

Sheffield Church Action on Poverty Pilgrimage 2023

**Church Action
on Poverty**



**Marking the 14th Annual exploration
of initiatives to alleviate poverty in
Sheffield, organised by Church
Action on Poverty Sheffield**

Contents

Church Action on Poverty 14th Annual Pilgrimage

Contents and Introduction	2
St James, Norton	4
The Grace Food Bank	4
The Terminus' Initiative	5
St Peter's, Greenhill	6
Conclusions	6

Introduction

Sheffield is still recovering from the dislocation that the Covid 19 pandemic had on the charitable sector, and, specifically, on those who work on poverty alleviation initiatives. It is a city with many experiencing extreme hardship due to the cost of living crisis.

So, it is essential that a voluntary support network is in place to help those who are experiencing poverty in their lives.

With this in mind, Sheffield's Church Action on Poverty aims to promote the work being undertaken by these voluntary initiatives across the city's church sector and wider afield, including, on occasion, undertaking political lobbying on a local and national level.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the work of Church Action on Poverty, we are a national ecumenical Christian social justice charity committed to tackling poverty in the UK.

We work in partnership with churches, with people living in poverty, and with those who work with people living in

poverty, to tackle its root causes, and we aim to put gospel values of social justice and compassion into practice.

This publication is based on

information gathered at our annual Poverty Pilgrimage that took place on the south side of Sheffield on 21st October, 2023, and on a small number of Internet sources relating to the projects that we visited.

This pilgrimage took place on the day after Storm Babet had caused serious flooding in Chesterfield and parts of Sheffield.

We went ahead despite this, but understandably numbers were less than in previous years.

Twenty one pilgrims set forth on this pilgrimage and encountered no problems resulting from the storm.



*Dr Joe Forde, chair of
Sheffield Church Action
on Poverty*

Every year we visit a different area of Sheffield to learn about how poverty is affecting people in the city, and about the alleviation efforts that are in place to mitigate the effects it is having on the poorest members of our society. This year we visited:

- **St James, Norton** — an Anglican church with interesting initiatives for young people and parents to be.
- The work of the **Grace Food Bank**, based at the Michael United Reformed Church, which provides help for people in need in Lowedges, Norton, Batemoor, Jordanthorpe and the surrounding areas.
- **The Terminus Initiative** — a community project that provides support through volunteering, health & social groups, education, and a range of other mental and physical well being and poverty relief interventions.
- The work of **St Peter's, Greenhill** — an Anglican church that supports a range of local initia-

tives, including providing School Pastors and the Makerspace project to help young people build confidence through practical hobbies and activities.

For this year, our Poverty Pilgrimage was also part of the national 'Let's End Poverty' campaign.

This is a campaign that is focused on influencing those in positions of power to focus on the cause of ending poverty, as we embark on the run-up to the next general election.

By building a movement of people who take action to push poverty higher up the agenda, we want to send the message loud and clear that the next generation has to be free from the appalling injustice of poverty.

For this to be a reality, we need our leaders to commit to structural change and political action.

Anyone interested in joining the Let's End Poverty campaign, either as an individual or an organisation that is committed to achieving that goal, should access the Let's End Poverty website for further information, using the link. <https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/>

Let's End Poverty



Sustainable livelihoods

A voice to people in poverty

Mobilising churches

Places that we visited

ST JAMES CHURCH, NORTON



St James Church is a parish church in the Church of England. It is an ancient and beautiful church that serves the community of Norton, Batemoor and Jordanthorpe, along with its ecumenical partners at Meadowhead Christian Fellowship.

It describes itself as a broad and inclusive church with a strong musical tradition that offers a warm welcome to all who wish to share in the journey of faith.

It is particularly strong on organising activities for young people. These include craft days, take-away activity bags, parties, treasure hunts,

photography competitions, book swaps, pancake toss...to name just a few.

It also runs a Bumps to 3 group that meets every Tuesday and Thursday, except in school holidays, from 10 am to 11.30am.

This is for parents-to-be, new parents and grandparents to meet and discuss issues relating to childcare and development, and is a popular wellbeing intervention for the local community that it serves. There are toys, craft activities, and refreshments provided for the children that accompany parents, as well as hospitality for the adults who attend.

Find out more about these initiatives using the link:

<https://www.stjamesnorton.org/community.htm>

GRACE FOOD BANK SHEFFIELD

helping give hope to those in need



Grace Food Bank is a community group covering the Sheffield 8 postcode area: Lowedges, Norton, Batemoor, Jordanthorpe and the surrounding areas.

It provides food parcels to families or individuals who find themselves in short term financial crisis.

It also provides a signposting service for people living in poverty and who are seeking help with debt management, gambling addiction, substance abuse

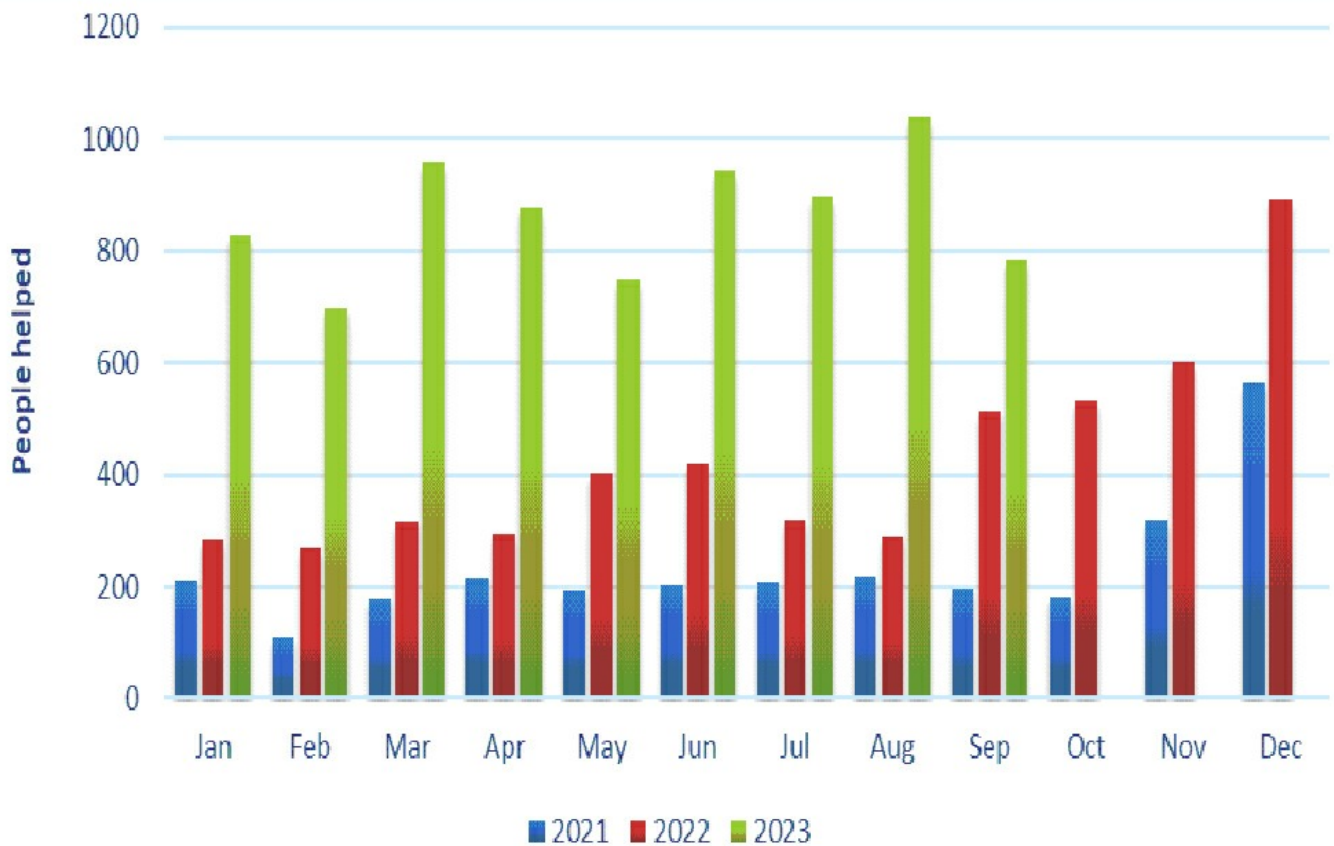
and other social challenges related to living in poverty.

Grace Food Bank works closely with the Lilies Clothes Bank based in Jordanthorpe shopping precinct.

There is more about the Lilies Clothes Bank initiative in the link below.

<https://mcfchurch.co.uk/lilies-clothes-bank/>

Jackie Butcher, who has managed the Food Bank for 9 years, showed us the bar chart (overleaf), which demonstrates



The increase in demand for Grace Food Bank's help from 2021 to 2023

the dramatic increase in demand for the Food Bank's services in the last year or so.

This shows how severely the cost of living crisis has affected less affluent communities in our City, and also suggests that the UK's social security safety net is now ineffective for many people.

The food bank is always in need of additional food supplies and financial donations that will enable it to purchase food, and for volunteers.

A link to its website is below, including information on how to volunteer, how to sign up to their Newsletter, how to collect food and make food donations to the bank, and how to fundraise for the bank.

<https://gracefoodbanksheffield.org.uk/>

There is also a link to a poster that you could print off and display in your churches as below.

<https://gracefoodbanksheffield.org.uk/poster.pdf>

THE TERMINUS INITIATIVE

The Terminus Initiative is a Christian charity that aims to provide a range of support services to its local community.

Working in partnership with other groups, it works hard to support & empower people living in Lowedges, Batemoor & Jordanthorpe.

It does this through supported volunteering, health groups, conversation and other social groups, education, mental and emotional well-being initiatives, practical poverty relief and more.

It is an excellent meeting place, with a community library, and offers spiritual

and practical support to those who seek it.

Particularly important is their involvement in the 'People keeping well' initiative, in partnership with Sheffield City Council.

Although the area surrounding the project is considered deprived by many

measures, it is rich in community spirit and neighbourliness.

There is more information about what the Terminus Initiative provides in the link below, as well as how we can contribute to its work.

<https://www.terminusinitiative.org/>

ST PETER'S, GREENHILL

Saint Peters is an Anglican church serving Greenhill and Lowedges. It provides a wide range of services and other social activities, including lunch clubs, mum and toddler groups, family Eucharist services, and other prayer and creativity services to the local community.

It is committed to helping those experiencing poverty to have a voice in their church and wider afield.

A key focus is on providing a range of local initiatives, including providing School Pastors who have built up excellent relationships with the local school community and who offer educational and pastoral interventions to them.

It also provides the Makerspace project, which helps young people build confidence through nurturing them to engage in practical hobbies and other creative activities with others, with an emphasis on collaborative working.

Louise Haigh, MP for this area, spoke to us, expressing concern that Sheffield continued to suffer from low pay and deprivation. She saw a need for action on the minimum wage and on health and housing. She praised the various church initiatives in her constituency for the love and concern that they showed.

More about this church and these initiatives can be found using the link: <https://saintpeters.co/>

CONCLUSION

In 2023, our Poverty Pilgrimage revealed to us just how important these sorts of initiatives are for a large number of residents living in south Sheffield. They revealed to us how community resources in civil society continue to play a vital role in the provision of welfare and wellbeing interventions, including for those who are experiencing poverty in their lives. Therefore, as Christians, we think they deserve our support, including any

practical measures that we can take along the lines referred to in the text above.

For churches interested in finding out more about these initiatives, we suggest they should either make contact with their providers directly via their website contact details, or, in the first instance, they can make contact with Sheffield's Church Action on Poverty by emailing our chair, Dr Joe Forde, at joe.forde@tiscali.co.uk