Manor Church & Community Project – The first five years...

The Manor is a sprawling ex Council estate, south east of the City centre of Sheffield, with a population of about 15,000 people. The Manor and Castle Ward is currently the most deprived ward in Sheffield.

The challenge to the Church on such an estate is how can you still be relevant and make a difference to the lives of those living there?

It became clear, over 8 years ago, that an ecumenical approach was the best way to achieve our aims.

The Manor Church and Community Project was established in 2013, by the Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches (with Trustees from each denomination and the local community) to develop and support the community in the Manor area of Sheffield. Through this approach emerged the possibility of seeking the appointment of a Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) Minister. Simon Loveitt was appointed in 2014.

Key objectives of the project are to establish and sustain community services and outreach, particularly for young families and the elderly, and to develop the faith community in the Manor Parish. These are based on the belief that God is present and reflected in the world and its people and our ministry shares Jesus’ model of working towards the Kingdom by working with people and communities ‘where they are’

So, what has been achieved since 2014?

- Development of activity sessions for families which includes crafts, worship and food attracting between 50 and 100 children and parents per event, and Stay, Play and Eat holiday activities, with our partners (Nursery and MASKK) which again attracts between 50 and 100 parents and children.
- Taking leadership roles in the development of Uniformed Organisations (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts). This is based at St. Swithun’s Church, replacing a chaotic and dysfunctional youth club. Sixty boys and girls attend Beavers, Cubs and Scouts held on two nights.
- Manor After School Kids Klub (MASKK) – A local charity, chaired by the CRCW Minister, and now based at Temple Park Centre, the organisation provides after school clubs, holiday provision and special needs activities for young people.
- Developing, with our partners the S2 Food Poverty Network - the Foodbank for the Manor community. In the sixth richest country in the world, there shouldn’t be a need for this! However, the Foodbank distributed 55 tons of food to 6,500 people in 2018. We work very closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau, and the Sheffield Credit Union (Simon is a Director) to provide practical support to the Foodbank clients. In April 2018, an S2 Food Club was launched, the next stage on from a Food Bank, helping some of our long-term clients to get back on their feet. Simon has been the Treasurer of the S2 Food Poverty Network since 2015.
• Working in partnership with other local organisations, including the S2 Foodbank, Credit Union, Manor Community Childcare Centre (MCCC), Manor & Castle Development Trust/Best Start.
• The development of the William Temple Church - A multi-phased project to enable the building to function effectively as a multi-use community resource and worship centre. We have delivered the first phase – new heating, lighting, windows and redecoration. Now working on other phases to improve access to the building, upgrade the toilets, and reception. Further plans include a café and a soft play centre.
• Being a key partner in planning and delivering Community Celebrations since 2016 – The Everyone’s Festival and the Bonfire, which attracts about 8,000 people to it.

We have much to thank God for. As our work, partnerships and projects develop we are hopeful that we will continue to create change in both the church and the community.

Simon Loveitt