

TRANSFORMING LIVES TOGETHER⁺



Annual Review 2023



In partnership with:



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL



Introduction from our Chair

The need to address poverty and social isolation are just as apparent, if not more so, than when Transforming Lives Together started its work 10 years ago. Looking back, through the myriad challenges of austerity, Covid-19, cost of living and refugee crises, the impact of TLT's work has been both remarkable and long-lasting. This arises from our efforts to empower, fund and support projects that realise the passion, skills and experience of hundreds of volunteers in local churches who, week by week:



- Lead activities for children and feed families at a holiday club with 'Filling the Gap'.
- Open up the church or hall diligently week by week providing a 'Place of Welcome'.
- Be the listening ear, directing, advising and signposting others.
- Bake, serve, craft, prepare food and offer hospitality.
- Collaborate with agencies and organisation to give professional help to those in need.


In this report you'll read of the different strands of our work and hear from some of the many people who have been profoundly transformed by the projects we support. Together, we continue to tackle poverty at source, in a very practical, relational and sustainable way, responding to Jesus' call to 'love one's neighbour' so that all may 'live life to the full'.

In 2023-2024, as our projects grow in number and diversity, as our volunteers grow in confidence and experience, and as our Board of Trustees shares its passion and expertise, we look forward to building on the firm foundations of the last 10 years, meeting the growing challenges of today.

Rev. Dr Andrew Knight Chairman of the Board of Trustees

We had a wonderful ten year anniversary celebration in October which was attended by many of our friends and colleagues from 24 churches and 12 organisations. We took the opportunity to thank them for their hard work, commitment and compassion for our neighbourhoods.





“It had been hard during COVID as I could not meet with people and the isolation was awful because I live on my own.

Talking to all sorts of different people here has been great. I do like variety and I’ve met people from all ages and interests. It’s got me trying new things like tomato growing which I never thought I would be into.

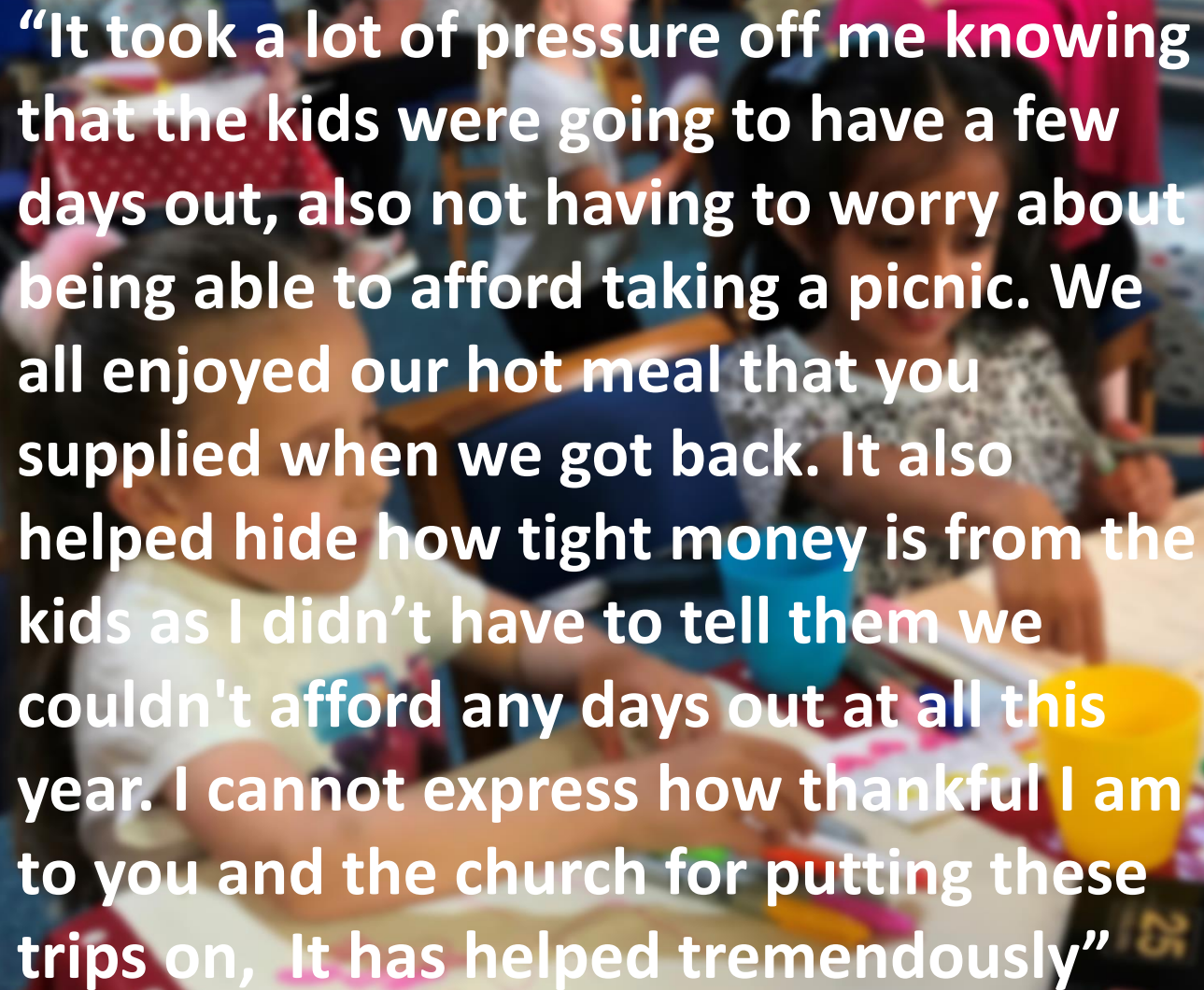
Coming along to this Place of Welcome has helped me feel much happier, you get into some really interesting conversations and I would recommend it to anybody.”



46 participating churches

12 new in 2023

We have enjoyed visiting our Places of Welcome this year and are very happy to have new churches join us! Some of them came to us through a joint webinar with the Diocese outreach team encouraging warm space churches to become Places of Welcome. We also presented at the Diocesan Mental Health Day and were able to share the positive effects of regularly attending a Place of Welcome on loneliness and isolation.



“It took a lot of pressure off me knowing that the kids were going to have a few days out, also not having to worry about being able to afford taking a picnic. We all enjoyed our hot meal that you supplied when we got back. It also helped hide how tight money is from the kids as I didn't have to tell them we couldn't afford any days out at all this year. I cannot express how thankful I am to you and the church for putting these trips on, It has helped tremendously”



17 Participating churches

2 new in 2023

We have been busy visiting our FtG churches this year and offering them financial and practical support. Our partner Brakes worked with us to support 5 churches financially as part of their ‘Meals and More’ initiative. We were able to support a further 3 churches with the donations we received from the Archdeacons Visitations. Just these 8 churches have provided about **5,000** meals to about **600** children and their families.



MHFA 2 day accredited course: **45**

attendees from **31** churches

Human Trafficking Awareness Raising: **15**

attendees from **8** churches

We partnered with  BritishRedCross and  to deliver training to church leaders and

congregation members across the Diocese of Chester. British Red Cross helped us with Human Trafficking training, BeWell with Mental Health First Aid. We also created a video of two churches talking about their experience of using the Growing Good Toolkit (more information about this on our website where you will find a link to download the course)

“I found the MHFA to be an excellent course and am very pleased to have done it. It was practical, interactive, informative and Nikki was very supportive - as many of us with "lived experience" found it touched us too. Nikki was just excellent in affirming and valuing all comments and also getting through the material, whilst allowing time for any and all responses. It's left me feeling confident in what I can do in listening and supporting others without feeling that I have to "sort" anything. The material has been a real help and I will continue to return to it. Thank you!”



“I found the Human Trafficking session really useful. Excellent course and to have such a hands on and knowledgeable presenter was a privilege.”

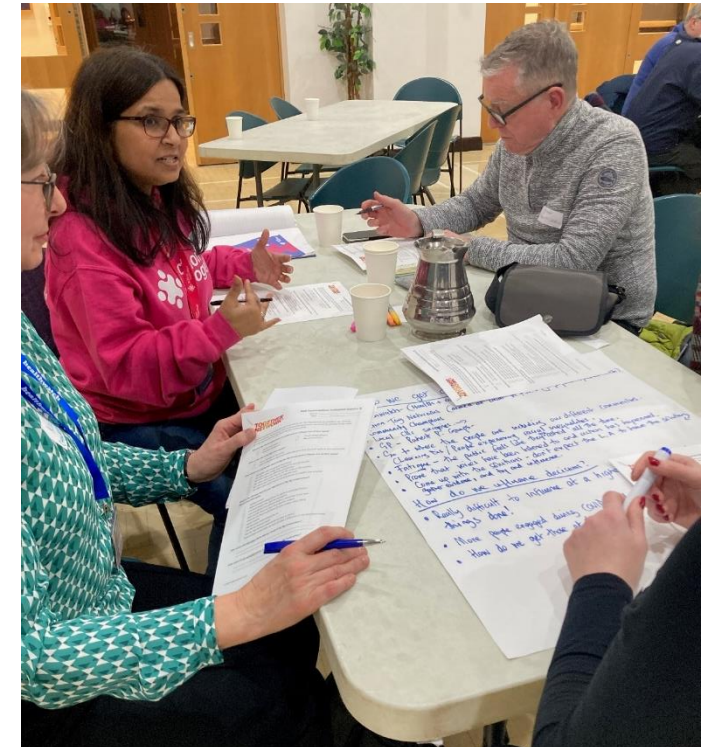


We have worked in partnership with Citizens Advice Cheshire to promote energy advice workshops available free to churches. So far the Energy Advisors have worked with **5** churches, some more than once.



“Really helpful and informative presentation, and an impressive amount of support and advice given”

We also worked in partnership with Greater Together Manchester and the Church Urban Fund on a ‘Real Conversations’ initiative. We held three conversations with two churches then invited all participants to a Big Conversation with our Manchester colleagues. Participants were asked to identify good things about their local area as well as things they felt could be improved. The information gathered was fed back to policy and decision makers.



Communication



TLT have worked with **61** churches this year **29** of which were new to us. Most were Anglican plus 4 Methodist, 1 Salvation Army, 1 United Reform Church and 2 Independent. Here are some of the ways we worked with them:

- Human Trafficking training **5**
- Mental Health First Aid training **31**
- Set up of new Place of Welcome **15**
- Support visit to existing Place of Welcome **17**
- Set up of new Filling the Gap provision **2**
- Support visit to existing Filling the Gap **8**
- Brakes meals and More funding for Filling the Gap **7**
- Real Conversations project **2**
- Growing Good **4**

We completely redesigned our website this year to make it easier for churches and partners to find the information they are looking for. Please do visit and have a look round!

WWW.TLTOGETHER.ORG.UK



597 Followers on Facebook, **79** new this year



308 people are subscribed to our newsletter, **44** new this year

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, Benefact Trust, Awards for All, Coop Local Community Fund and our anonymous donor.



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