



Mission Partner of the Month

October 2020



UPCOTT IS A CHRISTIAN CHARITY PROVIDING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN EXPERIENCE THE FULLNESS OF JESUS IN THEIR LIVES.

Up until last year the work was based in a residential location; the original Upcott between 1968 and 2007 and then The Beacon from 2007 to 2019. Following a decision to sell the current property, the Upcott Weeks this year were going to be held at a centre in Wales but due to the pandemic we moved the weeks online.



The House

The Beacon is now sold subject to contract and is nearing the point of exchange. Although there is inevitable sadness as this chapter of the work of Upcott closes there is a tremendous sense of thankfulness and anticipation of what the future holds.

New Ways

The last twelve months were supposed to be a time of trialling new ideas for the trust. Instead the pandemic has caused the work of Upcott to be catapulted into a period of sustained accelerated growth. It is possibly the most exciting time for the Trust in the last twenty years.

In the last few months, we have surpassed everything we were intending to trial. We have had between 15 and 20 hours of direct contact online (via Zoom) each week with our young people and helpers. The groups quickly evolved, as the point of contact between the real needs of the young people and the vision of the Trust emerged. And what emerged was not a surprise; Upcott's core strength and role is to enable young people to have a vibrant relationship with Jesus that is outworked on a daily basis.



This current online model enables us to invest in their lives in a way that we could never have dreamed of before. The discipleship groups spawned other groups for prayer, discussion and devotional Bible study. Sometimes the young people organised it themselves, other times they wanted our involvement.

Upcott Weeks 2020

We ran Overflow (aged 9-12) online during the May half term. It was a moment of history, our first Upcott Week online. It was wonderful to see the vision - of creating an environment where young people can encounter Jesus - now extending via Zoom into their homes.

In August we ran Ignite (age 17-18) and Involve (age 14-16). Our aim was to replicate, as much as possible, a normal morning on an Upcott Week—worship, teaching and discussion. The afternoons were kept mostly free to reduce Zoom fatigue. We used some of the evening sessions for games, Taskmaster, Murder Mystery, Big Quiz, Pictionary etc; and others for prayer and ministry.



1968 to 2020 the people and the methods have changed but the message is still the same.

The theme this year was based around Matthew 11:28-30 and Romans 12:1-2. The daily subjects were: Come to Jesus, Give it all to Him, Rest, Changing the way you think, Walking with Him.

The worship was very different to a normal week. We used Youtube clips of worship songs that people listened to via their own devices, sometimes in quiet – sometimes singing along (although on mute). We also used meditation on Scripture and creative skills – writing, art, photography, film making etc.

All the weeks were successful although they looked very different. It is still a steep learning curve and there is much we can change and improve if we need to run weeks online in the future.

Personal Thanks

The Palmer family would like to thank St Mike's for the warm welcome they have received since moving to Stoke Gifford. We particularly want to thank Richard and Helen Hine, Murray and Annie Hepburn, the Clothier family and Andy Greenslade for their practical help over the last twelve months. Despite Covid we've appreciated our involvement with church. Andrew particularly enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with the students on their weekend in February.



Prayer Pointers

- That the sale of The Beacon will be completed
- For the young people going to university this autumn
- For the young people who attended Zooms this year, that their relationship with Jesus would continue to develop
- For wisdom as we plan the next twelve months

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