

CASE STUDY

ST JAMES & EMMANUEL CHURCH, DIDSBURY, DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER, COFE

www.homecommunitycafe.org/about-home.php

Population: 26,788 (2011 Census)

The Grade II* listed Victorian church transformed its foyer, which was previously wasted space, into a lively venue and centre for the whole community and it now includes a kitchen, toilets, fellowship area and baby changing area.

St James and Emmanuel Church, Didsbury, which set up Home Community Café in its foyer was the runner-up in the Marsh Awards for Innovative Church Projects 2017, receiving a £500 prize.

www.nationalchurchestrust.org/marsh-awards-innovative-projects/marsh-awards-innovative-church-projects-2017-winners

The café is open every day and offers good quality food and drink, volunteering opportunities and a venue for community events - including pre-school stories in the mini-Home Café Corner, an impromptu ukulele jam or a community group meeting in the Living Room. Not-for-profit groups are welcome to use the Living Room for free and it had hosted more than 30 different groups in the 18 months up to mid-2017 including a dementia café, a knitting group, a Lego club, support for start-up businesses, and spoken word nights. There is also a well set up play and book area for small children and a garden.

A registered charity, Home, is run by volunteers and all profits made over and above the running costs are reinvested locally. Its suppliers are also carefully picked for factors like sustainability and being good to the planet. Home can be hired for events – and has hosted a wide range including support groups, private parties, concerts, exhibition launches, performance evenings and AGMs.

The church offers work placements to volunteers in partnership with

other charities, including Head Start, a mental health charity, and Work Fit, which supports people with Downs Syndrome to enter the workplace.

Nearly 70 volunteers take part each year and one said: *“Home changed me and changed my life... I have friends now, I laugh all the time.”*

The Marsh Awards judges were impressed with the highly efficient management model, the rapid growth of the project and the range of activities on offer and its partnerships with other organisations. They said: *“the project is contributing to use and engagement with the church and to the sustainability of the building. There was strong awareness of the community’s needs and of the need to invest in the building to support future development.”*