

Agenda Item No: 7

Report To: Ashford Health & Wellbeing Board

Date: 17th January 2018

Report Title: Ashford Vineyard Church: Bringing life to Ashford

Report Author & Organisation: Ashford Vineyard Church



Summary: Presentation from Ashford Vineyard Church on their wellbeing activities.

Recommendations: The Board is asked to note the content of the report and presentation.

Purpose of the report

1. To provide background to a presentation by Ashford Vineyard Church.

Background

2. Chris and Nic Kimmance formed Ashford Vineyard Church in the summer of 2008. The church meets every Sunday at The Warehouse, with the aim of giving everyone who attends a warm welcome regardless of their life circumstances or what they believe. The tagline at Ashford Vineyard is 'Bringing Life to Ashford'. The following gives a brief overview of the various groups and activities that take place.
3. The life of Ashford Vineyard continues throughout the week through small groups- "Circles" and social activities- "Gathering Groups" so that people can build important relationships during the best and worst moments of their lives. Both daytime and evening Circles are held, with daytime groups being held on a Monday and Thursday and evening groups being held each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. There are various groups including ones for families, women, men, and mixed groups. Gathering Groups are focussed around particular hobbies or interests and run at various times throughout the week (details of these groups can be found below)

Gathering Groups

4. A large range of community groups are happening all the time, from Book Clubs to a community choir, table tennis to coffee club. Activities include:
5. **Ashford Sings!** This started in October 2010 and is a choir for anyone that loves to sing (be it in the shower, car or with a



hairbrush); the group gets together once a week for a rehearsal. The choir's repertoire is pop/rock songs; there is no audition to join, and no age restrictions. The choir partners with the Pilgrims Hospice and has been raising money to assist in their valuable work. Performances have taken place at various venues including Ashford International Hotel, The Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone and on a number of international tours.

6. **AV Cheer:** This started as a one-off event for the older generation in the Ashford community at Christmas, but after such a great response and enjoyment it is becoming a permanent fixture in the calendar. As well as the Christmas event, there has been a 'Spring Cheer event with a performance from Ashford Sings! and plans are afoot for several regular events scattered through the year of entertainment, food and fun for the senior citizens of Ashford.



7. **AV Toddles:** Since February 2013 Ashford Vineyard has been running a vibrant and growing parent, baby and toddler group that meets every Tuesday morning. This social group is a fun and stimulating environment for young children and their carers, where everyone is always welcome and no-one has to 'go it alone' whilst caring for young children. There are sensory activities, craft, free play, stories, snacks and the opportunity to make new friends for adults and children alike.



8. **Thousand Hours:** Thousand Hours began in Ashford in October 2016 when Ashford Vineyard decided to pledge one thousand hours of volunteer time to start a 'kindness revolution' in Ashford. Whether through personal volunteering in our own neighbourhoods (picking up litter, baking cakes for neighbours etc.) or collectively by putting on community events throughout the month, the aim was to make an impact on Ashford by spreading acts of kindness. 2016 saw 1856 of time given into the Ashford community. In its second year (2017), Ashford Vineyard managed to hit 5997 hours and partnered with 6 local schools to achieve this amazing target! It was a fantastic month of building relationships and bringing life to the neighbourhoods around us. This year, Thousand Hours aims to be bigger and involve more schools and businesses around Ashford as well as impacting the individual neighbourhoods around the borough.



9. **Book Club:** Book Club is a great place to eat fantastic homemade cake, have great conversation, and read good books! There are currently 5 groups each group meeting once a month, including a daytime Book Club where young children are welcome.



10. **Bumps to Babes:** Preparing for and having a new baby can be incredibly exciting but also daunting! This group meets every Friday morning and is a safe place where new parents can meet up and develop friendships and support networks with others who are also new to parenting and is a place to share the joys and challenges of raising children. There are themed weeks, including a sensory session, disco week, and a clothing swap shop.



11. **AV Coffee Club:** This is a group where absolutely anyone is completely welcome to attend. It is just another way of doing life together; meeting with existing friends, building relationships and developing new ones, all over a coffee and piece of cake. The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month and regularly sees new people attending.



12. **Public Speaking Course:** This course is designed to help people become better at public speaking, whether it is just to one person or a number. It is not just about getting up in front of a crowd and speaking, it's about building confidence and helping individuals to become more effective communicators. The nine-month course started in September and runs annually.



13. **Table Tennis Club:** This group meets together every week to give people a couple of hours to escape busy everyday life by sharing the fun of table tennis. There are no age or ability restrictions, and it's a great way to stay fit while making new friends.



Ashford Vineyard Compassion

14. Ashford Vineyard Compassion works with the local community to support and empower people to become the best version of themselves they can be which sometimes starts with a bit of practical help such as clothing, hot meals or a mentor. The Compassion projects offered are:

15. **Mummy's Meals:** This supports local referred families through the tiredness and chaos of early parenthood, by providing evening meals, free of charge, for up to two weeks. Following the arrival of a brand new baby, we deliver the food straight to the door and ready to eat. Mummy's Meals isn't exclusively for new Mums/Parents. This service is designed for anyone in a tricky spot whether you've been poorly, just out of hospital, or need a bit of respite.



16. **Storehouse:** This offers newborn/children's clothes (of all ages) and baby equipment to support families who need a bit of extra help at a tough time. Families are invited to come and choose clothing that meets their need at the time and always receive a warm welcome and an opportunity to chat about any other support they may need.



17. **Open Arms:** Open Arms is a collaboration between Francis Road Evangelical Church and Ashford Vineyard providing homeless and vulnerable people in the community with a healthy cooked meal once a week. The focus is on building positive relationships between volunteers and guests. The aim is for people to feel welcome and that they matter, no masks, no judgment, an open door. Francis Road Evangelical Church provides a weekly hot meal and The Warehouse offers a weekly informal drop-in session, cuppa and chat.



18. **Cherish:** Cherish is a project for ladies and their families from the local women's refuge and takes place on the second Friday of the month. This includes pampering evenings, craft nights and games evenings. Regular social events are also held throughout the year. When ladies arrive at the refuge they are given access to Storehouse and all Gathering Groups to reduce isolation. Ongoing support is also given to the ladies and families when they move into their own homes with access to continuing supportive relationships during and after this transition.



19. **XL-Mentoring:** XLM is part of a national programme, mentoring secondary school-aged children over the course of a year, helping them gain respect for themselves and reach their potential. One of the key outcomes is that building self-confidence leads to less truancy and healthier individuals with higher aspirations. This is vital work that sees trained mentors linked to a child and, with the co-operation of the school and family, gives the child one-to-one support to thrive. The national programme reports fantastic results.
20. **Dress for Success:** Dress for Success will be launching later this year and will provide a smart set of clothes for those who need an outfit for interviews or meetings where they need to make a positive impression. This is particularly aimed at the long-term unemployed, but is open to anyone who could be struggling to afford interview clothing.
21. **The A Team:** The A team is a group of willing volunteers that offer hands-on practical help for people in the local community, for example with painting, gardening, cleaning, etc. This team regularly supports ladies from the Cherish project who are leaving the women's refuge and moving into their own homes.
22. **Christians Against Poverty (CAP):** Ashford Vineyard is linked with Christians against Poverty in Ashford. CAP offers free, impartial advice and support to become debt free.

XL-MENTORING
POSITIVE FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Further Information

23. Further information about Ashford Vineyard, its vision, the team and all the services, groups and activities can be found on the following website: <http://ashfordvineyard.org/>.

Conclusion

24. This report and presentation will be of interest to Board members and provides an opportunity to discuss possible collaborative projects for Ashford.

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