



6 Responses to the Church Review

Restriction Aftermath

Preaching

Small Groups

Leadership Structure

Hospitality

Children's & Youth Work

Back in the late spring we ran a Church Review. We did this as a response to the long season of Covid disruption to discover, as we engaged with many of you, where are we collectively at, what at this time is needed and how can we respond to nurture a greater unity.

We interviewed around 30 of the HCC family from different backgrounds and experiences and gave everyone the opportunity to fill the questionnaire in, independently. Dave Day collated and read and fed back a brief overview (see our YouTube channel) and gave us as leaders an in depth review.

From that we are sharing 6 responses. 6 things we are doing because of what you shared and helped us see. Some of these involve you doing something, some are for clarity on what currently is and some are new and in their genesis.

Ultimately it was just really good to talk. So please keep sharing, keep connecting and keep creating room to meet up with leaders and other church members, always coming with grace and a heart to serve. Thank you.

Matt Ford

'This season for Highworth Community Church is a great opportunity to move from Unison to Harmony. Unison is where you all sing the same thing. Harmony is where you bring the different notes, lines and chords and it creates a far richer sound.' Dave Day



1 Restriction Aftermath

Before all this no rain stuff, back when the fields were green, Kathryn and I went for a walk north of Coleshill. We tramped through (staying to the path Mr Hares) one field which we seemed to leave with half the field of sticky clay still attached to our boots. Walking quickly became a tiresome chore and we had to stop and shake/scrape off the dirt before we could continue our journey, unhampered by where we had been.

The months of Covid restrictions has left us all with 'dirty boots'. Many of you shared openly in the Review how you are hampered, weighed down and affected by where you have been and what you have walked through. Thank you for your honesty. You are not alone, you are not failing, Jesus really loves you and really wants to help. It's time for you to stop and get free.

This is why we have the Freedom Centre. Trained, kind and anointed members of our church family are ready and willing to spend some time with you, listen, care and pray with you through to freedom. This is open and free to everyone who is a part of HCC. Just email below and someone will get in touch and organise a suitable time to meet up.

freedom@highworthchurch.co.uk

Preaching @ HCC

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There was some really helpful and insightful feedback around what is taught both on Sundays and through our YouTube channel.

We have intentionally enjoyed a period over the last year where we have had a significant number of visiting speakers, which has been a very real honour. The point was to sow into you a wider revelation and vision from the limited world Covid created. But we will now be enjoying a season of 'home grown' preachers.

We are creating a preaching team who are accountable and committed to individual development. We are giving this team multiple opportunities to speak so they can grow. We appreciate this means that not everyone who can speak well is on the team and I (Matt) know how hard that can be from previous experience. But that's why it's called 'service' and I encourage you to listen to what Lizzie Hares shared recently on this.



In terms of content we recognised the tension many of you highlighted between individuals 'sharing what's on their hearts' and having a predetermined preaching plan that ensures we cover key subjects we might otherwise overlook. To meet this tension we have compiled a set of 'things to speak on', things like 'The Incarnation' and 'Walking in the Light'. Each member of the team has the opportunity to either speak on one of these or not and share what they feel from God. If this works, then we can consistently build a strong understanding of God and His word whilst giving room for Spirit led inspiration.

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Small Groups



Many of you understand the value of small groups. At their core its about consistently connecting with other believers to encourage one another and in so doing build deeper relationships. At HCC we recognise the term encompasses many differing expressions and purposes, so to help with a bit of definition (which you asked for), we are going to adopt the terms 'life group' and 'growth group'.

Life group is what you may have typically experienced as a 'house group'. Regular meetings without a defined end point that can include many things (prayer, food, bible study etc.) but their main purpose is relationship and connection. It's 'doing life' together while encouraging each other to run after Jesus.

Growth groups have a specific aim and normally a defined end point. Here people gather for a specific season and a specific reason. These could be courses, training schools or teams with a purpose. The aim is to grow, whether in understanding, faith, giftings or service.

Below are the groups that currently run (or will run soon). If you would like to know more about any of these or to speak to someone about starting a new life or growth group please email :

smallgroups@highworthchurch.co.uk

We appreciate that there is a host of smaller gatherings, in twos and threes, that consistently happen and fulfil the heart laid out above. We support this and view these in no way as less important.

Life Groups



- Adrian & Tessa's
 - Jo & Will's
- Adrian & Brenda's
 - Laura & Paul's
 - Bob & Jill's
- Wednesday Afternoon Group

Growth Groups



- Bible Study
- Training School
- Kintsugi Hope Groups
- Worship Teams
- The Bible Course
- Alpha Course
- Freedom in Christ
- Miracle School



Leadership structure

I was in the Supermarket the other day and I noticed something important. Everything had a label. It told you what the item was, differentiating between varieties of apples and helping sort the courgettes from the cucumbers. Nothing was labelled with a hope or calling, no-one had slapped a label on a pear saying melon, hoping it would rise to the challenge.

The leadership label should work the same. Calling someone a leader should be identifying what is already there and already happening. Yes, the label can give fresh room for that person to express their leadership but the heart to love others and 'stick your neck out to make a difference' should be already present and visible.

Many of you recognised that we have been in a season where we have given room for leaders to emerge, which by nature can mean things are a little unclear. We still want a culture where the leaders are not merely those with a label (that should just define how they serve) but anyone who is willing to step up and serve. But here is some greater clarity around our church leadership which is there to, as always, be a platform not a ceiling.



Champions is a developing approach for us at HCC. Their role is to support the leadership team, and therefore the wider church, by flying the flag for an area of church life they are passionate about. They are a point of contact to help the church family connect in to what's happening; the idea is that they are not 'doing it all' but releasing others to serve.

Hospitality

Enabling food ministry to individuals and organised groups

Sally Willson, Ian & Carole Coulson
hospitality@highworthchurch.co.uk

The Bridge

Supporting the drop in teams and other activities that run from The Bridge.

Jon Hares
bridge@highworthchurch.co.uk

Freedom Centre

A hub of freedom ministries including prayer ministry

Jon & Lizzie Hares
freedom@highworthchurch.co.uk

Worship Teams

Kathryn Ford
worship@highworthchurch.co.uk

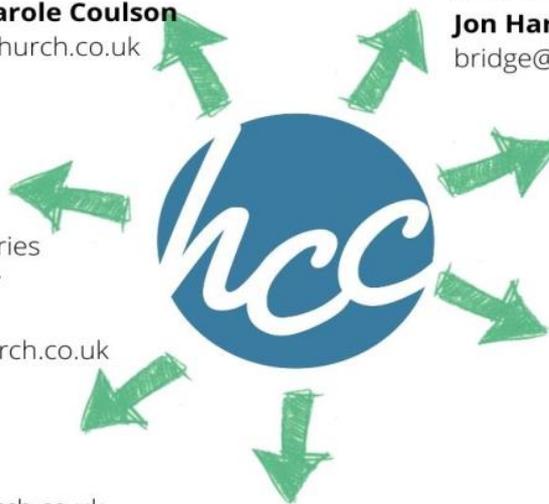
Youth

Deb Wathen
deb@highworthchurch.co.uk

Children & Families

Loving children and families in our church and in the local community

Jon Hares
jon@highworthchurch.co.uk



Watch this space

The above is not an exhaustive list but a start, re-imagining some current leaders and enabling some new ones. We are looking at areas like Small Groups, the Prophetic and We Will Stay (international missions) right now with more to come. But can we all be encouraged to 'champion' grace, love and the presence of God in and through all we do.



Leadership Team

Matt Ford, Sally Willson, Jon Hares
matt@highworthchurch.co.uk
sally@highworthchurch.co.uk
Jon@highworthchurch.co.uk

Trustees

Jo Pearse, Paul Fisher, Rich Wathen, Janet Hodgson, Phil Smith
trustees@highworthchurch.co.uk



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Hospitality and getting together

It's quite astonishing how much of the Gospels happened around food - in fact Jesus' earthly ministry started at a wedding feast and concluded with roast lamb in an Upper Room. But then it's pretty obvious I guess. We all have to eat and by and large enjoy doing so. Whereas our education, career, hobbies or passions often regulate meeting with those who are like minded, eating together can be with everyone and anyone.

We often receive feedback at how incredibly welcoming our gatherings are. It's such an encouragement to see that we are taking the time to talk and share not just with those we know or are friends with. However, some who have joined the church over the last years have commented how we don't yet have a consistent culture of eating together. Now I am not talking about Sunday 'bring and share' or big organised picnics but someone inviting someone else around to theirs for food.
Being family.

The Review highlighted this continual need for Hospitality. We have responded to this by creating a Hospitality Hub to support those who are newer or in a tough time. This team is also providing a monthly meal for those who live alone before our Mid-week Gathering. But that is the tip of the iceberg. Hospitality is biblical and it involves you.

Can we create a culture of shared meals? What if each of us, once a month, had someone round for a meal or a coffee? What if this wasn't those you know well or are your friends (do that as well) but you did it to form new relationships and love those who are newer or less connected? I know some of you already do this - keep going! This 'meal culture' is a challenge we need to all face into. It is love in action and if Jesus did it then so should we.

Children's and Youth Work

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Another area highlighted was a little uncertainty around exactly what was happening in HCC for younger people. Below you can find out what is currently going on. Covid hit this age bracket probably harder than any other. We recognise many children and young people connect in to HCC because their parents/carers have faith and through this come to discover a faith in Jesus for themselves. Restrictions made this incredibly hard so can you make children and young people a top personal prayer priority? Thank you.

Children and Families

Explorers: Weekly kids work at church on Sunday mornings, for children of primary school age, to intentionally invest in our church children. This happens during the talk/ministry time in the canteen extension. Sessions usually feature a story from the bible, discussion, prayer, games, news and refreshments.

Supersize Like Explorers only bigger, bolder and more messy! We run this once a month with a slightly bigger team, to reach out to those in our community who have some church connection through one of our other ministry activities. This lasts the whole of the church session, so 10.30-12pm approx. We deliberately make it accessible and really fun and with more of a gospel message focus and opportunities to respond.

Little Treasures Our popular baby and toddler group meets Thursdays at Highworth Community Centre in term time. With toys, craft, singing, stories and snack time for children under 5 and their parents/carers.

The Sanctuary A good meal, a warm welcome and a space to rest and reflect. That's our aim with the sanctuary for families, a monthly outreach event where we create a sense of community and invite some of those people who have a degree of connection to respond and engage. It's totally mad but always great fun! Second Tuesday of every month.

Schools work Jon regularly goes into Highworth primary schools, running assemblies, lessons and workshops and reading one to one. 2 particular highlights are work at Easter and Christmas which we do in partnership with other Highworth churches, where an army of volunteers come and help share Jesus with pupils and teachers from our local schools.

Youth

Miracle School Fortnightly session meets Monday evenings. Getting inspired to move in miracles, we've then been out to do it! In the past year we've put on healing rooms, feeding the homeless and treasure hunting linking in with the HCC Missions. Miracle school will continue as before, Monday evenings same time but at Jon and Lizzie's. For address check churchsuite or message Deb.

Youth Breakfasts Once a month we run a breakfast before church for young people of any age. Why not come eat with us and join in the fun, even if you don't quite fit into the teenage bracket any more!?

Youth Discipleship time Monthly during the talk at church our secondary age young people head out of the talk for discipleship input with Deb and team. It's an opportunity to dig a bit deeper, ask great questions and explore the bible together.

Schools work Each week Jon heads into Warneford school for "cake and questions" which does exactly what it says on the tin! We bring the snacks, students bring the questions. If you're in year 10 or above at Warneford, the school have asked us to continue with the group going forward so why not come and join us?

Youth moving forward...

Over the next few months we are hoping to put on a firework cafe, pizza nights and maybe even a residential! Watch this space!! If you have any questions please see Deb our youth champion.