

Shinfield Church Vision¹

‘A church where Jesus grows greater, a community transformed by the Kingdom of God,’

‘Shinfield Baptist Church is the warm, and welcoming centre of our village.’ Amanda Tanner, Former Manager Shinfield View Residential Home

Objectives

1. *A constant stream of village people exploring the Christian faith and supported into God’s family;*

The church runs the Alpha course most years.

2023 two Alpha courses run

- Daytime – five guests, four of whom are now regularly involved in church life
- Evening – four guests, three of whom are now committed members of the church family (two of these people previously had no church connection),

Easter on the Green – this was an event led by Shinfield Community Church, with participation from two other local churches, that acted out the Easter story on the village green. The parish council supported the event, allowing all their facilities to be used free of charge. The event was attended by about 200 people, the overwhelming majority from the Shinfield area and the majority probably not normally attending Sunday worship services. It was particularly popular with families.

Christmas Services – our Nativity and Carol services are well attended (about 100 people attending each event) with an estimated 60% of those attending in 2023 not being regular church attenders of Sunday worship but attend local schools, live in the Shinfield area or attend our related groups e.g. Rainbow Tots, coffee morning

2. *A church full of local people;*

Local - 50% of those who attend Sunday services live 4km or less from the church building.

Breakfast Services – the church regularly holds ‘Breakfast services’ for special Sundays e.g. Mothering Sunday, Harvest, Pancake Sunday (linked to Shrove Tuesday), Christingle.

Breakfast is served alongside the service which is designed to be ‘Family Friendly,’ with lots of activities for children, Attendance at these services is about 20-30% higher than regular services with people attending from our local schools and our toddler group (Rainbow Tots) who may not normally attend Sunday morning worship

Growth - Since June 2022 the church has grown to the point that our existing building cannot accommodate all who attend on Sunday mornings, and we do not have sufficient rooms for children’s groups and so we hire a local school hall.

3. *Members have a Jesus adoring, kingdom building, mentality that serves growth of the church as given by God;*

4. *The church well known in the community for good works that make Christ’s gospel attractive;*
Members of the church have either created or led the following charitable events over the last 2-3 years

- Josimah Baby Bank – set up by a member of our church to provide baby essentials, clothes, toys, travel items, toiletries, and baby equipment for babies and children up to the age of 5. Provides help to people in Wokingham and Reading Borough

¹ Remastered 2023

- Helping Hands set up by a member of our church in partnership with another member of our community. It provides support for those in practical need such as clothing, white goods items, toys etc in the Shinfield area
- Share Shinfield is run by members of Shinfield Community Church and is part of the Share Wokingham charity, making surplus food from supermarkets available for local people to come and collect, combatting food waste, as well as helping those that might otherwise struggle. A free café also acts as a community hub, helping friendships develop.
- **Charity Cafes** - These are community cafes organised by the church with all proceeds going to a local, national or international charity. At the last café and related activities in April 23 the sum of £1128 was raised to donate to the charity Shelterbox, an international charity that provides emergency shelter to families who have lost their home to disaster, enabling them to rebuild their lives. The café in December 2022 raised £640 for local charity 'New Beginnings' that supports homeless people in Reading. The charities also connect people in the new community (where there are constant new arrivals as homes are built) allowing people to get to know one another.
- **BBQ 4 Refugees** – a community BBQ and funday event run for the last three years organised by Shinfield Community Church in partnership with one of the members of our community to raise money for refugees. The BBQ raises about £2200 per year for the refugee charity 'Choose Love' and is attended by approx. 300-500 members of the community. As well as raising funds it also provides a fun event for the growing number of families in our community. The opportunity for local bands to play allows local young people the chance to perform.

Coffee Morning – Every Thursday the church holds a coffee morning. This is attended by 8-15 local residents. The coffee morning is open to all but is attended principally by those aged 60+ Attendees come from both faith and non-faith backgrounds.

House 4 Homeless – Shinfield Community Church is currently working in partnership with Hope into Action (Reading) to raise money to purchase a home for homeless people. The church has already recruited a team of volunteers to provide ongoing support to the new tenants of the home.

Quiz Night – in 2023 one of the DG groups ran a Quiz Night event to raise money for Tearfund and raised £155

Rainbow Tots – a weekly group for parents, carers and children, this group is run by the church in a heavily subsidised fashion to enable provision for this age group and to allow adults to meet and make friends. This is particularly important in a growing village where people are new to the area. The group has about 15-20 parents/carers plus children. Building size and personnel are limiting factors to further expansion.

5. *Provision for all ages to grow in worship, fellowship, outreach, service, discipleship*

Parsons Grange – we run a monthly communion service is held in Parsons Grange Care residential care home in Shinfield with attendance between 5-10 people. This activity allows those who are unable to leave the care home to attend a Christian act of worship.

'Flourish' at Shinfield View – a bi-monthly service and visiting programme called 'Flourish' was run for the past two years at Shinfield View residential home. This was attended by about 12-18 residents each session. This service allows those experiencing mobility and transport issues to enjoy a service of Christian worship. The leader of Flourish has now moved to another church and so Flourish is currently paused.

Youth Group – each Sunday a Christian Youth Group is run for 11-18 year olds. The group has games and activities and periodic social events e.g. paddleboarding. Numbers range from 5-15. Recently three members of the group were baptised (February 2024)

JAM/ Creche – Each Sunday as part of the Sunday morning worship there is a group for primary school aged children called JAM (Jesus and Me). The group helps children to support children's growth and development in the Christian faith. Creche provides stimulating activities and care for babies and toddlers during the same service. There are around 10 children each week at JAM and creche

Schools Outreach – the church has an 'Open the Book' group that tells bible stories through drama in school assemblies. The group performs monthly in two primary schools in the village.

The church also takes assemblies in the local secondary school. In 2023-24 these have been on the theme of Christmas, Harvest, Palm Sunday and Easter. Shinfield Community Church also organised and ran a shrove Tuesday event making and selling pancakes in 2023 to help students raise money to 'twin' toilets in their school and to raise awareness of global development issues.

Pastoral Support – in partnership and under the guidance and direction of the local schools, the church offers help and practical support to local families (we are not able to share details of such support, but schools can be contacted directly to confirm help is given in this way).

(see also activities of the Beech Hill renewal team below)

6. *Members and attenders of the church seek and see God grow greater in their lives so that relationships are healthy and wholesome, people feel cared for and loved and care for and love others;*

DG Groups – The church has 5 Discipleship Growth (DG) groups. These DG groups are places where people can develop friendships, explore the bible, pray, plan and undertake service projects e.g. planning a Charity Café and help others discover the Christian faith e.g. DG groups often run the Alpha course. Groups have average attendance of 4-11 people. Groups meet in the evenings in peoples homes, during the daytime and online increasing accessibility. Over 50% of the church family are in small groups of this nature.

Monday Prayer – the church has a weekly prayer meeting. One group meet online and another in person to increase accessibility. About 10% of the church attend one of these groups on a weekly basis

7. *A leadership team responsive to the Spirit of God and sensitive to the needs of the non-Christian community creating sustainable capacity for the growth of God's church in the local area;*

The church has sought to reflect the growing ethnic diversity of the area and has been intentional in its plans to ensure this is the case. It also seeks to ensure that ethnic diversity of the church is represented in the diversity of those leading and organising the church and events within the church. The church in the last ten years has moved from being an entirely white congregation to a multiethnic congregation with members coming from Brazilian, Caribbean, Chinese, Ghanaian, Hong Kong, Indian, Iranian, Nigerian, South African Ukranian, Zimbabwean, heritage.

8. *To be financially sustainable and give to others in need including charities*

Church Gift - Each year the church aims to donate about 10% of its unrestricted income to charity. For the year 2023 the church donated £9310 in this way. Charities donated to are

chosen by the church family and look to recognise local, national and international charities. Charities can be Christian or secular but should be in harmony with the church aims and ethos. We See Hope (international development), Alpha, Jericho Rd (project among homeless people in London), Refugee Support Group (Reading), Barnabas, CSW (both support those persecuted for their faith), Josimah Baby Bank,

Fundraising – each year the church raises additional funds outside the church gift for charity. These may be donated through the offering in special services e.g. Christmas or fundraising activities e.g. Quiz Night. In 2023 Shinfield Community Church raised £5131 in this way

Young People - The Church has supported three young people related to the church in charitable activities working with the following organisations: Latin Link (Christian outreach and mission in Central America (2 people) and Care (Christian political organisation),

Schools and local Community – the church offers financial support to local schools for activities relating to pupils that are outside schools normal budget e.g. supporting school pupils to attend a residential visit. The church also purchases physical items to support local families that have been identified as in need of help by local schools. The church also supports people who in the local community directly as needs arise. In 2023 the church donated £578 in this way.

9. *The church a model and resource to church planting² in the locality;*

Beech Hill – Shinfield Community Church is leading the renewal of Beech Hill Baptist Church which closed in 2019. Beech Hill is a rural village with population of 250 people. The renewal team holds a well attended weekly café with provision for toddlers and babies (about 12-15 adults and children each week). Attendees of the café have come to an Alpha run in 2023 and are now regularly attend services and DG groups. Café attendees have also joined the monthly service run by the renewal team in partnership with the Anglican church (attendance is usually about 25 people). At Christmas 2023 the Beech Hill team led a village carol singing event going to almost every house in the village to wish people merry Christmas, This was very well received. The renewal team also support the local primary school, performing termly assemblies and supporting the school's community development programme with children from the school coming to help serve in the café. In addition the renewal team, at the invitation of the school, ran a 'Prayer Space' at the school. This event, lasting a week, provided every child in the school with an opportunity to explore prayer through an activity garden.

Firestarters – Shinfield Community Church was one of the founding members of the 'Firestarters Network' aimed to 'help churches plant churches.' This involves Shinfield hosting and co-leading Firestarters events – attended by local churches seeking to nurture growth in their church – and attending Firestarters events to share the story of the renewal of Shinfield Community Church. The story of the renewal of Shinfield Community Church is told in the book 'On this Rock' (Remsberg, Harris,)

10. *Good relationships with local churches;*

Prayer Meeting – Shinfield Community Church initiated and leads a monthly prayer meeting for all local churches. The event is attended by clergy/leaders of four local churches (including our own).

² Church planting is used here as a broad term to include a range of options such as planting completely new churches; renewing churches that have ceased to function or are close to closure; starting a new congregation within our church building e.g. Youth Worship service; a new congregation off site e.g. a worship service in a residential home; or a bible study/prayer group off site e.g. at Thames Valley Science Park

Joint Services - Wherever possible the church looks to hold joint services with local churches – the Easter on the Green event and a service celebrating the Queen’s platinum jubilee – are the latest of these. (see also Beech Hill above)

Baptist Cluster – Shinfield Community Church is currently co-ordinator of the local ‘Baptist Cluster’ a monthly peer support meeting of local Baptist church leaders in the Reading, Shinfield and Wokingham area.

SCBA – the church attends regional events held by the Southern Counties Baptist Association. It also donates to Home Mission

Dreams of Helping to Grow Churches

Shinfield Community Church was reborn 2014/15 with the support and help of Wycliffe Baptist Church. At that time another local church, seeing the fruitful way that Shinfield Community Church had been reborn, asked if ‘Shinfield could do for them as a local church, what Wycliffe had done for Shinfield.’ Since that moment Shinfield Community Church, knowing how it was helped by others, has actively sought to renew other churches or to start new churches through planting aware that we are in an area of considerable population growth.

Dreams Realised

In January 2020 Shinfield Community Church was invited to renew Beech Hill Baptist Church and it sent a team of seven people to do this. In 2022 a new congregation – Flourish – was started in Shinfield View Residential Home.

Dreams to Come

In planting, we’ve learnt from experience that being ready means that we can take hold of the opportunities God creates. But being flexible allows us to move well into those opportunities as they arise!

2024 Off site congregation e.g. Parson’s Grange

2025 off site prayer or bible study e.g. Thames Valley Science Park

2026 New Building completed: two congregations on Sunday or one congregation to remain in Alder Grove School one congregation in new building

2028 off site prayer or bible study e.g.

2029/30 – Planting a brand new church in Hall Farm Garden Village