

Above Bar Church

East of Southampton



Loving God | Following Jesus | Sharing Hope

Objective

The primary objective of this proposal is to help us as we seek to increase the missional opportunity available to Above Bar Church as a whole as we seek to fulfil our vision on the east of the city.

The purpose of a trial is to gather more information and experience as we develop our missional presence as well as helping us come to informed decisions about any future steps.

Vision

Above Bar Church exists to glorify God by seeking to make and mature disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Loving God, Following Jesus and Sharing Hope.

Together, we are committed to becoming increasingly:

- God-dependent – expressed in prayer and expectation of the Spirit's work
- Bible-centred – in our ethos and activities
- Mission-focused – locally, nationally and internationally
- An authentic community of people from many backgrounds who love and nurture each other as disciples of Christ.

We pursue these priorities and values believing that God wants to bless us as his people in order to make us a blessing across our city, within the wider church, and across the world.

Aims

- To see more people come to living faith in Jesus
- To see more people deepening fellowship with one another
- To see more people grow in faith, fruitfulness and dependence on God

A renewed intentionality around personal and community outreach

Key reflections:

- We want to be a community of people on mission together
- Relationships are key to God's work in our lives and the lives of those around us, he has placed us in the community and friendship groups he has for a reason
- Introducing our friends who aren't Christians to other Christians can be really significant in their journeys to faith

So, what are we suggesting?

Are there any simple steps that you, your friendship group, or your home group could take to be more missional?

- It's possible that we could do this by spending more quality time investing in relationships with non Christians, whether that's taking up new hobbies in the community or engaging in more conversations with neighbours, or parents at the school gate. Things like:
 - Inviting people to your home to eat with you
 - Working in public places, like a cafe
 - Joining in with what's going on in the local area
 - Serving your neighbours, maybe gardening
 - Sharing your passion e.g. join a running club
 - Hang out with your work colleagues
 - Prayer walk near your home
- Or, finding more ways to bring non Christians into Christian community, whether home group BBQs or trips to the pub, it doesn't have to be official or have a name to be significant.

For some, this will come naturally but for others of us it takes more intentionality, however if we are going to realise our hope of seeing lots and lots of people come to know Jesus we are going to have to all be actively, and intentionally seeking to build relationships with non Christians.

Developing and Supporting ministries that meets the need of a local community

Key Reflections

- The passions, gifting and experience of those involved needs to inform the decision of which ministries we engage in
- The ministries we establish need to meet a need in the community
- There are loads of things we could do, but have felt that we need to be realistic and focus on a couple of core areas that are achievable in the period of a trial

So, what are we suggesting?

There are a large number of different ministry opportunities. We have worked through lots of different ideas and suggestions to settled on couple of areas to focus on for the period of a trial.

- We plan to run a one off Poppin Church and a Mini Wow, in order to provide opportunities for families to invite friends
- A number of mums have been meeting on the East for a few years. They plan to continue praying for and supporting one another in building up intentional relationships in the community, by regularly attending existing groups/activities together
- Development of a football group to engage men in the local area, and create relationships within the community
- Support other ministries on the East of Southampton.

It could be that during a trial period that there is a particular ministry you'd like to see developed - should you want to create or develop something specific please talk to us!

By highlighting these few areas we are not saying that others things can't happen but that these are the areas the proposal team feels we should begin with.

Accessible Sunday service

Key Reflections

- Doing Sunday service on a smaller scale gives us greater flexibility for both the feel of the service and developing community
- That Sunday service should be accessible to non-believers and be a key part of our missional presence
- That every generation has a key place in Sunday services and it's important that people of all ages are welcome and involved
- Sunday service should typically share the preaching team, program and content with the city site

So, what are we suggesting?

We feel that a Sunday gathering at 10.15am on the East of Southampton will help to give us a focused time for community, sung worship, growing in and sharing our faith.

- We feel that the right next step would be to trial a Sunday service once a month for 6 months. This will give us time to try a few different things, reflect and inform a decision about the possible longer term plans
- There will be a children's program and Hannah Zealey will lead the team for the period of a trial. There will be a crèche for 0-3s and a GSMA for 3-11s
- There aren't many young people (11-14) living on the east so we intend to encourage young people to serve or engage in other ways rather than having their own, relatively small group. They will still have their Sunday groups for the other weeks of the month and Thursday evenings in the city centre

A lot of work goes into running a Sunday service and we'll really need all hands on deck to make this happen, so please be prepared for chipping in and helping out, mainly with childrens ministry, set up/down and refreshments/welcoming.

Geographical focus and location

Key Reflections

- Having a local focus presents us with key opportunities that have not been available to us in the city centre
- There is room for more evangelistically active churches on the East of Southampton. From the existing churches, the most active ones are in Bitterne park
- The majority of people from Above Bar Church that live on the East live nearer Bitterne park
- There is a broad mix of more/less deprived geographical areas, see research for more info

So, what are we suggesting?

There are a few areas that have stood out for us, and as yet we do not feel that God has clearly guided us to one particular area; we feel that whatever happens we long for a renewed intentionality for people to engage in the community immediately around them.

We have a growing sense that the way forward is to further develop the Cobden Bridge missional community and create two further missional communities, one in Woolston/Peartree and one in West End.

- These communities would be groups of people on mission together reaching out to their local neighbourhoods and areas
- They would establish activities to reach out in their local area, like age specific groups or finding ways to do more social activities that non Christians would enjoy being part of
- Then we would either seek a more central location to gather for an accessible Sunday service, or a venue that is in one of these three areas

There are a limited number of venues that are open to having us and of the ones available we feel that the most suitable for what we need would be Woodlands Community College.

Please do be praying into this, and seek God to what your role, or the role of your Homegroup might be in this should we move towards a trial.

Timeline and proposed key dates

Should we make the decision to move towards a trial, this is what we are currently proposing. These dates are a rough guide, and are subject to change:

Pre-Trial

- Nov - Dec – Further Conversation with local churches
- Oct-Dec - Further planning for implementation
- Jan 28th - Update Wider Church (11am and 5pm)
- Jan-April – Start ministry and renewed internality of evangelism
- Jan-April – Work on development of the 3x MC's
- 4th March – Community Lunch

Term 1

- 15th April - Mini Commissioning – All three services at city
- 22nd April - Marathon – CWW (3x MC meet separately)
- 13th May - Sunday Service with whole community lunch
- 17th June - Sunday Service
- 7th July – Poppin Church
- 15th July - Sunday Service

Term 2

- 2nd Sept. - Sunday Service (All-Age)
- 14th Oct - Sunday Service with whole community lunch
- 10th Nov - Mini Wow
- 18th Nov - Sunday Service
- Dec – Evangelistic Christmas Event

Feedback 2019

- January - East Forum
- January - Whole church forum
- Feb– Agree next steps
- March - Members meeting

We feel that this plan is achievable and will give us enough breadth of activity to inform any longer term decisions.

As raised earlier, it's our hope that around these events we will see a renewed intentionality for personal and community outreach.



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