



Love Southampton is an initiative of the churches in Southampton that springs from the very heart of who we are - a diverse community of people united in our love for God and our love for our neighbour.

Love Southampton draws together people and projects who are working for the common good of the neighbourhoods and communities in the city. Rather than being a registered charity or organisation delivering initiatives and projects itself, Love Southampton is a network that initiates, co-ordinates and mobilises resources to help local projects work in collaboration. The three supporting church networks are Churches Together, Southampton Christian Network (SCN) and the Southampton Pastors' Network.

Bishop Jonathan, Chair of the Council of Reference

I am delighted to commend the wide ranging partnerships that continue to develop, for the flourishing of everyone, in the City of Southampton. The season of Advent challenges us most profoundly: as the Christian community prepares to celebrate the wonder of God's presence in the birth of Jesus Christ, so Christians are called to join hands with their neighbours and to serve the most vulnerable and needy in our society. Our words must take flesh.

Be assured of my good wishes and prayers for a holy and peaceful advent.

Bishop Jonathan
Southampton





Oasis

This year, our City's two Oasis Academies were both rated by Ofsted as 'Good'. The academies were launched in 2008 and both moved into new buildings in 2012. Both academies are performing well and delivering excellent education in the heart of their respective communities. Ofsted said about Mayfield, 'The school's work to support the local community is particularly impressive and embodies the Oasis Community Learning Trust's objective of "transforming communities". Through the work of "the Hub", senior leaders and the school council oversee a wide range of highly effective community enrichment projects including youth centres, social workers, enterprise challenges, a community allotment, local church activities and charity fundraising. The school is rightly proud of this work and it significantly enriches and extends learning'.

Oasis Academy Lord's Hill serves a community on the far west of the city. The inspection team noted that the Academy is rapidly improving through strong leadership at all levels, and that student progress is good thanks to their teachers that 'motivate them to learn and succeed'. One parent told an inspector that 'there have been many teachers who went beyond what they normally do to support and encourage my son when he found things difficult'.

The partnership between the two academies is at the heart of their improvement strategy, working together to provide education in the heart of the community.

Safe Families for Children

Safe Families for Children (SFC) supports families at a time of crisis to help reduce the flow of children being taken into care. Working with local churches and community groups, SFC seeks to recruit volunteers who can get alongside and support isolated families and build a community of people to support them.

In October SFC started to take referrals from Southampton City Council; so far volunteers are supporting 6 families across the city. Bishop Jonathan and Sir Peter Vardy (Safe Families founder) hosted a commissioning service at Highfield Church which was attended by volunteers, church leaders, community leaders and council staff as well as Caroline Nokes MP. Sir Peter Vardy shared some of the story of SFC and how it works with local authorities to offer a community solution to a community problem. SFC continues to recruit and train volunteers who want to support families; so far 61 volunteers have been recruited across the city.

Recently there have been positive meetings with Hampshire and Bournemouth Councils and SFC is confident that their work will start there in 2017. For further information please visit their Facebook Page or email:

www.facebook.com/SafeFamiliesSouthCoast
southcoast@safefamiliesforchildren.com



Safe Families *for* Children



Movement Day Global Cities Conference, 24 - 27 Oct

It was a privilege for Billy Kennedy and me to attend this conference and join with 3000 other delegates from 95 different countries to hear how people are working in partnership to transform their cities. I saw how possible it is to overcome the divisions of diversity and see global issues such as refugees and racism addressed. I heard about resilience and the need to go deep into the fabric of society to include and make room for one another.

Sona Kazanjian, a Syrian working in Dubai helping refugees, gave a moving interview in which she said 'with refugees, if in 6 months you don't love and care for them and get hold of them, then they turn back to hate and sink back into their culture'. Letitia Shelton from Australia offered from her experience 'if you want to know the health of a city look at how the women and girls are doing'. It was a rich experience, inspiring to see all that the faith community is doing worldwide and I would encourage everyone working here together that we are on the right track and must keep going, moving from naïve compassion to informed strategic compassion, whilst overcoming differences to find new solutions.

In the welcome the Mayor, Bill de Blasio, said 'the

strength of New York City is dependent upon faith communities and the countless ways they add to the rich fabric that runs throughout our neighbourhoods'. It is my hope that in Southampton the faith communities can even more strongly assist transforming our city into a great place to grow up in and grow old in, and everything in between. Collaborative working is key.

Mandy Harding
Street Pastors Southampton

Lord Bourne Visit

Billy Kennedy and members of Love Southampton hosted a visit by Lord Bourne, the minister responsible for faith and integration. He held a round table discussion which included leaders from the faith communities. Bishop Jonathan outlined how Love Southampton had originated from a desire to mobilise the church in response to some of the challenges in the city, particularly with council budgets being cut. The discussion centred on the role of church leadership in the community and how faith communities had responded to migration issues in the past few decades. The discussion concluded with reports from some of the projects supporting vulnerable children in the city. At the meeting Lord Bourne commented: 'Whatever you're doing in Southampton is working. Everywhere I go I hear about the work in the city'.

Super Casino

Monsignor Vincent Harvey and Paul Woodman visited Aspers Casino in Stratford in July, meeting with their General Manager, Bea Stevens. Bea explained that the casino is open 24-7 and only closed on Christmas Day. The visit was made in view of the planned super casino build in Southampton scheduled to open in 2021, which will also be run by Aspers. Of particular interest was how the Stratford casino engages with the local community and the chaplaincy team there.

On arrival, messages on TV screens and information about responsible gambling were readily available and gave a good impression of the casino's commitment to ensure people gambled within their means. The casino has 30,000 visits per week and employs 650 members of staff. Bea said that the Southampton casino would be part of a £450 million port investment that would involve the relocating of the Red Funnel ferry terminal. Bea encouraged us to be part of the CARG (Community Action for Responsible Gaming) when it starts in Southampton, a quarterly meeting where statistics such as numbers of those excluded (self-exclusions and casino-led exclusions) from the casino are shared. The chaplaincy service is proving important for those who have been excluded enabling them to speak to someone independent about their gambling.



Home for Good Southampton used Adoption Sunday on 6 November to promote the need for more adoptive parents and foster carers in Southampton. Over the Autumn, more foster carers from local churches were approved by the local authority.

www.homeforgood.org.uk



image by www.thegreatbritishdiet.co.uk

Street Pastors Southampton

Street Pastors has grown out of the churches working together to love and serve our city. Started in London in 2003, Southampton churches brought Street Pastors to Southampton in 2009 and we are now in our 7th year with 100 volunteers from over 46 different churches, which is outstanding. We have grown enormously and the demand for patrols in schools, communities and the night time is high. It was out of our strong partnerships with the City Council and police that Love Southampton was launched in 2013 and we continue to be involved. The stories fed back from patrols are inspirational; lives saved, people given renewed hope, families and friends reunited, communities brought together and atmospheres changed. The churches' presence on the streets has saved the police, NHS and council a considerable amount of money. One person said to us 'Street Pastors is an absolute necessity to the city'. We want to ensure the church, through Street Pastors, reach as many people as possible through our voluntary patrols that offer reassurance, safety and support through the simple act of listening, caring and helping. Our vision is to make Southampton a safe place to grow up in, and a safe place to grow old in. (Zech 8:4-5)

New patrols have started in Cxford and Millbrook on Saturday evenings and we are in the process of launching Response Pastors, which will enable us to train volunteers to respond to any emergency at short notice. Working with Hampshire Local Resilience Forum and Emergency Planning, we hope to be a positive presence in times of crisis and distress.



Hope Community School

I heard a provocative question the other day: 'What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?' Think about it for a moment ... what dreams have you pushed down because of a feeling that it just wouldn't work? What have you let go because you thought you aren't good enough? Isn't it sad that a fear of failure could stop so many possibilities? What is even sadder is that this fear is prevalent among our children and young people.

That is why I am so excited about the opportunity to be part of starting a new school at the heart of Southampton. At Hope School, 'failure' will not be in our vocabulary. Instead, we will see difficulties, problems and challenges as exciting opportunities. We will be known as a school that produces solution seekers and innovative problem solvers.

Over 100 families have already expressed interest in sending their children to Hope School and there is a real buzz of excitement about being part of something new. Our family liaison officer, along with volunteers from local churches, has worked tirelessly to make links with local families. During monthly community play events about 80 families have enjoyed meeting together and discussing their hopes for the new school.

What parents have seemed most excited about has been the combination of the school's aim to put Christian values into practice, the vision of creating children who are community pioneers and the passion we have for including parents in every step of their child's education. Because of our links with local businesses, churches and charities, parents can see the opportunities available for their children and are amazed at how many local people are already committed to supporting their child's education.

I am thrilled at the chance to be involved in adding to the already outstanding educational provision in Southampton and I believe that, with the huge support of so many passionate people, Hope Community School will produce children who are unafraid to step out and make a difference - they will become the movers, shakers and ground breakers of their generation.

Steve Wright
Principal, Hope Community School





Community Playlink

Love Southampton has facilitated conversations between Southampton Community Playlink and Southampton City Council with the aim of supporting families with young children across the city. Southampton Community Playlink has long provided resources and support for child minders and toddler groups, as well as running toy libraries across the city. Evidence clearly shows that early childhood is an important time and that the right input and support early on can have a massive impact on a child's life chances.

To this end, Community Playlink has recently recruited a part time Project Worker to enable it to further develop its links with toddler groups and families across the city. With Love Southampton, Community Playlink will be exploring how to develop further opportunities to work with both the council and other organisations across the city, for the benefit of young families.



Your Schools Southampton is a project led by Chris Davis and Sammy Jordan under the auspices of Southampton City Mission. Their vision is for every school in the city to be connected with a supportive, local, Christian church or organisation. It has two key strategies:

- to map church involvement in our city
- to create a network that will resource and equip churches engaging with schools.

Their long-term strategy is to provide quality schools work and spiritual support, which builds relationships between the city's schools and churches. Since the last newsletter a core team has formed around Chris and Sammy to help shape the vision going forwards. This term the focus was on feeding back to all churches who took part in the initial mapping survey earlier in the year as well as keeping the database updated.

On **Wednesday 18 January**, Your Schools invites you to join them to pray for schools across the city, 12 - 1.30pm at Highfield Church. You are welcome to bring your own lunch. Refreshments will be provided.

Community Buildings

Townhill Park Community Centre

On 1 October, the Townhill Park Community Centre was transferred from Southampton City Council to City Life Church. The building continues to be used for local community events and is the base for a busy pre-school and a popular scouts group.



Burgess Road Library

On 25 April, Burgess Road Library was transferred from Southampton City Council to Christ Church Southampton. The building has been substantially refurbished and improved. Library services continue to operate under the auspices of the Burgess Road Library Management Team, and the building also houses offices for the church staff and plays host to a number of activities (a parent + toddler group, Toy Library, a drop-in Spanish Café and Rhyme Time).



City Chaplaincy For Older People

Off to France

In June, around 60 older guests gathered for a '2-day trip to France'. Highfield Church was transformed into scenes from around Paris, with a four metre tall Eiffel Tower, an Arc de Triomphe, a Creperie and our own resident artist on the Rue de Montmartre! It was wonderful to join in with the laughter and lively conversation, as we spent time together over French themed activities, cuisine and popular entertainment provided by Highfield Primary School.

This was an opportunity for those who are older in our community to come together for a 'Holiday at Home', an opportunity in the words of one lady who attended, 'to have a holiday when you can't get away for one yourself'.

Social isolation is an increasing challenge in our society, but especially for those who are older, when social networks diminish due to bereavement, physical frailty and a disconnection from families who so often live at a distance.

Holding a Holiday at Home is one way to bring older community members together for a time of friendship and fun. Not only was 'Off to France' a wonderful inter-generational opportunity, but it was also good to partner with the local community.

Loneliness Strategy for Southampton

As a way of exploring how our city can address the 'Silent Epidemic' of loneliness, a workshop was hosted by Southampton City Council, NHS Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and facilitated by the Campaign to End Loneliness:

www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/guidance.

It was encouraging to hear of the many services already available across Southampton and there was a real energy generated to work together to ensure coherent and effective services for those who are socially isolated, lonely and vulnerable. Southampton City Council is currently working on the Southampton Plan to End Loneliness and the City Chaplaincy for Older People is actively involved with this process.



Two Love Southampton projects, CLEAR and EU Welcome, have been involved in collaboration with Advice Southampton, which is designed to be the place to come if people need to know where to find advice in the city. It offers clear guidance on a range of needs and signposts to the organisations that can best help. For more information, visit:

www.advicesouthampton.org.uk

City to City: 24 hours for Southampton

We are delighted to have the opportunity in 2017 to pioneer an event where we aim to re-imagine Southampton by drawing together a number of people from a range of spheres to spend 24 hours together, free from agendas, to find creative solutions to a few pre-identified problems or gaps. Experienced facilitators led by Simon Thomas of City to City will steer us throughout the time and we will be joined by guests from other cities interested in running a similar event. This is in the planning stage; invitations and more details on how to be involved will be released shortly.

Chaplaincy

Chris Davis is leading a group looking at developing chaplaincy services in the city. Chaplains currently work in hospitals, schools, and the port and we are looking to extend this.

To find out more about chaplaincy or how to train to be a chaplain, please join us for an information evening on Tuesday 28 February at Highfield Church. Contact Chris for more details: scmchris@gmail.com.

Projects

It is great to see what the church is doing together in the city. There are about 24 inter-church initiatives in Southampton, a mix of charities and projects that seek to bring Christians together from different denominations to find local community solutions to problems and help meet the emerging needs. It is our unity that speaks and the common bond of loving our neighbour as best we can in practical ways. Together we seek to overcome challenges and share good practice. We love working with our partners in the city. There are many opportunities to get involved and everyone is welcome to join in. Please contact:

mandy@southamptonstreetpastors.org.

Network Team

The Network Team is composed of working groups. It is working to coordinate activities and keep the development of Love Southampton open and inclusive:

- Paul Woodman (Chair) (Oasis UK, City Life Church)
- Chris Davis (Southampton City Mission)
- Liz Taylor (New Community Church)
- Chris Kilby (Life Church)
- Dave Barclay (Alder Trust)
- Rev Erica Roberts (Highfield Church)
- John Ayrton (Portwood Church)
- Sammy Jordan (Highfield Church)
- Mandy Harding (Street Pastors)
- Will Rosie (Millbrook Christian Centre)

Council of Reference

- Bishop Jonathan Frost – Bishop of Southampton (Chair)
- Rt Rev Monsignor Vincent Harvey – Catholic Dean of Southampton
- Canon Billy Kennedy – Leader of New Community Church and Pioneer network of churches
- Paul Finn - Chair, Southampton Christian Network
- Rev Dr Sarah Hall – URC Group Minister, South-West Hants Group
- Pastor John Paul Oddoye – Leader of Covenant Life Ministries
- Bev Webb – Leader of City Life Church
- Pastor Michael Olutoye – Southampton Pastors Network
- Rev Arthur Cowburn – Methodist Superintendent, Southampton Circuit