



# **MANOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY PROJECT SHEFFIELD**

## **Church Related Community Work Project 2014 – 2022**

**CRCW – Simon Loveitt**

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Micah 6:8:

‘He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God’.

## 1. Background

The Manor Estate is a large low-rise housing estate on the south-east side of Sheffield. The estate was started during the 1930s as a garden city development offering a healthier alternative to living in overcrowded central Sheffield, but places of work were not included in the scheme. From the 1990s onwards, large areas of the estate have been demolished and, a programme of housing redevelopment still ongoing.

Located in the most deprived ward in Sheffield with a population of c.21,000 in 9,700 households, Manor parish is ranked in the highest category of the English indices of deprivation.<sup>1</sup>

Founded in 2013, as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), **The Manor Church and Community Project** is an exciting local church initiative and Local Ecumenical Partnership, supported by the Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

### **Our vision as a project:**

We exist to:

1. promote social inclusion for the public benefit of Sheffield Manor residents by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.
2. provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, financial

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<sup>1</sup> [ArcGIS - Church of England parish map](#) Source: Church of England Research and Statistics Unit drawing on 2019 Deprivation Statistics taken from the English Indices of Deprivation, produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.

3. be a Christian presence within the Manor and Castle Ward.

The vision is to work ecumenically, and in partnership with others who share our aims, to be agents of God's transformation in the lives both of individuals and the community in the Manor area of Sheffield. The vision is based on our strong belief that the Church is called to be an agent of social change and a vehicle for establishing God's Kingdom.

Our aim has been to build upon the already existing initiatives, to build new relationships, and to try and make a difference in the community, by addressing the many issues of social injustice and exclusion that present themselves in the Manor district.



## **2. Overview by the Chair**

The Manor Church and Community Project would not be where it is now without the expertise and input of Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) Simon Loveitt, who has been part of the project for the last seven and a half years. We are indebted to him for representing the Manor Church and Community Project (MCCP) across the Manor Community and for having facilitated several partnerships and co-operations with other local agencies and organisations which are and will continue to be an invaluable part of our work in this community.

This report gives a good oversight and outlines the different pieces of work Simon was involved with and how the partnerships have grown while he has worked with us.

I would like to express my special thanks to Simon for his dedication and diligence to our project throughout his time with us, and especially for his continued commitment through a number of upheavals and changes to the pattern of his work due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the leaving of the Manor Parish rector Rev Julie Upton in recent years. We could not have achieved the refurbishment of Temple Park Centre without Simon's willingness to be on site as often as possible and his excellent communication with all parties involved.

We are sad to say good-bye to him and are very thankful for all that Simon has achieved with and through our project and wish him well for the opportunities and challenges that his new role will undoubtedly bring with it. He will be missed very much not only within our project, but across the whole Manor Estate. We have been very blessed to work with Simon since 2014 and wish him God's continued blessings in his new post.

Rev Debora Marschner - Chair of Manor Church & Community Project

### 3. Temple Park Centre



Historically, the Manor estate has been served by the Methodist and Anglican denominations working in a local ecumenical partnership. William Temple church, built in 1957, has remained the only church building on Manor Park since. Over the years has been served jointly by ministers of the Methodist circuit and clergy of the Anglican Manor Parish.

In 2017, the William Temple Church building ceased to have a regular worshipping congregation in 2017. Both denominations were faced with the challenge – should the building close and be sold off, or could it have a more imaginative future?

Following extensive consultation; a lease from the Sheffield Manor Parish; a new name; and significant capital investment, it has become a multi-use community centre - still with the church at its heart.

The Manor Church and Community Project took over the very tired 1950's building, which in places hadn't been decorated since it was built. It needed a significant amount of money spent on it.

Initially two unsuccessful Lottery funding bids were submitted one in 2013, and one in 2015. The decision was then taken to try to refurbish the building in phases.

## Phase 1

In 2019 The William Temple Church was renamed, The Temple Park Centre.

The first phase, for just under £100,000 was for new double-glazed windows, LED lighting, a new heating system, raised from a grant from Veolia, and the Methodist Church.

## Phase 2

A major refurbishment was completed under Covid lockdown conditions in 2020, with funding from Biffa, Viridor, Veolia, All Churches Trust, The Methodist Church and The United Reformed Church, of about £300,000 with a new entrance, reception, car parking spaces, new toilets, new stage area, new roofing, and a reconfigured internal layout to allow access to all the rooms in the building when sections are being used by groups. This was reported on in the local press: [Community centre and church's £300,000 revamp creates a versatile community hub | The Star](#)

Our thanks must be recorded to our architects, Self Architects, and our team of builders, Woodward & Taylor whose support and professionalism enabled us to create the fantastic community resource.



## 4. S2 Food Poverty Network



The S2 Food Poverty Network began in 2013, and only after significant pressure from existing foodbanks in other parts of Sheffield, who saw a significant number of their clients coming from the S2 postcode. Storage, office and distribution space was available in St Swithun's Church, one of the church buildings belonging to Manor Parish.

All the organisations who came together to support the foundation of the Foodbank, felt it is fundamentally wrong for people to rely on charity handouts. It is wrong to have unjust structures in society where the 'forgotten' fall through the safety net. The number one aim of the Foodbank is to close the Foodbank, originally by 2020. Until there is a fundamental shift in Government policy, unfortunately, it seems, foodbanks are here to stay.

Foodbanks are becoming 'normalised' and accepted as part of the fabric of society. That can't be right. Campaigning forms an important part of our organisation; hence we are called the S2 Food Poverty Network, and not the S2 Foodbank.

Once the immediate need for food has been addressed, the Foodbank works with the clients to address the reason they need assistance. For over 85% of the clients, it is debt. The Foodbank works in partnership with Citizens Advice, and pays for debt advice workers for two days a week to work with the clients to begin to address these issues. As part of this, a Food Club was established which operates much more like a supermarket, where clients pay £2.50 per week, and have access to about £30 of food per week. They can access this for up to 26 weeks' whilst they are working with the debt advice workers.

### **Covid-19 Appeal**

As part of our support to the Sheffield Foodbank Network, the S2 Food Poverty Network has been able to help facilitate the Sheffield Foodbank Network Covid-19 Appeal. The Network is a supporting and co-ordinating umbrella organisation for the Foodbanks in Sheffield and doesn't have its own bank account. The S2 Food Poverty Network offered to act as 'bankers' for the Covid-19 Appeal, and to distribute the funds raised equally amongst the 15 foodbanks operating in Sheffield. To identify that the money is for the appeal, the payment reference is annotated with the donors' name, and Covid-19.

So far, there have been nearly 1,800 individual donations to this appeal, raising nearly £170,000. For some Foodbanks, this has been a lifeline, enabling them to continue to operate during this pandemic crisis.

Simon has been Treasurer of the Foodbank from 2014, till early 2022.

## 5. MCCP Craft Activities

From December 2015, till early 2020, Manor Church & Community Project ran craft activities, based at St. Swithun's Church. With a rapidly ageing and shrinking Sunday morning church congregation, these activities were a first step to developing outreach, serving local families.

From small beginnings, the programme developed to offer games on arrival and a snack; a range of craft activities; a time of story-telling and reflection (using a Godly Play approach) and finishing with food. The last few being home-made chilli con carne and home-made bread rolls.

Four events were held each year on a weekday after school with a focus around seasonal events, typically Christmas, Easter, Harvest but sometimes including St Valentine's Day and Pentecost. Numbers varied, and steadily increased, to almost 100 attending (counting children and their parents).

In 2019, the parish were able to begin a monthly



Sunday afternoon time of worship called Family Church that ran until Covid-19.



## 6. Community Events

The MCCP were key partners in the various community events that took place on the Manor Estate.

### Everyone's Festival

After years of small-scale summer events, Everyone's Festival was established in 2016 with music, food, fairground rides an obstacle course, and plenty of activities for children. These were reasonably successful and ran between 2016 and 2019.



### Community Bonfire

The MCCP became involved in the running of the Community Bonfire in 2016. It ran each year between 2016 and 2019, being cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was a great community event, with many local organisations being involved in the planning. In 2018 & 2019 just under 10,000 people attended the event.



## 7. Manor Assembly

This was the [multi-agency partnership](#) for the area and was generally attended by most organisations active in the area, including the police, councillors, housing associations and some residents. Simon sat on the planning group for the meeting.



Two initiatives worth highlighting are the Community clean up's which took place across the Manor Estate, and in partnership with a number of the Registered Social Landlords, Police and many other local organisations. Up to 35 tonnes of rubbish were removed from people's houses and gardens.

On Friday 7th September 2018, Manor Assembly hosted an awards evening at Temple Park Community Centre. It was a fantastic evening, with many local people receiving awards, including the S2 Food Poverty Network & 186th Sheffield Manor Scouts



## 8. St. Swithun's Church, Food Growing Garden



In partnership with Heeley City Farm, the Manor Parish applied for, and were successful in a £10,000 bid to the National Lottery's Awards for All scheme to develop a plot of unused land surrounding the church and create a food-growing garden on the site and offer open community food-growing classes.

The aim of the project was to:

- Involve food bank users, people and families in food poverty and other local young people and adults in local food growing, harvesting, cooking, eating and enjoying fresh healthy food and taking physical exercise.
- Improve the health and welfare of the local community
- Provide an annual programme of local food growing and health related events to engage all members of the community
- Promote community cohesion and pride by involving more people in volunteering in their community



## 9. Looking Forward

As the current United Reformed Church, Church Related Community Work Project comes to an end, The Manor Church and Community Project are keen for the Partnerships and opportunities created not to be lost.

The MCCP are currently applying for funding for a Community Cohesion and Development worker to carry on some of the Partnership work created and to develop the activities and bookings at the Temple Park Centre.

Due to Simon Loveitt's curtailment, we have come to a crossroads earlier than anticipated, but we see this as an opportunity to re-focus our work going forward on the key vision we have always held: to come alongside local people in their need, to journey with them and God and to be a presence of God's love through justice and inclusion for everyone. The adventure of our project will continue and we hope to build on the good foundations laid by and through the work of Church Related Community Worker Simon Loveitt during his time with the Manor Church and Community Project.

Thank you, Simon, and God's rich blessings for the journey ahead.

Rev. Debora Marschner – Chair of Manor Church and Community Project