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KING'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Report to the Annual Parish Assembly of Hedge End Town Council, 16 March 2021

1. **King's Community Church** stopped having its usual Sunday meetings in March 2020 and went online instead. Many people have started attending the online meetings during the past twelve months. Some are churchgoers who are temporarily involved while their own church has not been able to go online. 70 adults have joined the membership in the past year. It is estimated that the online Sunday meetings are accessed by about 1,000 people each week. The Sunday morning YouTube channel for young people has 152 subscribers. An estimated 50 families including 70 children (those aged 0-11) have regularly accessed the Kidzone content. There has been a strong wish to involve meeting contributions and leadership from those among ethnic minorities represented in the church.

A small number of church members died prematurely during the pandemic. There has been a larger number of members who have themselves been left fighting for their lives or trying to support family members in that kind of danger. In response to such challenges, the amount of praying done in the past year has multiplied.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, we were launching our annual Special Offering to balance the budget. We had a target of £150,000 and, despite the coronavirus, we raised £114,000 of this. We did not pursue trying to raise the balance, but instead launched the Help Fund, which has raised over £60,000 (not including the further funding mentioned below). This made it possible to support people financially in the church, locally in the community, and very importantly, overseas. Many of the people we are connected to overseas are in countries where there has been virtually no government support through the crisis.

In managing our finances, we tried throughout last year to keep both the church and its outward-looking ministries operational. Most ministry staff have continued to work throughout the pandemic, but we have taken the opportunity of the furlough scheme to help pay the salaries of the cleaning team and some office-based staff. Some overhead budgets have been trimmed back. Over the time period, regular giving has in fact gone up a little, rather than down.

2. In addition to the provision for **children** available on Sunday mornings, we also offer an online experience each week, and an estimated 15-25 younger children regularly access this. We have also been supplying Freegrounds School with some of our material, who use it periodically for their school assemblies. A few other churches have accessed the material too. The Family Hub has not been used for purpose over the past year.

3. On Tuesday evenings we are currently engaging about 60 **young people** a week on Zoom. In the summer term we typically had around 100 young people. We have also been supporting 30 young people throughout the year through our school mentoring program, with 4 young people accessing a smaller version of our most recent 'Focus' course.

4. Although **older people** associated with Halo, Gems and the Shed have not been able to make use of the building, our group leaders Frank and Sally Parker and their team have been actively pastoring and supporting those who used to come to those events.

The team has sought to keep in touch regularly (contacting several weekly) with members of the Halo lunch club. There are about 100 people on their books. As well as making phone calls and doorstep visits, the team have distributed flowers, food parcels, Valentine gifts and birthday cards. They want them all of these elderly people to know that God has not forgotten them and neither have we! The Help at Home connect group has also helped some Halo residents with gardening.

Frank has been holding the Shed meeting every 2 weeks on Zoom, with about 25 men attending. A 'Thought for the day' is sent weekly to those who want it, and the talk from the Shed meeting is distributed on DVD to those who want it. Another 25 men are contacted regularly by phone calls and doorstep visits. The team has also kept in touch with those in care homes via carers and family members. Sally has kept in touch via families with about 15 of the Gems group (run for people living with dementia). Again, the team has taken food parcels, flowers, Valentine gifts and birthday cards over the months. This includes much practical help, such as shopping, prescriptions and meals.

Sadly, 5 of the Gems members have died in the past twelve months and 2 have gone into care. Frank Parker has taken 5 funerals for people from the groups over the past year.

5. The **Job Club** has given a service to 10-15 people in all during the past year, subject to the limitations of social distancing. The walk-in sessions were moved to the Hope Centre in Weston because of the lack of Internet access of the large majority of those needing help there. A couple of the attendees have passed away in recent months. Online support has been given when requested, to assist those making new starts elsewhere in the UK.

6. King's Community Church has long maintained that the church is a people, not a building, so in that sense it has not been closed. In fact, **the building at Hedge End** has been in considerable use during the past year. Hedge End Food Centre, an ongoing work based at the church, has been part of the Community Hub based at King's Community Church. 400 people were helped through the work of the Community Hub in 2020. Some of these people were helped as a one off, while others are still in contact with their volunteer. Cllr. Tonia Craig very kindly gave £1,500 of HCC Councillor Funding towards the outgoings of the Community Hub to local people in need. At the moment, the Community Hub is not active in taking new referrals, as agreed with Eastleigh Borough Council at the start of 2021. However, we can restart if needed, and we continue to support those whom we have helped throughout the pandemic. A great deal of medical work has been based at the Hedge End site in the past year, under the auspices of Southampton Primary Care Limited (SPCL). SPCL introduced a new initiative to give patients access to medical help from 8am to 9pm seven days per week across various GP surgeries in Southampton.

In 2020, the **Food Centre,** which is run completely by volunteers, supplied 3,253 individuals (1,120 households) with 7 days' worth of food. Of this number, 220 came via the Community Hub and Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) referrals, 17 via the mental health team locally, 303 via medical professionals. 856 via local schools and 113 came via housing associations. The remainder came via KCC, CAP, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and various care in the community agencies. Hampshire County Councillors Tonia Craig, Keith House, Rupert Kyrle, Bruce Tennent and Mike Thornton kindly gave a total of £6,550 Councillor Funding towards the Food Centre, as well as voluntary work done by Cllr Tonia Craig.

7. Our **Branch of Christians Against Poverty (CAP)** has had to adapt its client model over the past 12 months so that they can continue to work with and support clients with a phone-based appointment system instead of face to face. They have worked with 42 different families across the year. 22 new families have contacted the Debt Centre for help since March 2020, and 8 clients have become debt free. The CAP money course and Lifeskills course have been delivered online.

8. **Parish Nursing** has also continued to operate. A **Hong Kong Task Group** has been started recently, to help support new arrivals from Hong Kong, which has included a weekly English Conversation class.

9. At **a commercial level**, there has been a small amount of income from the short period we were able to operate last summer and there was some ongoing letting to the NHS. For example, they have been holding blood donation clinics throughout the pandemic. Commercial income this year will be around £30k compared to £175k last year. The Junction Café has been unable to function.

10. Work through **the Hope Centre in Weston** has been severely curtailed during the past twelve months. The responsibility for this is moving now David and Emily Williams. Building renovations and roof repairs are a priority for the reopening there to be possible.

11. **The church site in Totton** had to be discontinued during the lockdown. Ongoing use of a secondary school there will not be possible. It is hoped to restart in Totton broadly in line with the time that the Hedge End site restarts its Sunday meetings on18th April. The latter will start with meetings for a congregation of up to 150, combined with a live link online.

12. **The overseas work of the church** continues, involving frequent ongoing contact with churches and church leaders in over 50 countries, most of which are countries that lack the varied resources of the United Kingdom. The charity CRY (Care and Relief for the Young), based in the Hedge End site building, partners with organisations overseas to support work among vulnerable children in 28 other nations.

compiled by Dr. Nigel Paterson