourage the discouraged
Celebrate all that is good*

We are inspired by this passage from Isaiah 58:

*What I'm interested in seeing you do is:
sharing your food with the hungry,
inviting the homeless poor into your homes,
putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad*

Trustees and Directors at 31st March 2016

Peter Hindle (Chair)

Ena Gatenby

Peter Michell

Carol Davison

Edith Hutchinson

Richard Stephenson

Elsie Dixon MBE

Shirley Irving

Secretary

Peter Michell

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The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Chair's Report

“All you need is love” sang the Beatles all those years ago. Many sermons have used the phrase – and why not? It is fully compatible with “And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” as written by St. Paul to the Church in Corinth.

Cornerstone knows a great deal about love. How much is needed. How desperate people can be for just a hint of it. How simply it can be expressed – a friendly chat, a cup of tea, helping make better meals helping with a craft, setting up a prayer space, telling a story of Jesus. So, so many different ways.

But love is *not all* you need. Time, for example. Furniture for the woman who finds herself without any. Clothing for the children. Money to buy the tea bags for that cuppa or the ingredients for the meal. Skill in explaining a new craft or a different way of doing an old one.

Yes, it can be argued that such things are available in Cornerstone because of love. But none of this happens without people and money – people who love and who know how to use money, time and skills to show love in action.

We are so grateful to the Cornerstone staff – salaried and volunteers – for the way they live love every day. We are hugely grateful to the supporters – individuals and organisations - who provide money that keeps us going. We applaud those who find the loving help they need in Cornerstone and then become helpers to others.

Many Cornerstone stories cannot be told because of their private nature. That's OK. Much more important than story-telling is love-living. Strictly speaking we may need more than love. One thing is for certain: none of us can really live life without love. The people of Cornerstone delight in showing true love in very practical ways. That is the Jesus way of living.

Peter Hindle

The Welcome Project

Millennium Club members voted for & enjoyed a diverse range of activities for their annual calendar. The summer trip to York included some of the ladies from the Knit & Natter group. It was a fun day & an adventure as we all kept getting lost! A local funding stream, *Community First Elswick*, kindly funded a Christmas Crafting evening & buffet which was complimented by a disco provided by one of our club members. The club went on to win £75 in a prize draw from the funders. One of the highlights of the year for club members was a visit to the Big Lamp Brewery. We were given a guided tour, served jugs of real ale & a delicious buffet. The evening was deemed a great success & the group have decided to visit every brewery in the North East! The art group continues to be fun, focussed & productive. Their painted pebble project culminated in a display at the Rendezvous Café in Whitley Bay. They went on to produce the '*Piece of Our Hearts*' which comprises a large wooden heart cut into jigsaw pieces. The group worked in pairs to decorate each piece identically.

Throughout the year Welcome Project members took part in a variety of '*Keep Me Safe*' projects. Newcastle Disability Forum ran a series of workshops at Cornerstone, covering essential advice on safety awareness for adults with learning disabilities. A partner organisation, *Better Days*, then gave a Safe Places



Pieces of our Heart



Getting Crafty!

presentation. As a result Cornerstone is a designated safe place where anyone can call in for assistance.

I approached a local metal working company & they kindly provided continuation funding for the Healthy Cooking & gym sessions. The regular attendees & their support staff value these sessions.

As always I am very appreciative of the volunteer help the Millennium Club members receive & of Louise who continues to inspire the art group to give their best in all that they do.

Denise Scott

Children and Young People

At Easter 2015 the Schools' Team said goodbye to Catherine and Tim which left us rather depleted, with only Kathy Germain, Dee Humphrey, Elsie Dixon and myself. That's fine for the day to day work with schools but it leaves very limited numbers for the bigger events such as *Christmas Through the Keyhole*, *Experience Easter* and the *Puppet Roadshows*. At Christmas we felt blessed to have Grace Thomson join us for the Christmas events and she proved to be an experienced practitioner. Since then she has become more involved with our children's work.

As always, Christmas and Easter were busy times. We are now adept at setting up *Christmas through the Keyhole* and *Experience Easter* and surprised ourselves at the shortened setting up time. The buzz once the children arrive is immense and, with both events, if we'd had more volunteers we could have taken more bookings from St John's, Atkinson Road and West Newcastle.

The Puppet Roadshow visited Atkinson Road, Canning Street, Hadrian and West Newcastle at Christmas but Canning Street and Hadrian expressed no interest with the Easter show, although we visited the other schools, including St John's.

Regular assemblies for both Key Stages happen at Atkinson Road Primary plus visits to tell Bible stories to two Reception classes. Half-termly assemblies at St John's Primary occur as well as short assemblies for Nursery and Reception.



Summer 2015—activities for all ages, and good food too!

The Family Fun Club has continued to meet each Monday, after school, during term-time. As relationships developed Cornerstone has been able to support several families practically through furniture and household items, as well as individuals through prayer. The families asked for something during the summer holidays, John secured funding, and the four Thursdays in August saw breakfast being served in the café of Cornerstone which then became a hive of good quality craft activities before we shared lunch cooked by Val or Kath. There were plenty of volunteers to chat with the children and their adults and I believe this was a time of strengthening relationships. Following this, one volunteer talked to a group about what we do and we received a gift of £50. This money was used to fund craft activities for a two day holiday club at Easter.

Messy Church continues on Wednesdays at St James but, as always, a shortage of volunteers limits what we can provide. Although the Schools' Team volunteers are happy to help out in an emergency they are not able to commit regularly.

Thanks to the generosity of various churches Cornerstone has once again been able to provide toys and food for some of the particularly needy families who attend Messy Church or Family Fun club. In addition, the schools were invited to identify needy children and come to Cornerstone to choose gifts which are so much appreciated by families trying to do their best for their children.

I continue to be encouraged by the way I see God at work in the schools, in families and in our volunteers.

Paulette E Thompson

South Benwell Community Church

Over the last year there have been a few changes of personnel, but the Community Church continues to meet fortnightly “sharing friendship, food and faith” as the strapline goes. As well as the dedicated leadership of Allison and Jamie, we have recently welcomed the new Team Rector, David Kirkwood, onto the team and he helps make the meetings friendly and accessible, which are key strengths for all. Our thanks to all involved, especially Elsie, Edith and others for the food.

Older people

We continue to provide a number of activities particularly suitable for older people. The main focus is our weekly lunch, with 20 to 25 people coming along regularly to enjoy good company, good food and good conversation (and bingo!).

In the last year we managed a couple of trips out, with a visit to Whitby being particularly enjoyable for around 40 people from the community. They managed to find some bargains in the shops, as well as feasting on fish and chips.

Our Knit and Natter group continues to meet regularly, with laughter frequently echoing round the building, but also providing the opportunity to show care and compassion when people encounter illness or other difficulties. They have also started selling items that they make to raise funds for ourselves and other local organisations, and we are grateful to Sylvi and the others for this.

Our flower arranging group is also blossoming (sorry!), with some wonderful creations being developed as Edith brings the best out of the ladies who come along.

With many people living alone, these activities become more important for those who attend, and thanks are due to all who organise them or help with them.

Baby and Toddler Group

Our Baby & Toddler group is now 10 years old. Some of our early toddlers are now at secondary school! With firm foundations laid down by Heather Lowe, the group continues to provide a place of fun and friendship for a small but faithful group of carers and little ones.

In the past year the usual high spots have been marked, with Christmas and Easter being particular times of enjoyment. There has also been the annual outing, which this year saw the group enjoying a trip to Cullercoats.

Many thanks to Gail, Kathy, Dee, Sonia and David for making sure everything happens so well.



Who enjoys the seaside most? Adults or children?

Visitors

In September 2015 the announcement of the new Bishop of Newcastle was made, and we at *Cornerstone* were honoured to be one of the places where the new incumbent would meet the Diocese. We didn't know who it was going to be until the official announcement was made on the Wednesday morning: indeed, we weren't allowed to say *what* the announcement was until that time.

We were delighted to welcome Rt Rev Christine Hardman, who chatted in a relaxed and engaging manner with our lunch club guests, as well as being interviewed by the various TV &



Bishop Christine gets to know some of our regulars

radio reporters who also came along. Bishop Christine certainly made a good impression on everyone present. It was a lovely day for all who were there, and we even persuaded the Bishop to call some bingo numbers for us! We wish her a joyful and fruitful time in the north-east.

Final Word

Writing this in summer 2016, we are all well aware of how the world is changing. Political upheaval at home and abroad, tensions within and between communities and nations. Even the Olympic Games has been tainted by allegations of cheating and corruption.

But for many people in this community uncertainty has been a fact of life for many years. Alterations to the benefits system, reduction of Council services, promises of new facilities that never seem to come to fruition and changes to the make-up of the local population have all contributed to a rise in uncertainty within the population.

One of the strengths of Cornerstone is that we, like so many of local organisations, have been part of the scene for a long time. In our case, we will have been established for 30 years next year and we will be celebrating that milestone, so look out for more details. None of our work is without effort: countless volunteer hours continue to contribute to much of what we are able to do, as well as the hard work and dedication of our staff who regularly go the second mile (and more) to help achieve their aims.

But more and more I believe that it is important for our users, whatever activity they are involved in, that we are here, and

here for the long term. Providing a place of welcome and support in an increasingly uncertain world is vital for many. It is a Godly activity, too, as we seek to live out a response to God's welcome to all and any. It is our hope and prayer that we can continue to live out this calling, expressed so clearly in the words from Isaiah on page 2. Thank you for your continued support for us in this whether through prayer, through giving, through volunteering or through encouraging.

John Carr

Financial Report

We aim to make our money go as far as possible and to augment it where we can. As well as the Knit & Natter sales mentioned earlier, we have taken the opportunity to raise funds through selling some of the more esoteric items we receive.



*Wonderful building,
interesting items*

Last year we took a stall at a charity event in the Grainger Market and had an enjoyable day savouring the smell of the produce on sale as well as selling our own items. It was also an opportunity to make contact with people and tell them a little bit about the sort of things we do.

As you will see, this year we have recorded a small deficit.

While this is not a great concern, we are aware that we are operating in a difficult economic climate with no immediate prospect of major change. We continually endeavour to keep costs under control and to seek new sources of funding in order to continue our work in a community that is struggling more than most with the effects of economic uncertainty.

We are grateful to all who support us, and we know that some have done so faithfully and consistently for many years.

Major contributors in the last year have been St James, Benwell, St John's, Benwell, All Saints, Gosforth, Denton Burn Methodist Church, Heddon-on-the-Wall Methodist Church, Milbourn Methodist Church, Newburn Parish Church, Ponteland Methodist Church, Ponteland United Reformed Church, St Mary's, Ponteland, Westerhope Methodist Church, St Oswin's, Wylam, The Leslie and Lilian Manning Trust, The Prudhoe Street Mission Foundation, The Reece Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity.

In addition, we have received a number of significant individual donations. To all of these we send our thanks.

Chris Carr
October 2016

The following page shows a summary financial report for year ended 31st March 2016. A full version of the accounts is available by request.

The accounts were prepared in accordance with the Charity Commission Statement of Recommended Practice (Revised 2000) with particular reference to the exemptions provided for small charities in paragraphs 344-358, in particular paragraphs 353 & 354.

Chris Carr
Cornerstone Treasurer
October 2016

I agree that this is a true and fair reflection of the Cornerstone accounts for 2015/16
Simon Bissell
October 2016

Reserves Policy

The policy is to have between 6 and 12 months running costs in reserve.

Financial Summary for year ended 31st March 2016

Balance Sheet	Opening Balances	Closing Balances
Assets		
Fixed Assets	3838.46	2878.85
Debtors	2000.00	2000.00 (1)
Bank/cash	85567.46	84695.23
Total Assets	91405.92	89574.08
Liabilities		
I&E Account C/Fwd	91405.92	89574.08
Creditors	0.00	0.00
	91405.92	89574.08

Notes: (1) Accrual for unpaid Gift Aid

Summary of receipts & payments:

Receipts:	£	Payments:	£
Salary Grants	33738	Staff Costs (Salaries)	71879
School Workers Grants	6108	Management & Running Costs	15597
Welcome Project Grants	23583	User Costs	495
Group Income & Grants	8835	Group Activities	10260
General Donations & Grants	12201	Group Supplies	461
Other Income		Depreciation	960
Total Receipts:	97819	Total Payments:	99652
Deficit 2015/6	1383		