

TRANSFORMING LIVES TOGETHER⁺

In partnership with:



CHESTER CATHEDRAL

Annual Review 2024



Introduction from our Chair

I'm struck by how 2024 has been a year of growth, both in the **reach** and **resilience** of our projects and volunteers, as together we tackle poverty, loneliness and social inequality in all its forms. We have seen growth in the number and diversity of our partners in churches of different denominations and in new Communities across Chester Diocese.



We have been growing resilience in our projects, through our Community Missioners, providing funding for food and other resources, and gatherings of volunteers that have sought to educate and to share best practice with each other. Notably we have also grown resilience in project leaders and volunteers through training courses including Trauma Informed Practice, First Aid and Mental Health First Aid, so they are best equipped to serve and care for those attending their projects.

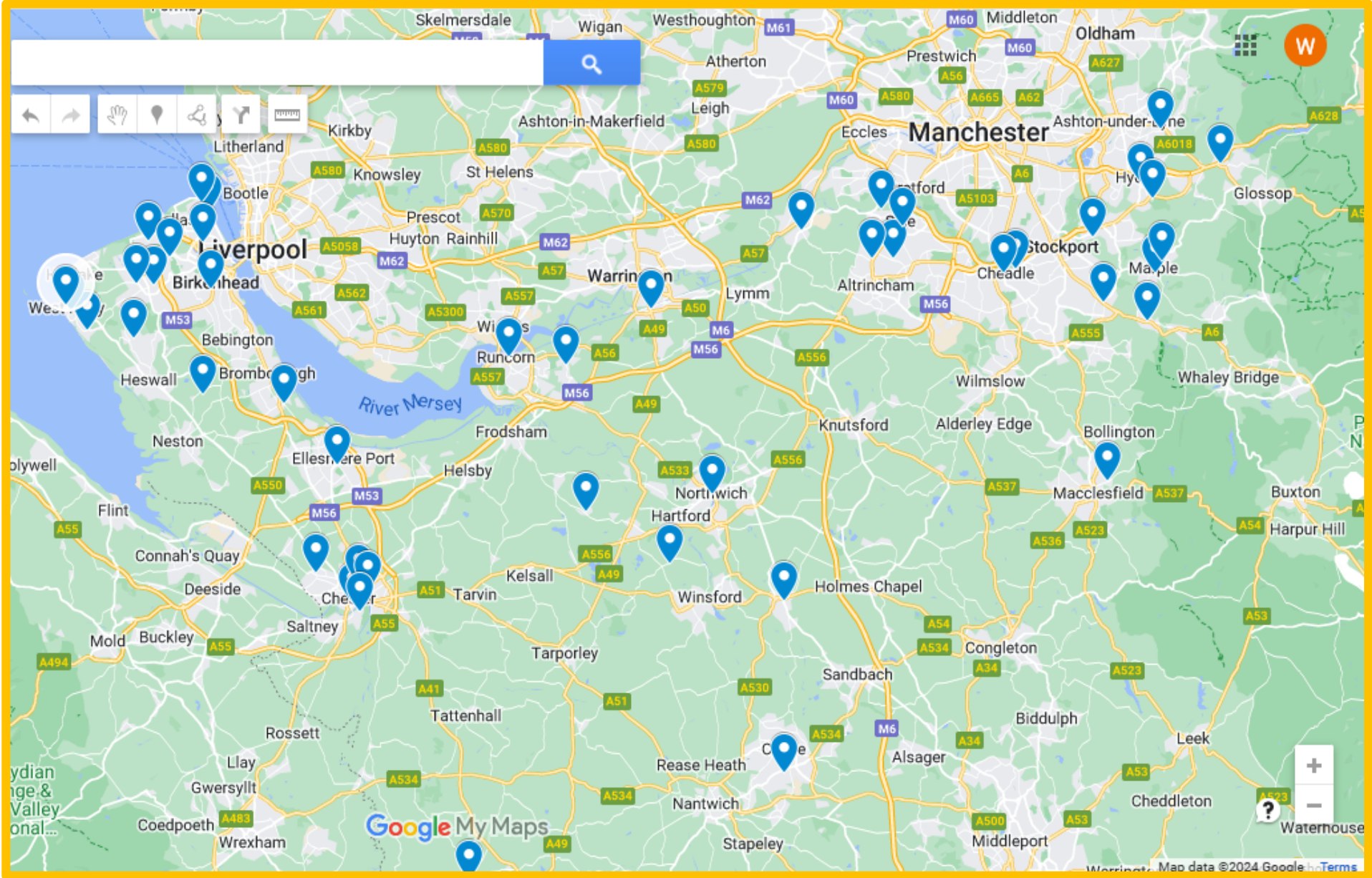
In sharing stories of locally based 'faith in action' projects helping individuals and communities thrive, we have been able to attract funding from a wider variety of grant making organisations, which help cover our core costs, allow us to be more generous in support of others, and provide financial resilience for the coming years. Lastly we've sought to grow in prayer and spiritual resilience, putting Christ's call to love others as ourselves at the heart of all we do.

Thus, as we come into 2025, we are perhaps more active, focussed and resourceful than ever before, giving us a strong base from which to grow our support of existing projects, replicate our good work of poverty relief, and respond to needs. For example, in 2025 we'll be starting to more actively address poverty in rural neighbourhoods, often overlooked when so much attention is given to urban centres, with our "Connecting Rural Communities" event in February.

Do join us in 2025, as together with Chester Cathedral and the Diocese of Chester, we continue to strengthen children's wellbeing and family resilience, and bring diverse communities together, such that lives are transformed and communities flourish.

Rev. Dr Andrew Knight Chairman of the Board of Trustees

This maps reflects the spread of churches TLT has worked with in 2024



A snapshot of some of the things we have been doing in 2024



We supported **7** of our 13 Filling the Gap churches with **£11,000** to deliver over **6,000** meals and activities during school holidays



We delivered **2** Trauma Informed Practice training courses (2 day) to **24** people from **19** churches and **2** first aid courses to **23** people from **20** churches



We have worked with **57** churches, **21** of which were new to us this year. We supported them with training, guidance, funding, project visits and mediation



We opened **6** new Places of Welcome bringing the total to **52**
We supported **6** with funding for new signage and equipment
44 people from **17** churches attended our Place of Welcome celebration



Our Places of Welcome are part of a national network offering an unconditional welcome to local people for a few hours each week. All are welcome to pop in for a friendly face, free refreshments and a chat.

We held a Place of Welcome Celebration at Chester cathedral in October. The purpose of this was to thank all our volunteers for their hard work over the year. We heard from Canon Anthony who spoke about 'welcoming the stranger', and Margaret, one of our trustees, led a great discussion on unconscious bias. The room buzzed with conversation, connections were made, and much cake was consumed. The informal feedback at the end of the event was very encouraging, one attendee wrote on their 'take-away' post it note that they were taking away JOY!





In this year's report we are highlighting Filling the Gap, a network of churches delivering food and activities during the school holidays, enabling children and families to eat healthy food and play together. We have 13 participating churches and have been able to support 7 of these with funding from Brakes Meals & More in 2024. We regularly visit these and speak to children, carers and parents.

Adults tell us how important it is for them to have the opportunity to spend time with their children, having fun and enjoying food together. Some mums told us they could not otherwise afford treats or trips out - even a trip to the park involves paying for public transport.



The communications team from the Diocese of Chester visited one of our Filling the Gap churches in Stockton Heath and produced an article for their website. Read the article and watch the video [HERE](#)





Our partnership with the Brakes Meals & More initiative has enabled us to financially support 7 churches to provide food and activities during the holidays. We also occasionally work with Brakes in other ways, for example this Christmas they donated 600 'goody' bags to be distributed to children across the churches. Click the picture to the right to see the contents of the bags and to hear Becky's comments about the donation!





“Just to let you know how much we enjoyed the trip ..The kids really enjoyed the farm and making the seed bombs and then having a good run around the park. The food was amazing ..If it wasn't for all your hard work putting these trips on, we wouldn't be going anywhere. Thank-you so much for all that you do.”



“One mum brought her two sons with ADHD, convinced that it was a bad idea to come. The Lads loved it, particularly making wooden jails using hand drills and screwdrivers. They had never handled tools before, and found that they could do so with ease. They were fine for the whole 3 hours they were there and came back happily the next day, with a much less stressed Mum”

Training

Community workers, curates, clergy and others came from across the diocese to attend First Aid training and Trauma Informed Practice training. The latter increased awareness of Trauma and considered how we might implement our learning in the spaces and places where we welcome people. We thought about how people could be signposted, listened to and supported, while waiting for or receiving professional help.

The First Aid training was an accredited one day course and reminded us of the essentials of various aspects of first aid in multiple settings.

“I definitely have a better understanding of trauma informed practice. I recognize more than ever the need to put this learning into practice in the places and with the people where I work”



Transforming Lives Together strategy and fundraising

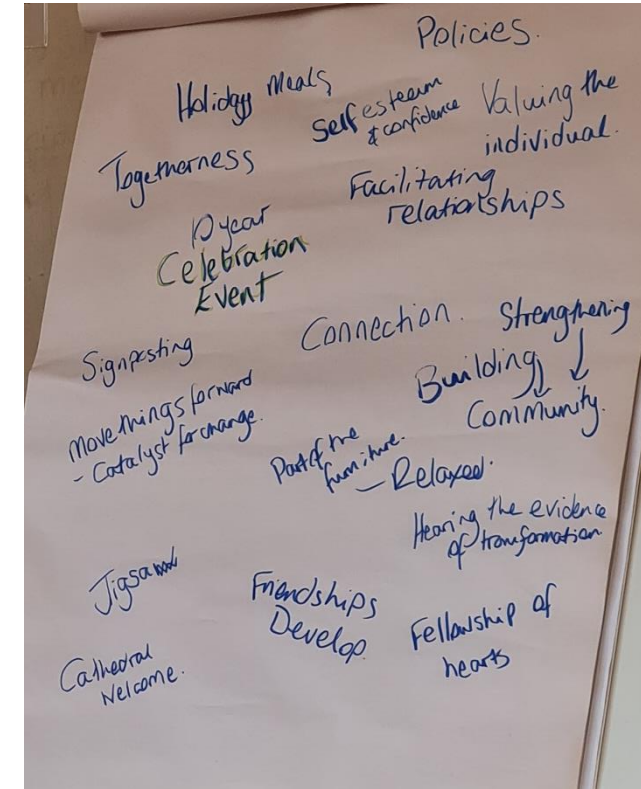
We have been spending time this year thinking about a communication strategy and a financial plan for the next three years. We are working to make TLT sustainable in the future and have been fortunate to secure funding from the Joseph Rank Trust, the National Lottery, St. Bridget's Trust, the Co-op Winners Share it All Fund and an anonymous donor.

If you would like to donate

We continue to seek funding for 2025 onwards. Anyone managing on a tight budget will tell you how important every bit of income is. It's the same for donations. Whether it's pennies or pounds, anything you give will make a big difference.

Because we only work at a local level, we can use local volunteers to do the work using their experience of the neighbourhood. So there are no big overheads and you can be sure that every penny you give us will be made to count.

If you would like to make a donation to our work please use this [JustGiving](#) donation link. Alternatively, you can [click here to contact us](#) and ask for a donation form, which we can send to you with all our details. You can make a one off donation of any size or set up a regular standing order.



We wanted to give a special mention to our long term partners Chester cathedral, the Diocese of Chester outreach team and the Church Urban Fund. We have benefitted greatly from working together on joint webinars, funding bids, Places of Welcome and presentations of our work.

We are also extremely grateful to our funders St. Bridget's Trust, Joseph Rank Trust, Awards for All, Coop Winners Share it All, Brakes Meals & More and our anonymous donor.



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