



**Church  
at Barking  
Riverside**

# *Moving Forward*

**Annual Church Meeting 2024**

**Report Pack**



# Contents



If you're reading this then: THANK YOU! Thank you for being part of Church at Barking Riverside and/or caring enough to share in this part of our journey.

## **Why this meeting?**

We are at a major transition in our journey as a church community. This meeting is to help us as a whole community understand where we've come from, where we find ourselves now, plus the challenge we face; and to help us share in shaping and supporting how we move forward together.

## **In this pack you'll find....**

1. Our story so far!
2. Reports on our core activities:
  - a. Trustees and Team
  - b. Youth Hub
  - c. Hubs Together
  - d. Coffee Corner
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  - f. Community Events
3. The challenge we face:
  - a. Description of the challenge
  - b. Finance report
4. How do we respond?
  - a. The direction we're heading and how we got there
  - b. What next steps do we take together?
  - c. How can we each find our part?





**Church  
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*Our Story So Far...*



# The story so far...



2016 - Diocese of Chelmsford identify Barking Riverside as an area of new housing for investment to start a worshipping community. They secure £500k of funding for 5 years from a national church fund: the Strategic Development Fund (SDF). All Saints Woodford Wells becomes the resourcing church for the church plant.

2018 - Anna and Sam Pollard commissioned as leaders, to gather team from All Saints, including Randall, Maggie, Sue and Martin, and to start a church.

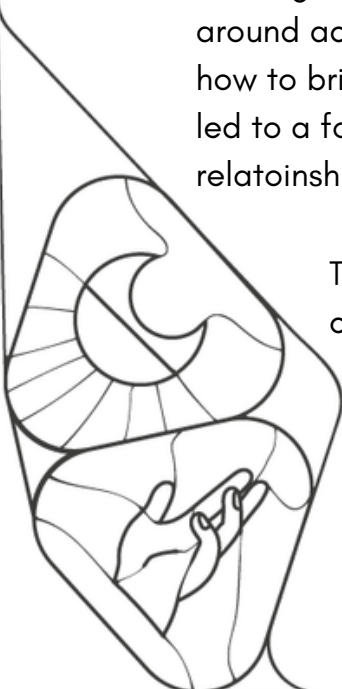
## ***A different shape of church...***

Through prayer before moving down, three core convictions began to shape the values and vision of the church....

**First: God is already moving and we are joining in. God primarily moved through people, since each person is a masterpiece made for a purpose.** This led to core values of being Defined by Dependence on God; Passionate about People; and Dreamers who Dare to Make a Difference.

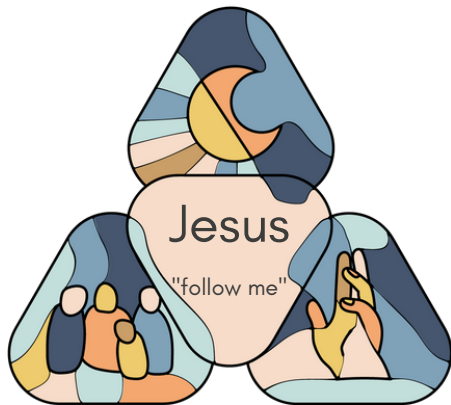
**Second: God gave a vision to see our community thriving with Jesus at the heart, and a challenge to ask: who do we need to be as church to see this happen?** Although the original funding bid aimed for a large congregation gathered around activities put on by a paid staff team, we felt challenged to ask how to bring Jesus to every person and every place in our community? This led to a focus on connecting with people where they are, building relationships and helping people take steps toward Jesus.

This all came together over the next year or so into what we call our **PURPOSE...**



*Very early Family Hub - 2019!*

*Our purpose is to create space for Jesus in our daily lives, together and for others, through Habits, Hands and Hubs.*



*“Come to me all who are thirsty...and out of the believer’s heart will flow streams of living water” John 7:37-39*

**HABITS:** “church” is a community of people shaping their lives around following Jesus. When we create space for Jesus, He will fill our lives enabling us to be who we’re made to be and do what we’re called to do. We need to do this intentionally in our own lives and together as a community. So we help each other form HABITS of spending time with Jesus, reading the bible, praying, loving and serving those around us. We have corporate habits like praying the Lord’s Prayer at 12 noon. And we started community celebrations to bring this rhythm of worship around the Christian calendar to the wider community.

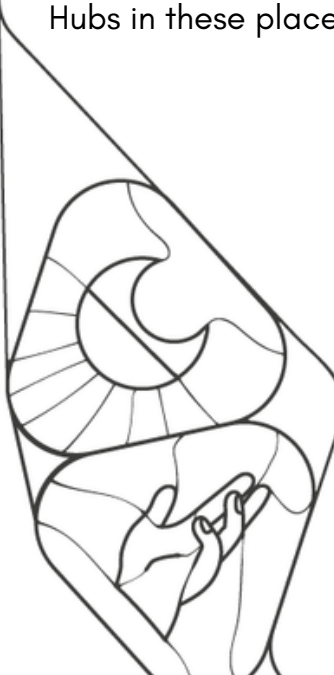
**HANDS:** are a reminder that we are each sent to people and places. Our fingers are particular people and our palms places where we find ourselves. We use our hands to pray and to serve – so we commit to praying for specific people and finding ways to serve and love. As we do, we share Jesus and help people take steps toward God. 18 months ago, through prayer together, we found God highlighting **3 core places** for us to focus on as a beginning: **YOUNG PEOPLE; FAMILIES** around the Rivergate/George Carey; **BARKING FIGHT GYM**. So we have intentionally formed Hubs in these places...

**HUBS:** are spaces created to help people connect together and take steps toward Jesus. Imagine a journey from people beginning to connect together, to going deeper in meaningful conversations then exploring faith, until people eventually begin to read the Bible, pray and come to faith. At this point church – a gathering of disciples – emerges.

**This is how we look to grow...**

...sometimes going where people already connect and creating space to explore Jesus: i.e. Fight Gym

...sometimes creating new spaces for community to form, maybe explicitly as ‘church’ i.e. Youth Hub, Hubs Together; maybe not yet i.e. Coffee Corner. **READ MORE IN THE REPORTS BELOW...**



# *One last thing...local leaders*



What we've described may seem simple now, but it is the heart of who we aspire to be and formed over the last five years through a journey of ups and downs, things starting and stopping...and especially through relationships formed. From the beginning we felt God saying: **"Do not take many people with you, I will raise up local leaders to shape this community."**

This is what God has done. The last five years have been laying foundations and preparing the ground for what God is now going to build/grow. The primary foundation through all the activity, prayer, hubs starting and stopping has been the forming of deep relationships based on shared vision for this community and shared desire to follow Jesus.

18 months ago a core of 10 people went through disciple-making training, which led to the shape of hubs that we have at the moment. Our prayer is that, as we move forward into this next season, more of us catch the vision and find our place in what God is doing in this community.

## *Pause for thought...*

What excites me or I'd like to know more about from this story?

What next step toward or with Jesus might I like to take?





**Church  
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Riverside**

*Where are we  
now?*

**Reports on our Core  
Activities**



# Trustees and Team



## TRUSTEES - 2023-24

### Who?

Gill Hampton (stepping down April 2024)  
Martin Williamson TREASURER (stepping down April 2024)  
Anna Pollard  
Sam Pollard (ex officio)  
Raymond Mugerwa TREASURER (appointed April 2024)  
Urbain Matsalou-Yombe (appointed March 2024)

### What?

Trustees help CBR to be a reflection of the kingdom of God through accountability for finances, HR, and safeguarding; and helping find the best ways to implement strategic decisions. Since 2021 this team have helped establish CBR as a charity and employer, with a huge amount of work for processes, policies, finances and strategy. In 2024 it is the Trustees who legally have the responsibility to make decisions for the sustainability of the church.

## CURRENT PAID TEAM

### Who?

Anna Pollard - CHURCH LEADER - (3 days/wk)  
Sam Pollard - CHURCH LEADER - (3 days/wk)  
Jeorgina Soares - YOUTH AND FAMILY LEAD - (2 days/wk)  
Zahra Awani - COMMS AND OPS LEAD - (2 days/wk - on maternity)  
Hayley Bayes - COMMS LEAD - (1 day/wk - maternity cover)

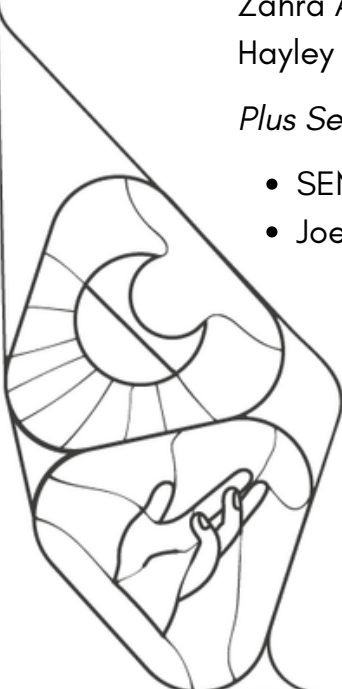
*Plus Service Level Agreements to help resource key activities...*

- SENSpired (Shay Orr) for Kids at Hubs Together
- Joe's Fight Gym (Joe and Hayley Bayes) for discipleship at the Gym

### What?

**EVERYONE is on team...but some are currently paid to add capacity for certain roles.** All roles have been created with the convictions that:

- God is calling local people
- Finance is to release/resource what God is doing
- Leadership roles are to empower EVERY PERSON, not every person volunteers to do what leaders say.



# Youth Hub

by Jeorgina Soares



Youth Hub started from prayer and connection with young people on the street where Urbain used to live and those connected with Triangoals. Jeorgina now leads Youth Hub.

Over time fortnightly gatherings began that create a safe space and time for young people to come together and play games, but also get to know Jesus more. During the time we focus on games, activities, bible study, prayer and open conversations about building our relationship with God. This helps young people connect with God and know who they are in God's eyes.

**Autumn/Winter 2022:** started by focusing on fun, connection and talking about wellbeing using the Scripture Union "Rooted" material.

**From January 2023:** started using equipment at the Warehouse to create a podcast where young people discussed questions of life and faith. This paused when the Warehouse closed, we hope to restart it at the Rivergate.

**During 2024:** Youth Hub meets in the Rivergate Centre 4pm-5.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month. The older young people are leading the discussions and prayer. The whole group shared in January a hunger to get to know Jesus more and go deeper in faith. We want them to discover God's PURPOSE for them and grow as disciples.

## Stats...

*No. of Young People involved = 20+*

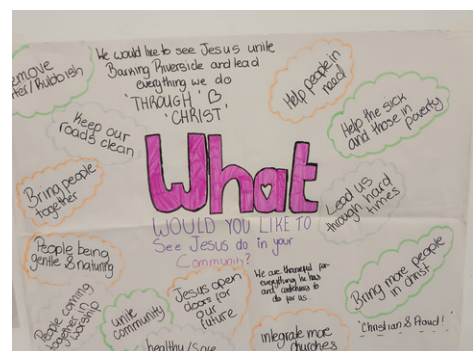
*No. of Young People each week = circa 12+*

*No. of adults helping = 2*

## PLEASE PRAY FOR....

...ADULT TEAM: we need 2 or 3 more people happy to help on a monthly basis.

...YOUNG PEOPLE: to encounter God and keep growing in Him.



# Hubs Together



Hubs Together emerged in late 2022. Before that we alternated weekly between small hubs (meeting in the Pollard house and with Urbain at Rivergate) and “celebrations” where we came together at the Rivergate. We brought these hubs together weekly at the Rivergate as a way to create a safe space (especially for kids with SEND), to be more visible to the wider community, and from a desire to connect with families surrounding Rivergate / George Carey.

Our aim is to create a welcoming space for families where we connect with God and each other in ways that can easily be replicated at home or other spaces. We start cafe style with games, then move into more structured activities for kids, and bible discussion / prayer for adults.

**Since January 2024** - SENSpired have partnered with us to help develop our kids provision and train us as a community to be able to grow together with Jesus well.

ENCOURAGEMENTS are many! We’re now seeing 20+ people gathering on average with over 40 adults/kids being part of Hubs Together roughly once a month.

## **Moving forwards.....into FAMILY HUB?**

During April we’ll trial adults joining with our kids so that we learn to encounter God together. This comes partly from a practical need to simplify Hubs Together for the amount of team we have available, but more importantly/excitingly as it fits better with our vision to enable families to encounter God together and learn habits we can bring into our daily lives.



# Coffee Corner



Coffee Corner started in the summer term of 2023 as an experiment in using the Rivergate Foyer as a Community Lounge for people surrounding the centre and connected with George Carey School to connect. There is a distinct lack of space on Barking Riverside for people to go without needing to spend lots of money or do a specific activity.

We regularly have **12+ people each week with around 20+ regulars** coming once a month or more. A sense of community has grown amongst regulars which is diverse and friendly. Recently we have begun to talk about “Big Questions” - which people wrote on cards, put in a tin, and randomly picked out to talk about. We’ve had meaningful conversations about everything from eternal salvation to transgender to the moon landings!

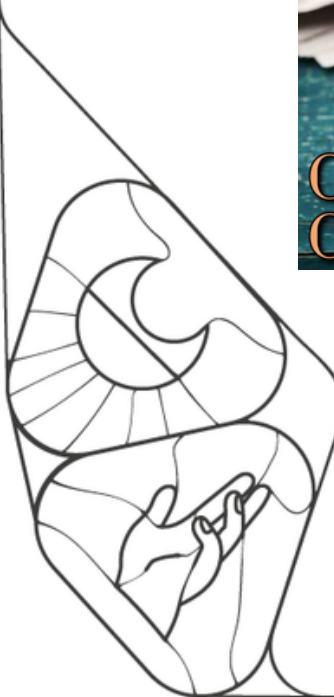
This space was key in the forming of a Community Choir for Christmas Carols; conversations with the school about forming a PTA; and people have begun to get involved in helping with community events.



## PLEASE PRAY FOR...

...people to keep taking next steps toward Jesus individually and as a community

...wisdom as to how to help this grow as we explore physical spaces



# Fight Gym



by Joe and Hayley Bayes

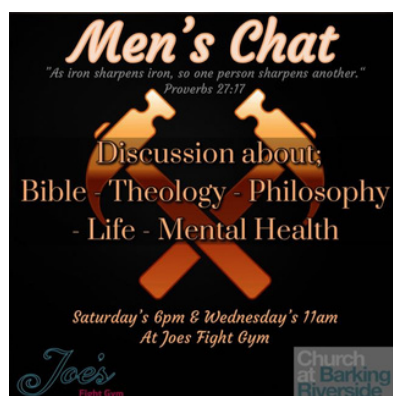
Men's Chat at the gym started around 2/3 months ago and runs twice a week. Joe was having a lot of separate conversations with different people about Christianity and a lot of people had the same questions. So Men's chat was created to be a space to discuss these questions, sometimes it's theology, sometimes they read and discuss a Bible passage, and sometimes it's a discussion around today's problems, but Joe directs these chats to focus around Christianity and the Bible.

We have had guys who have never read a book before ask if they can have a Bible to read and three guys are interested in baptism, praise be to God!

Men's Chat has been an opportunity to teach working class men about Christianity as almost all of the men who walk through the door don't know anything about the gospel or Christianity. It has been amazing to plant seeds that God has been watering and watching how the conversations are leading people closer and closer to Jesus. Jesus has definitely been working in the hearts of these guys.



Also for those who can't make the men's chat sessions, they have been having conversations with Joe before and after classes at the gym, the Holy Spirit is working in the gym as a whole, not just during the Men's Chat sessions. We have also had one guy begin discipling a friend of his outside of the gym. The idea of Men's Chat was to open the gym up to God that He may have an opportunity to reach those who don't want to come to a traditional church.



# Community Events



To help foster a rhythm of celebration as a wider community, we seek to host regular community events based around the Christian calendar plus Social Sundays whenever there is a 5th Sunday in the month.

Community events see anything from 80 (often Social Sundays) to 250 (i.e. our Easter Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday).

Many people who don't come to Hubs, regularly come to these celebrations. These events create opportunities for people to discover Jesus and church for the first time; and people from various hubs and communities come together to make them happen.



## *...not just events...*

We're passionate about our community. Members of our church family are involved in or leaders of organisations, businesses and activities across this whole estate, including George Carey School, Triangoals, JDS, Barking Fight Gym, Pullums Dance, Thames Life, Scouts, SENspired & many more!



**Church  
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*The Challenge We  
Face*

**...out of the  
greenhouse...**



# Out of the greenhouse...



## **OUR CHALLENGE: Our SDF Funding ends on 31st Dec 2024. We need to decide how to move forward after this.**

Since 2018 the **majority of all costs have been covered by SDF**. SDF has been like a **greenhouse** - creating an artificially safe space to help something start to grow. It has been a huge blessing! Now, **we are leaving the greenhouse!** We've sought to grow in such a way that we can survive and thrive when planted in the soil...and this is when we can truly begin to shape our community - **exciting!**

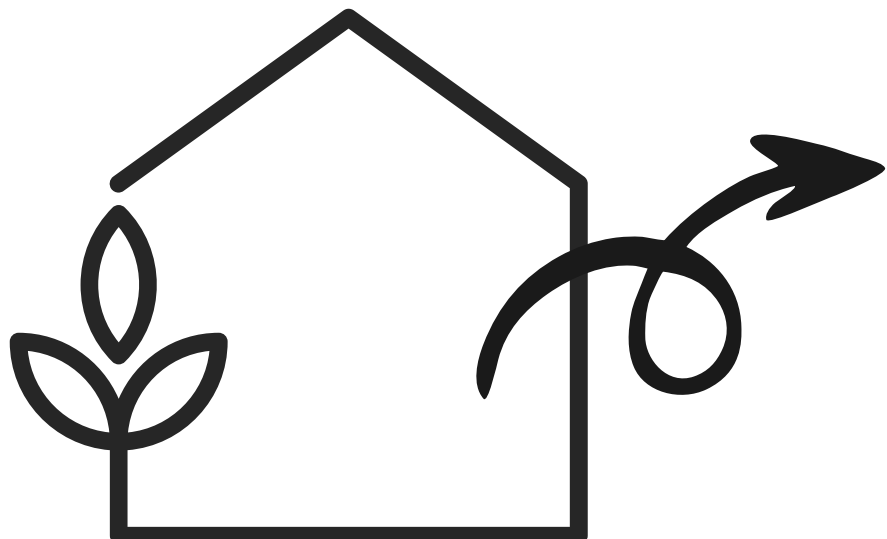
## **THERE ARE TWO MAJOR CHANGES WE NEED TO FACE:**

### **1: FINANCE**

We now need to find ways together and with God to fund our shared life.

### **2: TEAM**

- Urbain was our only full time member of staff when Curate until June 2023.
- We have used SDF to fund some team. We have focused on local people, using the money to give them capacity to be discipled and to resource mission that was already happening. We have needed people specifically where a) safeguarding is a concern; b) for work necessary for us to exist as something larger - e.g. governance, finance, vision, communication.
- Anna and Sam have been funded separately, but this also is set to stop. They still want to stay, but will need to find alternative income which will reduce their capacity significantly.

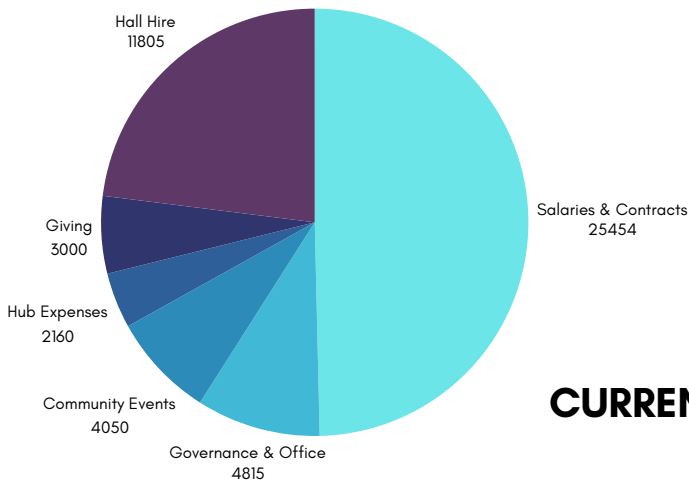


# Finances



For a detailed financial report see our Annual Accounts for 2023

## CURRENT RUNNING COSTS - [excluding Anna, Sam & partnerships]



**£51k**

Primarily for Team and Regular Hall Hire

## CURRENT INCOME - circa. £17k [giving]

### OTHER SIGNIFICANT FUNDS:

1. **RESERVES: circa. £70k** - we have saved regular giving whilst able to use Strategic Development Fund (SDF) monies in order to give an "off-ramp" from funding.
2. **CAPITAL ASSET: £48K** - this is historic money from the diocese for Barking Riverside that is intended for use on a capital asset.
3. **POTENTIAL UNDERSPENDS: £70k** - this is a projected underspend on SDF monies that times out after 2024. Can we pre-pay hall hire (lease a space)?

### What is Parish Share?

Typically every church pays "parish share" to create a central Diocese pot that pays for all diocese staff/costs, curates training/housing/stipends, and vicar stipends. How much each parish pays is calculated by a "full cost" based on the amount of ministry [1 full time vicar = £90k; half-time = £60k] then adjusted for size of church and economics of the area. In Barking this is greatly reduced, e.g. £10-30k for half-time vicar. So far Sam and Anna have shared 1 stipend (salary) paid by SDF.

**Hard News:** The Diocese are not willing to bring CBR into the parish share scheme nor add a stipendiary post to the deanery numbers. We are exploring other mechanisms for support, but right now Anna and Sam will not be supported financially by the Diocese.





**Church  
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*How do we  
respond?*



**“See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up, do you not  
perceive it? I am making a way  
in the wilderness and streams  
in the wasteland.” Is.43:19**

# With Faith and Together



**Jesus said: "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it"**

As we explore these big questions, we do so with HOPE not fear; remembering that God will provide for all He wants to do. So our next steps are to **look for what God is doing, pray for His guidance, and make decisions about our shape and way forward.**

## THE DISCERNING JOURNEY SO FAR

### JAN/FEB: SCENARIOS AND SHAPING PROCESS

Sam and Anna met with Andy Scofield [friend and consultant]. We explored all the uncertainties and variables we face, working out how to process this together as a community.

### MARCH: DISCERNING JOURNEY WITH A CORE OF OUR COMMUNITY

Through several facilitated workshops we spent time discerning a direction moving forward. This was based around a metaphor of cooking: What are our ingredients? What could we cook? What do we want to cook? What's the recipe / how do we get ready to cook?

1. INGREDIENTS: people, activities, resources; but especially our values, stories and passions. We have a shared desire to see our communities thriving with Jesus at the heart. Key themes emerged of being a community that accepts people, enables people to find help and healing, and brings unity amongst diversity.

2 and 3. WHAT TO COOK? Major questions:

a) Relational or something bigger? CBR doesn't have to continue as a charity or legal entity, but could simply be relational community encouraging each other to do our own things. **We decided we want to be part of something bigger, for CBR to exist and grow.**

b) What grows? We could focus on small organic spaces/communities ["pancakes"] or forming something more complex together ["sponge cake"]. **We decided we wanted to form something larger but in a way that encourages smaller things to grow too. I.e. to form a larger community but to help people connect and catalyse disciple-making in many places**





**THIS NEEDS A “KITCHEN” - a physical space that enables us to cook many things and people to learn how to cook.**

We ended with a proposal for a physical space, not as a typical church building, but as a “community lounge” where anyone can connect, where a rhythm of activities, worship and prayer can take place, where people can connect with help and support services, where training can take place to help people grow. This could partner with other organisations like the Fight Gym and Dance Academy.

#### **4. WHAT’S THE RECIPE?**

In our final session we recognised **two main things we need to be “ready to cook”**:

### **THE RIGHT SPACE | CAPACITY TO COOK**

**THE RIGHT SPACE: There are 2 live possibilities...**

- **DEDICATED SPACE:** (Preferable) We have begun conversations with Barking Riverside Ltd (BRL) exploring possible dedicated spaces where we could form a cafe space with Jesus at the heart as described above. We are exploring partnering with others to share costs and increase what we can offer.
- **RIVERGATE CENTRE** BRL are looking for a community group to manage the community spaces within the Rivergate. We have expressed interest. This involves providing a Centre Manager(s) and comes with funding for the first three years (£75k, £25k, £25k).

**CAPACITY TO COOK:** we don’t have enough cooks!

Our current team is over-stretched with people moving on AND there is additional work to do both in plans for physical spaces/strategy and organizational/governance work needed to be ready for the next season.

***If we are going to be move forward we need to simplify what we are doing and share out the work more between us.***





## TIMELINE

### **BY EASTER:**

Decided direction [Find physical space and create capacity to cook] and share with wider church family at Annual Church Meeting.

### **BY END OF MAY:**

Process deciding managing organisation for Rivergate Centre will be complete.

And/or we have explored and identified a dedicated space.

### **BY END OF JULY:**

we need to have a clear plan of where we are looking for additional funds: grant funding opportunities (we are in conversations about these with various people in the Borough); income streams / business plans; giving from the church community. And with this a clear sense of what roles are involved going forward.

We will continue conversations with the Diocese over the current decisions around parish share, not increasing deanery stipendiary numbers, and their plans for the vicarage.



# What about me?



**OUR HOPE IS THAT EACH OF US CAN FIND OUR PART IN THIS JOURNEY....HERE'S HOW:**

## **PAUSE AND PRAY:**

Now is a time for each of us to consider: do I share this vision? Is this my church community? Do I want to be part of seeing this come to pass?

## **JOIN THE CONVERSATIONS:**

We want to share these decisions together as we look to share living them out together. **If you want to be part of the next stage of planning please sign up or message [hello@churchatbr.com](mailto:hello@churchatbr.com).**

## **JOIN THE TEAM:**

We need help especially for...

1. YOUTH HUB [once per mnth]
2. FAMILY CHURCH [once per mnth]
3. TRUSTEES [every two mnths]

## **SUPPORT...**

Would you consider supporting through regular financial giving?

Could you help with time/expertise as we explore physical spaces / business planning / grant applications / admin?

## **PRAYER - BUILD THE ALTAR**

The Bible says that, when Israelites returned to rebuild the ruined Jerusalem, they began by building an altar to worship and pray. We are convicted that **prayer is key** to our moving forward. Would you join in regular committed prayer with us? **Message [same@churchatbr.com](mailto:same@churchatbr.com) to find out how.**

