



The Church in lockdown

**Celebrating church action
and the work of YourNeighbour**

90%
of churches surveyed have supported the vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic



1,165
churches signed up to help their community through the YourNeighbour network

£500,000
the amount of money the Salvation Army spent on emergency food and PPE



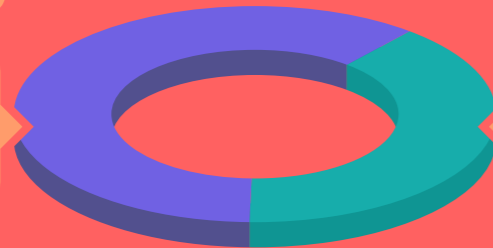
meals delivered to vulnerable families through our Lockdown Hunger partnership



meals churches have provided per month to those in need

1,300
calls to the YourNeighbour helpline looking for practical or emotional support

59%
callers looking for practical help



41%
callers looking for emotional support



91,000
page views on our website yourneighbour.org

8,000
views of YourNeighbour hosted online events to encourage and equip church leaders

A letter from our founders



The Church demonstrates love to communities like no-one else can.

Back in March, when we started to comprehend the impact of Covid-19, we dreamt of building a network of 300 churches to care for our communities in crisis. We established YourNeighbour at the onset of lockdown to strengthen communities, equip the Church and connect churches to local and national government. We have been absolutely astounded that over 1,100 churches and 40 denominations and Christian charity partners joined with us. Thank you!

Time and time again, we have seen the Church bring light to the world. Our buildings were closed but the Church was open. The Church responded quickly and creatively. We estimate that churches have been providing more than five million meals per month to those in need. Churches also played a vital role in providing emotional and spiritual needs through pastoral and bereavement support, domestic violence interventions and mentoring, among others.

We're incredibly proud of how the Church mobilised and how we gathered a network of over 1,100 churches across the UK within six weeks. We launched a national helpline at Easter to support individuals in need by connecting them to local churches who could help them. To date, we have received well over 1,300 calls. To address holiday hunger, we brought partners together to launch the Lockdown Hunger project to support local churches. Our partners delivered over 2.8 million meals to vulnerable families nationwide.

Many church leaders felt ill-equipped and isolated with face-to-face events not being possible. In response we hosted over 40 online events, where over 1,000 people participated and were equipped to extend the reach of their ministry.

Church leaders wanted more connection with government. We facilitated multiple roundtables with Christian leaders, government ministers and officials, highlighting the challenges faced by local communities and the work of local churches in response. We also launched a unique toolkit for church leaders, to enable them to strengthen collaboration locally. The toolkit has been viewed over 1,500 times and equips churches to work more effectively with Local Authorities.

While our national helpline provided a valuable connection with over 1,300 calls; promoting the helpline was crucial. When we secured radio promotion, call volume significantly increased and we have learnt that raising awareness of the helpline is key to its success.

In the midst of today's challenges, we have seen how church-based programmes are well-positioned to help communities during the long-term recovery from Covid-19. However, not all churches are able to access these. Lockdown Hunger encouraged and supported churches of all sizes to access resources to support families in their community who were facing holiday hunger.

Looking forward, there is more need and an even greater opportunity for churches to be beacons of hope. We see that the Church will need more resources. In conjunction with Stewardship we are seeking to convene a national fundraising campaign to raise new financial resources to support churches. Danny Kruger's recent report to the Prime Minister, "Levelling up our communities", mentioned the potential to raise £500 million over 5 years and we believe there has never been a better opportunity to do something at this scale. Key to our approach will be to demonstrate the impact of church-based programmes telling the stories of transformation that have churches demonstrating God's love at their heart.

We're humbled by what the Church has done in the midst of Covid-19 and we also believe that God will do even more in the months to come. We'd love for you to be a part of it.

Many blessings,

Russell Rook and Dom Llewellyn

Introduction

In mid-March, with the likely impact and challenges of Covid-19 becoming evident, it became clear that churches had a vital and challenging part to play. Senior church leaders, government officials, ministers, the Good Faith Partnership and the Good Faith Foundation began a discussion about what the church response would look like. It became clear that churches wanted to be able to work together to be able to care for their communities in crisis, be equipped and connect with the Government.

YourNeighbour is a UK Church response to Covid-19. In the 6-week period after the onset of lockdown we built a network of over 1,100 churches. Our denominational partners include the Church of England, Salvation Army, Baptists Together, Assemblies of God, Vineyard, and the Methodist Church. We exist to help churches care for their communities and have created a platform that will enable the Church to respond in transformational ways – increasing impact and drawing more people into community with each other.

YourNeighbour has three pillars:

1

To strengthen communities in lockdown

2

To equip the Church to care for communities in crisis

3

To connect churches to local and national Government

'I'm very thankful that YourNeighbour gives communities across the country ease of access and peace of mind about the help that is available to them when they need it.'

— Right Revd Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London

This report showcases the nature of the work that the Church has done, how YourNeighbour has supported it and also how the Church continues to be a voice for the vulnerable, a place of support for the weak and a beacon of hope for the weary. Over the last five months YourNeighbour has delivered a wide range of services with and for churches across the nation to support all members of society. We featured in national news and media coverage at Easter, highlighting that, while church buildings were closed, local churches have been open for business and busy as ever.

The Church's response to Covid-19

On any given day, churches in the UK provide a wide range of services across local communities. Over the last five months, this has grown to an impressive array of projects and programmes, initiatives and interventions. Much of this has demonstrated the

true capacity of Christian institutions; while already a significant part of civil society, these churches and charities remain a place of unrecognised support and untapped resource. We have sought to identify a series of broader themes across three main categories:

Resourcing a national response to the crisis

Outlining the resources that churches have made available to local communities across the country

During the national lockdown*:

- 90% of surveyed churches supported the vulnerable.
- 58% provided emergency food.
- 57% provided befriending to the elderly/isolated.
- Almost half of the surveyed churches started a new community engagement initiative.
- The average UK church supported over 100 beneficiaries.

Responding to urgent needs

Outlining the work of churches in the provision of emergency food and other essential provisions

Responding to invisible needs

Outlining the work of churches in pastoral care and mental health

Resourcing a national response to the crisis



Churches and Christian charities have taken a lead in sharing their assets and resources to serve and support the most vulnerable across the country. At a time when many churches and charities face huge uncertainty in terms of their own finances, they have sought to raise money, rally volunteers or repurpose their facilities to meet the needs of those struggling in communities. In time it will be possible to estimate the overall size of these efforts but, for now, we are left to reflect on the contributions of individual institutions.

Examples include:

- The Salvation Army spent in excess £500,000 of its own money to provide emergency food and PPE for its frontline staff in homeless services and care homes.
- Stewardship raised and distributed over £5m to 100 churches and local charities serving their communities.
- Life Church Manchester was used by Trafford Council as a hub of support for the community and to support a community-wide response, in partnership with statutory agencies and local charities.

In addition to finance, staff, volunteers and buildings, churches have a unique and valuable resource: In the words of Rev David Hitchcock of Tonbridge Baptist Church, **“Trust has been our greatest asset in the midst of this crisis. The fact that we have been part of our community for decades, supporting families, running programmes, serving the vulnerable and partnering with local agencies, means that we are a safe place for people who are struggling and a dependable organisation that local leaders and policy makers can rely upon.”**



Photo: The C3 Church

Responding to urgent needs



Church efforts over the past few months have often focussed on the most urgent need for food. In April, demand from the 425 local food banks supported by the Trussell Trust and the Independent Food Aid Network doubled, with an average of 700 emergency food parcels provided by each provider in the month.

From the figures available to us, we estimate that churches have been providing more than 5 million meals per month to those in need. The true number may be considerably more.

Churches have found a much broader range of people in need of emergency food. As one Vicar shared in a YourNeighbour Focus Group. **‘The people we are providing for are not the ones that normally reach out to the food bank and in some cases wouldn’t qualify for help due to the referral systems in place.’** These include: frontline workers, those who were self-shielding and individuals too embarrassed to ask for help.

From the figures available to us, we estimate that churches have been providing more than 5 million meals per month to those in need. The true number may be considerably more.

In addition to food, churches have met a range of other urgent needs, including:

- West End Baptist Church in Wiltshire sought to address digital poverty by refurbishing and distributing laptops through local schools, so that disadvantaged pupils can continue to engage with the curriculum.
- In Bristol, churches worked with Home For Good and the Local Authority, to help recruit new foster families for children at risk – leading to more than 60 enquiries, with 17 households so far starting the formal approval process with the Local Authority.

The work of the UK church in adapting to the challenges of the pandemic, demonstrates both a capacity to meet urgent needs in difficult times and points to the opportunity to play a more proactive and long term role supporting the most vulnerable in our communities as part of the nation’s recovery.

case study

St Matthew’s is a bilingual church in South London working with large numbers from the Hispanic Community. This summer they ran a holiday club for 40 children from a hispanic background during the school holidays. This included a hot meal, fun activities and games, all in a safe environment. They are also offering ongoing English classes and legal support for parents.

‘We believe that to believe in Jesus Christ is also to believe in Social Justice; this season has given us an opportunity to walk with these people, to encourage them to see they are not invisible.’

— Fr Hugo Adan, Rector of Holy Trinity and St Matthew, Southwark



Responding to invisible needs



Alongside the most immediate and urgent needs, churches have proven particularly vital in meeting less visible needs. Social distancing, self-isolation and debt have brought a significant increase in anxiety and other mental health issues. Given the pastoral role of local churches across the country, significant efforts have been made to identify and support community members who are suffering in this way.

Churches and christian charities have continued to provide:

- Traditional chaplaincy services in prisons, hospitals, schools and other community spaces, no matter how challenging the circumstances.
- Support for families going through bereavement. This has been a major focus for Black Majority Churches, who are part of communities that have been especially vulnerable through the crisis, according to Bishop John Francis of Ruach churches.
- Support for victims of domestic violence. Restored, an international Christian alliance working to end violence against women, saw traffic to their website double as they received requests from victims, survivors and church leaders looking for advice on how to respond and offer support. 'We work to change the story for survivors of abuse... we produced a downloadable toolkit and delivered a rolling programme of online training for church leaders.'
- 'Kick UK', a provider of chaplaincy, sport and positivity activities in London, has helped to keep schools open; providing educational and physical activities for the children of key workers, while offering remote mentoring and online chaplaincy for vulnerable young people.

The overview above represents only a small part of the UK church's contribution over the past four months. There is much to learn and more still to celebrate. Furthermore, there is much to be gained from a strategic discussion about the role of the Church in our future recovery.

'Don't underestimate the importance of hospital chaplaincy visits. When we are most vulnerable, our emotional and spiritual care is as important as the medical care we receive.'

— Mike Royal, Co-CEO of the Cinnamon Network and chaplain in the Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

The role YourNeighbour has played

Strengthening Communities

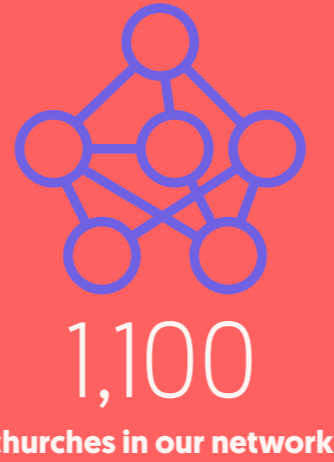


Equipping the Church



Connecting to Government





Strengthening communities

The Church has a long history of social action and works hard today to combat unemployment and debt, support vulnerable children and families, and provide immediate help through food banks. The doors This has included:

of many churches are wide open with Christians helping to meet a plethora of needs. YourNeighbour, along with partners, has created a range of services that support churches to connect with their communities at this time.

Helpline

The launch of a national helpline to support individuals in need by connecting them to a local church



Lockdown Hunger

Working with schools and churches to tackle the problem of Holiday Hunger

'YourNeighbour helps people in churches and is a way of encouraging fresh volunteers; making phone calls, buying food and keeping in touch with people who, for all sorts of reasons, can't get out.'

— Right Revd Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham

Helpline

This pandemic has left large numbers of people across the country isolated, lonely, and cut off from their usual support networks. The YourNeighbour helpline has enabled people to reach out and access valuable support in their local area. Our network of over 1,000 churches were ready to help, and our helpline has enabled us to bridge the gap between churches and their community.

YourNeighbour has run a helpline with a team of trained call handlers ready to take calls and respond to people's needs. From April-July, the helpline was run in partnership with Oasis, who were able to use their highly knowledgeable and experienced team to man the phone lines. This was a really positive partnership and YourNeighbour are very grateful for the support of Oasis during the challenging season of lockdown. We have taken over 1,300 calls from people across the UK with both practical and emotional needs. Through our network of churches, we have enabled the person's local church to respond, or in a small number of cases, we have made referrals to specialist services.

Of those we supported, around 59% received help with their practical needs, from those shielding and needing prescriptions collecting, to those too scared to go to the shops, to those left without the resources to afford food to feed their families. In all of these cases, churches were able to reach out and respond.

Beyond the practical needs, around 41% of people called having been left lonely, depressed or in emotional distress by the pandemic. In some cases, the helpline was able to be a listening ear, or was able to pray with the caller, and was often the only voice that person would hear that day. In many cases, YourNeighbour was able to connect them to a local church who could befriend them and let them know they are not alone.

'It has been great to work with YourNeighbour as it has provided us with a network of people we could help that we would not otherwise have met.'

— Brian Dickens, Hall Green United Community Church

As well as the benefits to those who have called the helpline, the YourNeighbour helpline has provided a unique opportunity for churches to connect with their local community. Reaching out to people during the pandemic has been challenging for churches, due to the nature of the restrictions. By signing up to our network, churches have been able to offer practical help and often build relationships that will last well into the future.

We are extremely grateful to Compassion for their ongoing support and sponsorship of the Helpline.

'I'm so glad I called YourNeighbour. I am really, really grateful.'

— Mrs E, helpline caller



'YourNeighbour has been a great initiative, please keep doing what you are doing. It is so valuable to connect the Church with the community. It's not about drop and go, it's about beginning a conversation, and starting a journey'

— Amanda, minister of Enfield Baptist Church.

case study

M was connected to the helpline in July. She was really struggling to feed her baby and could not afford to buy the nappies and baby essentials she desperately needed. YourNeighbour was able to connect her with a local church who responded quickly with a large delivery of nappies, wipes and baby milk. As well as meeting her practical need, they have invited her along to their mother and toddler group, and are putting her in touch with a local outreach worker who speaks her language.

Lockdown Hunger

Meeting family needs over the summer

Millions of children and families faced a difficult summer this year. Before Covid-19, government data showed 4.1m children in poverty out of whom 1.3m qualified for free school meals. Millions more households who were managing before, found themselves struggling as a result of the crisis. For many families, schools were a source of food, respite, activities and socialisation as well as education.

YourNeighbour working in partnership was well placed to help churches connect with local schools who had been helping vulnerable families during term time.

The project

The YourNeighbour team rapidly consulted with experts, local churches and schools on the ground – and together in partnership with The Message Trust, Audacious Foundation, Love Your Neighbour, The Salvation Army and Transforming Lives for Good, worked out a plan. Each network and organisation contributed through materials, promotion, webinars, social media and media engagement.¹ We undertook to call the most engaged churches in our network and encourage action, having conversations with 123 church leaders over a two week period.

case study

The Well Church in North London have been working with their local school over the summer to support vulnerable families. Clive, the Senior Pastor said:

'The whole project started because of a session I listened to on YourNeighbour. Off the back of that we got in touch with our local school and we then ran a project for their five most needy families over the summer holidays. It's been a really positive response so far, showing the school we are a church here to help. The teachers at the school have been really thankful and the parents too.'

Something worth mentioning is that we have a group of single mums at the church who meet in a mid-week group. They heard about this food project we are doing and they are now chipping in £5 per week to it.

We are now getting to the place where we are actually getting out into the community and helping people. As a church we are producing people that do the stuff that Jesus called us to do.'

Examples of the work across partners include:

- Love Your Neighbour promoted the call to their network, and organised two zoom calls for questions and answers on lockdown hunger, attended by YourNeighbour and TLG (Transforming Lives for Good), to around 35 church leaders interested in pursuing this.
- Audacious Foundation worked directly with 10 schools in deprived areas, two of which were contacts established because of YourNeighbour, as well as communicating to church leaders in the AoG (Assemblies of God) network.
- Sam Ward from the Message Trust was interviewed on Trans World Radio and presented to Elim church leaders as part of communications to their network. The Message Trust delivered around 50,000 meals in the Manchester area and are now working with local government and other partners on a wider vision to tackle food insecurity in the Greater Manchester area.

The outcome

During the course of lockdown, the partners involved in this project reported delivering around 2.8 million meals (where figures were available). The lockdown hunger project was part of that wider picture of a vast range and quantity of partner activity aimed at those in need.

The partnership enabled churches to respond appropriately, according to their resources, in each individual context. Some churches were able to rapidly deliver a new programme, offering food parcels, hot meals or vouchers to local families during the school holiday period. Some joined in with local organisations or found other needs to meet such as for school uniform or baby clothes. Some began conversations with the local school, raised funding and will shortly begin supporting local families this term.

Emergency need but long term relationships

For many churches, building longer-term relationships was a key aim of their project, both with individual families and with local schools themselves, in order to offer ongoing support and tackle the root causes behind food poverty.

'We provided 9,000 meals over the summer...and through YourNeighbour we found a CAP Kick Start course and were able to follow up with families.'

— Halifax Elim Church



'Your help came just when I needed it most. Just when I didn't know what to do, I had no other option, and just then the food came. From the first day you came, I was moved to tears.'

— Joy, single mum of 3 in East London

Lockdown Hunger: The numbers

- Across the partners hundreds of thousands of meals were delivered across the summer through a range of programmes and schemes
- TLG welcomed 91 new churches into their network who provided over 295,000 meals through Boxes of Hope; 13 of those new church partners cited YourNeighbour as the prompt to connect (and TLG believe YourNeighbour contributed to the sign-up beyond that 13)
- In-depth follow up with YourNeighbour churches suggested around 1 in 4 of those initially spoken to were able to respond in some way (including supporting other schemes locally), while another 1 in 4 were already undertaking a similar programme. A further 12% are setting up a new initiative with a local school this term.

'It's nice to know there's people out there who actually care and I've even made friends through it too. Everyone's really friendly and they give up their spare time.'

— Penny, single mum of 2 in East London

New partnerships...

As well as new relationships on the ground, the project has formed closer relationships among the partners who worked together. For example, TLG's work on wellbeing will be promoted through the partnerships established for lockdown hunger. As well as being practically useful, this has encouraged collective action that we believe has a profound spiritual significance and has laid foundations for future collaborations.

'The relationships with schools and local organisations weren't new, but before they were tenuous. Now they are happier, stronger, and people are confident we can deliver.'

— Church in Streatham

'Working in partnership with YourNeighbour has been an invaluable experience. It is a pleasure to be a part of a nationwide initiative, and one that is relevant to the needs of our communities during the current crisis. Most of all, I am confident that it has produced great results at a time where we have needed to respond both quickly and intentionally in order to see impact and changed lives. I look forward to future opportunities to work together.'

— Laura Howard, Program Director, Audacious Foundation

case study

The Message Trust, a YourNeighbour Partner, have launched a new initiative to offer a sustainable approach to food poverty alleviation. Their new Community grocery uses surplus food from local supermarkets and food distributors like FareShare. Community Grocers support local residents with their weekly shopping, offering the option to save money on food and reduce food waste. Community Grocers aim to be more dignified than food banks, offering choice and empowerment.

Alongside the grocers, we are providing additional services like debt relief, job clubs and counselling. We hope that our services will include a citizens advice style that signposts to services to ensure that our clients can access the most applicable benefits.

'We feel the grocery model offers instant support and becomes a destination at which advice and guidance can be obtained.'

— Sam Ward, Director of Ministry, The Message Trust.

¹ e.g. www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/10-july/news/uk/children-in-poverty-to-receive-help-over-summer

Equipping the church

As the pandemic took hold, key challenges for local church leaders began to emerge as they sought to respond to the lockdown both emotionally and spiritually for their church communities. YourNeighbour, working in tandem with Eido Research and Stewardship, undertook research to understand the needs of churches and faith-based organisations. This showed that, for the vast majority of organisations, the crisis directly led to both an increase in demand for services and a decrease in available funds and staffing.

Churches had to respond quickly and creatively in response to the ever changing environment created by lockdown. The sudden closure of buildings, the live streaming of services, the furlough scheme or grappling with the ever changing government advice were all issues that YourNeighbour helped church leaders to navigate. The financial challenge to churches has been immense, as income from lettings ceased overnight and congregational giving has reduced. Clergy have been forced to grapple with issues they never thought they would encounter and were certainly not trained for.

YourNeighbour recognised the need for training, equipping and support for church leaders during this uniquely challenging season. As a result, YourNeighbour designed bespoke content for leaders and the church population at large.

YourNeighbour also showcased the best of other contemporaries' online events and partnered with other specialist organisations and promoted their resources where the content supported our analysis of what leaders were needing.

By the end of August, YourNeighbour had provided 16 themed weeks of programming, engaging almost 8,000 unique views of the material.

These themes fitted broadly within the following categories:

- Encouraging the Church, for example: how to re-open buildings safely, sharing hope and church leadership skills.
- Helping the Church to meet community needs, for example: domestic abuse, lockdown hunger and children and young people facing poverty.
- Tackling key themes affecting the Church, for example: our thematic mental health week and refugee week in partnership with World Vision.

Leaders Lunches

Over 1,000 leaders attended our 24 leaders lunches, an opportunity to listen to an interview with a significant leader or expert with a live audience on zoom.

These featured Nicky Gumbel, Mike Royal, Eli Gardner, Sam Ward, The Right Revd Paul Butler, Krish Kandiah, Marvin Rees (The Mayor of Bristol), and David and Carrie Grant.

99% of churches experienced organisational hardship due to loss of revenue post-lockdown.

82% of churches saw a loss of human resources, all churches saw disruption of their usual activities.

Despite this,

71% of churches have delivered new services, many in areas of the community they have never been active in before.



'I've also been involved with some YourNeighbour webinars which were very helpful. Particularly the Elim one on reopening churches, that was so helpful for us.'

— Brian Dickens, Hall Green United Community Church

'I would be very grateful if you could pass on my grateful thanks to all involved with YourNeighbour. I have found it to be so valuable, and I have really enjoyed the Leader's Lunches and various webinars. I think hearing something of people's faith and how they are navigating their way through this current situation has been really helpful.'

— A Vicar of a YourNeighbour Church in Lincoln

18
weeks of programme content

12
YourNeighbour training events

24
Leaders Lunches

124
events run by partner organisations

18
YourNeighbour interviews

8,000
views



Connecting to Government

Local governments have been crucial to coordinating local responses and, along with national government, have been at the core of public services, as well as providing guidance on how places of worship can operate. We saw a strong desire for

collaboration and joined-up thinking to help provide an effective level of support and care. We wanted to help equip the Church to be a voice at the table to showcase the wonderful work it was doing through the challenges of lockdown.

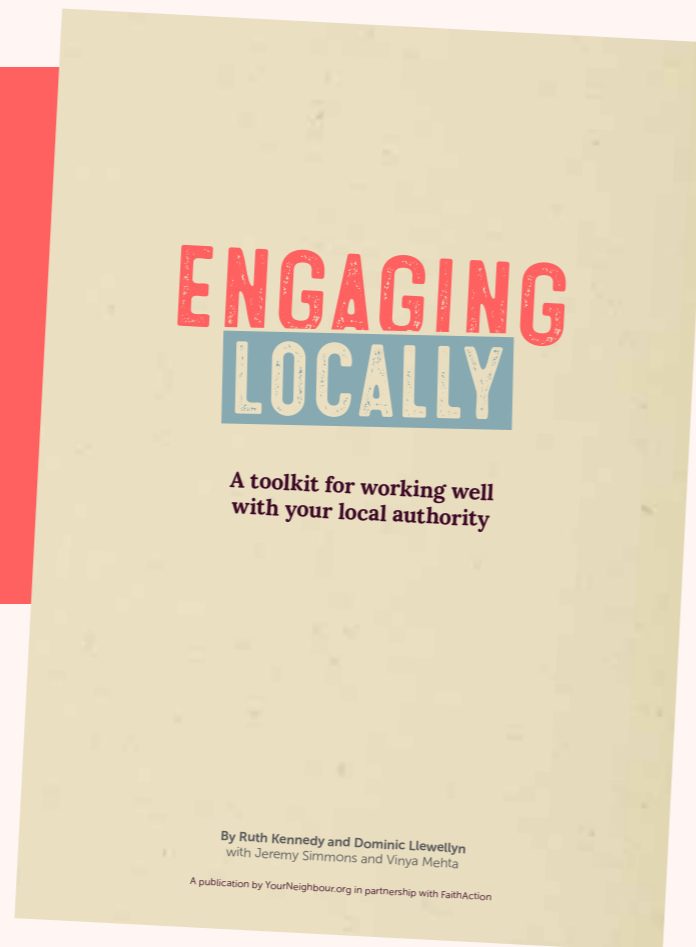
Toolkit

Churches across the UK were asking us the question: how can we work well with our local authorities and other local agencies as our localities look to recover from Covid-19? Communities benefit when Local Authorities and churches have strong working relationships. However, many churches find the world of local government difficult to navigate and get alongside.

In July, we launched a toolkit with Faith Action to shine some light on this world in simple terms, and offer practical advice to churches to enable them to strengthen their relationships with their local councils. The toolkit has been viewed over 1,500 times.

'This is a really helpful toolkit for any church leader looking to begin building relationships with their local authority and wider local agencies. Highly practical, accessible and thoughtful, it's a great place to start building positive and fruitful connections to help bring about change in a community.'

— Vanessa Conant, Team Rector, St Mary's and the Parish of Walthamstow



1,500
downloads



Roundtables

Senior church leaders told us that they wanted to have access to Government Ministers and officials during the pandemic; both to ensure that the Government and churches could have healthy dialogue on the implications of the Places of Worship Guidance, and also so that the Church could highlight the work that it is doing to care for its communities and explore ways to partner with Government. At the start of the crisis, we supported the UK Government in convening a roundtable for senior church leaders. We also convened a roundtable with the Minister for Faith, Lord (Stephen) Greenhalgh, government officials, churches and Christian charities around key themes such as debt, food poverty and the role of the Church in and throughout Covid-19.

Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP, Culture Secretary said **'Church buildings may have been closed but I'm delighted to see them doing the good work they do for those in need. YourNeighbour is an excellent initiative and yet another example of how our communities and voluntary groups are rising to the challenge posed by Covid-19, as part of our national effort to beat the virus.'**

Prime Minister's Review on civil society and Covid-19

We were asked by Danny Kruger MP to support his review for the Prime Minister in developing proposals to strengthen and develop the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector as part

of the Covid-19 recovery phase. We canvassed the views and input of Church leaders for the Prime Minister's review through surveys, focus groups and one-to-one interviews.



Insights and lessons learned

Through YourNeighbour, the church has demonstrated the unique role that it plays in communities, the local trust that has been built by churches for many years, and the subsequent capacity of church congregations to share good news in difficult times. Along with this, we have learned that:

Certain church-based programmes are well-positioned to help communities during the long-term recovery from Covid-19. However, not all churches are able to access these. Our Lockdown Hunger project encouraged and supported churches of all sizes to access resources to support families in their community facing holiday hunger. We recognise it would have been preferable to start this earlier to allow churches to contact schools before term ended.

The Church social action space is complex and it can be difficult for churches to find and access the range of networks, organisations and funding available. YourNeighbour recognises the need to help churches navigate this complex system.

Many individuals in need lack connection with a church community, with the most vulnerable often remaining hidden. This has only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Our national helpline provides a valuable connection for these people. Promoting the helpline has been crucial; where we secured promotion on the radio for the helpline, call volume significantly increased.

Local churches that have been part of integrated crisis response within their own communities are eager to share their learning and practice with other churches nationally. YourNeighbour provides a platform by which this can happen effectively.

Almost all churches have faced financial hardship during the pandemic, at a time when the need is ever increasing. Churches need access to resources and financial support to be able to continue their support for the most vulnerable.

While some local churches have been able to integrate their efforts with their Local Authority and civil society, many others lack the confidence, connection, or expertise to work well with local stakeholders. Through our toolkit and webinars, YourNeighbour has provided church leaders with support and insight to work more effectively in, and with, their local community.

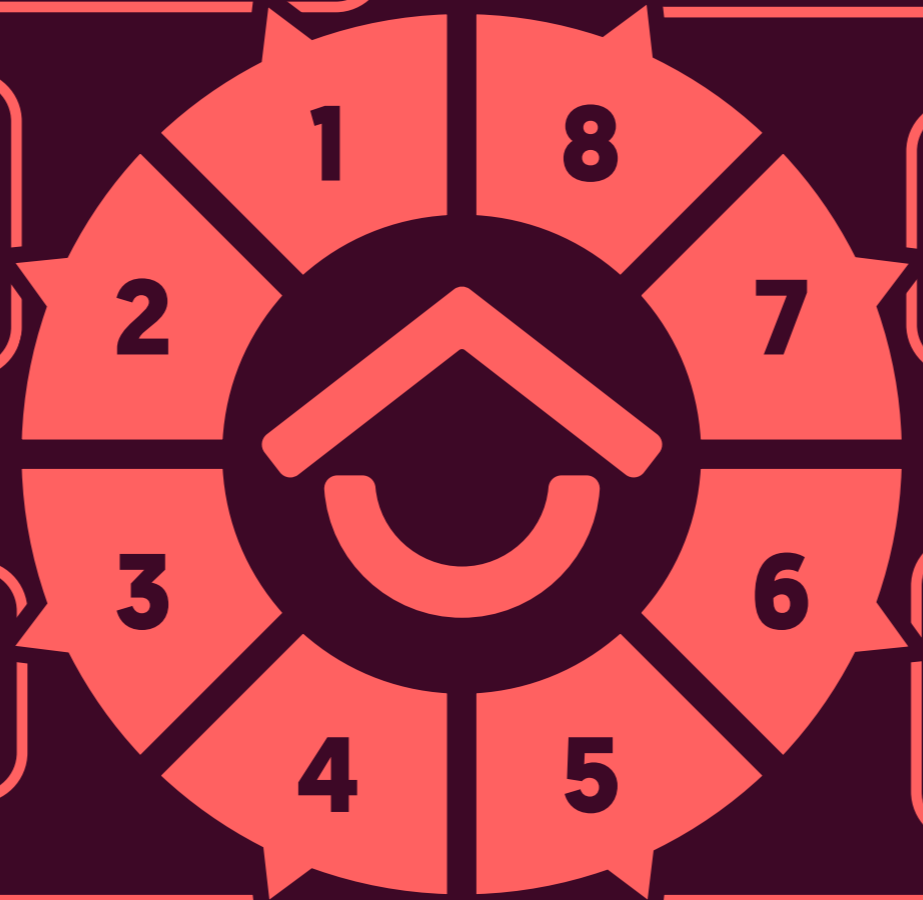
Smaller churches often punch above their weight but lack access to the resources and support that larger churches are accustomed to. YourNeighbour has had successes in supporting smaller churches, helping them to explore how they respond to recent challenges and maximise the potential of current opportunities.

As YourNeighbour has sought to tell the story of the amazing work the church is doing, the feedback has been positive, but there is so much more to do to showcase the key role the church has to play in community transformation.

While many churches have responded heroically to the challenges that Covid-19 has presented to their communities so far, we have also learned that the Church will come into its own in the upcoming recovery. YourNeighbour is determined to help churches play a vital role in our national recovery to resource and support churches and to make the most of this opportunity to reposition and re-establish churches in the heart of local communities.



Photo: Cornerstone Leyton



What next?

It has been inspiring to see the Church come together to meet the needs of so many people through the initial phase of the Covid-19 response, and it has been an honour for all at YourNeighbour to be involved. We have taken the lead in a number of areas such as the helpline, lockdown hunger and equipping church leaders, whilst also acting as a point of integration for many of our partners.

We are incredibly grateful to all who have financially supported us so far and are actively

seeking funding to sustain and grow our impact. YourNeighbour is in a position to support hundreds of churches to identify and target specific areas where they can meet critical needs and make a difference. We want to do that in a way that benefits communities and helps churches to thrive. Looking forward, YourNeighbour aims to maximise the benefits to churches of the platform that has been created and is exploring new opportunities in the following areas:



Catalysing a nationwide Church fundraising campaign to raise financial resources to support churches as they seek to do more. We are collaborating with Stewardship who successfully raised £5m to support the initial response to Covid-19. Danny Kruger's report to the Prime Minister 'Levelling up our communities' highlighted the opportunity to raise an additional £500 million for church based action over 5 years and we believe there has never been a moment when this is more needed. This will only ever be possible if God is in it and the Church comes together to deliver it but, with all that we have seen in the response so far, we believe it is more than possible.



Leading research into what more can be learnt from how churches have responded so far, to enable us to contribute approaches for churches adapting to the rapidly changing world we are now in. We want to tell inspiring stories of the Church and how it helps those in most need backed up by solid evidence. As people see the Church doing this work we want them to ask questions about the God of love that we serve.



Developing the web platform to become a one stop shop for church leaders as they look for resources to support their social action responses, making their lives easier and creating communities of common interest.

'I welcome the partnership between YourNeighbour and Stewardship as it explores ways to galvanise collaboration between churches in serving their communities and transforming them for the common good.'

— Dr Paul Goodliff, General Secretary of Churches Together in England

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While we see many challenges ahead, we also see great potential for churches to come together and meet deep practical needs in ways that bear witness to the God of love that we serve, and firmly establish the Church as a relevant force for good in the country. We look forward to collaborating with you on this journey.



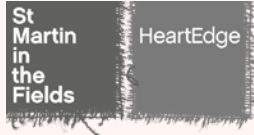
WITH THANKS TO ALL OUR PARTNERS



ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

NewWine

Paul Hamlyn Foundation



evangelical alliance
together making Jesus known



SPRING HARVEST
Home



vineyard churches



FaithAction

GATHER

RenewWellbeing



UCB.CO.UK

It all adds up to
Livability

Catalyst



World Vision



TRANSFORMING NOTTS TOGETHER

Eden

The Methodist Church



Samaritan's Purse
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF



thirtyone: eight
Creating safer places. Together



KIDS MATTER



CAPITAL MASS
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