

News from the AGM Be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded - 2 Chronicles 15:7



Guests Giving Thumbs Up

This was the message from our Chair, Rev. Hilary Moore, at our Annual General Meeting. The meeting was held on July 4th at St Thomas Centre, Brampton. Hilary was completing her first year as Chair of Trustees, a role which she has shared with Sam Abel. Hilary, will continue as Chair but, sadly, Sam has had to stand down due to pressure of work. CotB is grateful to her for all of her work and prayers.

Hilary reflected in her Chair's report on the past year. Although CotB is exploring if, where and how its work should change this year has seen the faithful delivery of sessions in Matlock and Chesterfield. The Chesterfield team, supported by the Trustees had to deal with a complex safeguarding issue which meant that some sessions were held outside rather than in, and additional guidelines and training have been made available to all volunteers. The Trustees are grateful to Derby Diocese Safeguarding team for all of their help in this area.

As ever CotB is appreciative of the support from all of our organisational partners and links. A particular highlight this year has been linking with the Chesterfield Law Centre.

Our prayers for new members have been answered in the form of fifteen new people who are working with and for us. More volunteers are still needed, however, so please keep praying, or asking, "Is it me?"

Hilary emphasised in conclusion that the Trustees are still seeking the right way forward: "As trustees we are committed to seeking and managing the future of Church on the Bus, to flexibly responding and developing to changing local and national circumstances and to finding our way forward prayerfully, carefully, and wisely and we all look forward to the next year and what it may bring."

Money

Financially we are in a healthy position for which we give thanks to God and those who give to our work. Our income included a very generous gift of £7,000 from the Pinelog group and 3 other gifts that came from the St Anne's quiz event last December. Just under 60% of our outgoings are on our normal activities while around 40% allows us to provide overnight hotel accommodation which frequently helps support someone in need until the local authority can place them in emergency accommodation.

Different Ways You Can Give Financially

Regular or one-off donations – can be made to our Co-op Bank Account: The Church On the Bus. Sort Code 08 92 99 – Acc. 65923339

Just Giving Page -

<https://www.justgiving.com/church-onthebus>

Give As You Live – this website gives you access to many major retailers and high street stores. When you shop through this site a nominated charity receives a donation from the retailer – you can nominate CotB
<https://www.giveasyoulive.com/>

Membership

Our membership has increased over the last year. We currently have 70 members made up of current volunteers and past volunteers. Within this we have 2 organisational members representing St Anne's. Although this is good news, there is a need for more volunteers since the current work in Chesterfield and Matlock relies upon teams of 21 and 7 respectively.

There is a particular need for people who would be able to help move and manage furniture for helping equip people in starting in fresh accommodation.

Providing furniture and domestic utensils is a service we can offer to those who are rehoused as they are given 'empty' properties. However, we need more volunteers to make this happen! How are you fixed and have you time to help?

Please consider if you or someone from your church could volunteer in one of these areas:

Gifts in Kind – we need: small items for personal hygiene (that can be easily carried), trainers, walking boots, jeans, and **new** underwear.

Sandwich Making – for Matlock

Welcoming Guests - at Matlock or Chesterfield. **Joining a “furniture” team** in Chesterfield

To help with any of these please email:
churchonthebus@gmail.com

Operational Updates

Matlock

The team offers hospitality on Tuesday afternoons in a room above Cornerstone Christian Bookshop. The staff in the bookshop are very much part of our guests' experience and we are glad of their involvement. Numbers coming to the session have decreased recently, possibly because provision of hospitality has increased following the Warm Space initiative.

Nevertheless, the relationships in the group are close and precious. We have welcomed Penny to the team, but additional volunteers would help to sustain our hospitality since our team is small, and at the moment, challenged by some of the personal situations facing the volunteers and limiting the time that they can offer. Because of this, sessions will close for the 6-week school holidays as some respite is needed to recharge.



A Thursday night at Chesterfield

Chesterfield

In this last year (Apr22 – Mar23) there have been 1,093 guests in 100 sessions involving 141 men and 41 women of which 23 have attended 10 or more sessions, 74 attended 3 or more sessions and 69 only attended once.

It would be easy to think that the sessions made little difference to the people who come along, but the AGM heard evidence to the contrary.

While collecting furniture Andrew Lamb received assistance from a man who looked familiar. He certainly was having once regularly attended the sessions on the bus, along with his dog. Not only has this gentleman turned his own life around but he is also helping others. As Andrew reported, "It is all worth it!"

Recently **Tesco Extra** in Chesterfield telephoned and asked Ian to call in to accept a donation. This is a regular event since **Tesco** have supported CotB with regular food donations for a few years. However, this was no ordinary donation. The **Tesco Community champions**, Jane and Karen had raised £300 for CotB from a display which they had promoted for two weeks. We are very appreciative of all the support that Tesco gives; this donation will probably go towards some more sleeping bags to boost our stocks ahead of winter.



The Cheque from Tesco

An Informal Open Evening

Please Join Us

There will be an informal open evening on Tuesday 19th Sept, 7:30pm at St John's Church (S42 7LT). Everyone is welcome to come and help us discuss our current situation and what changes we should be looking to make. None of us likes change but it is inevitable, as the pandemic proved so painfully. In the light of this we need to continue to explore the opportunities that may present themselves.

For example, night shelters, as we know them, are not likely to return so what if anything should replace them? We are actively having discussions with others regarding ways forward and seeking exciting opportunities to move us on. Please pray that we will be guided as to the way – and do come along on September 19th if you are able to do so.

Sad News of Friends from Matlock

Pat Russell

One of our earliest volunteers for Church on the Bus, Pat Russell, passed away in December 2022. She served on all the different buses alongside Captain Alan Park for many years. Pat gave out hot drinks and snacks with her good friend Trish and always engaged with the guests, giving them Christian literature and talking to them about her faith. She also prayed a great deal about individuals, even after she left the charity in 2017. Just before she died she wrote to John Phillips mentioning some of the guests by name that she said she still prayed for and would never forget. We give thanks for Pat's life and witness.

Dave Cauldwell

A very dear guest, at Matlock, Dave Cauldwell passed away in February this year. He was a lovely, gentle man in his middle years who came back to live near his mum in Matlock having been a primary school teacher in Hertfordshire. He was a great asset to our conversations at Church from the Bus meetings with his sparkly sense of humour; he was also a very kind and supportive friend to many other guests, especially when they were in a time of need. He will be greatly missed by us all and it has been a privilege to know him well for about 16 months.