

OAKLEY WITH WOOTTON



# OUR SUPPORTED CHARITIES, 2023

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# OVERVIEW



Over the last few months, the Oakley with Wootton Mission Action Group (MAG) have met to discuss and prayerfully consider applications for gifts in 2023.

It's been a pleasure to see the variety of fantastic and inspirational charities applying for gifts, both locally and globally.

We have selected the following charities to receive gifts. Please see overleaf for a summary of each charity; what they do and how our gifts will support them in the coming year.

Thank you and God Bless.

**The Oakley with Wootton MAG team.**



## UNITED REFORMED CHURCH YOUTH CAFÉ (OASIS)

A brilliant Christian community café at the top of town, offering a friendly quiet place for breakfast, morning coffee and lunch. It is staffed mainly by volunteers from churches in the area with a salaried café manager to supervise.

The café is greatly valued by its customers who like the friendly environment and the fact that they are welcome to sit as long as they like without pressure. Some 30 to 60 attend each day and many are long term regulars. They also have a Christian bookstall selling both books and cards.

As well as our proposed gift, URC would love to hear from anyone in our congregation who would like to volunteer at the café. It can be as simple as making tea or coffee, or having a chat with customers.

Our gift will go towards general running costs of the café operation, which include their paid cook / kitchen supervisor, staple food items and energy costs.

# MONEY LIFELINE

Money Lifeline is an invaluable Christian run free service providing expert debt advice for people living in or near Basingstoke. They have been operating for 16 years & St Leonard's has supported them financially throughout that period. Additionally, they have always had advisers who are members of St Leonard's.

Based in the Sarum Hill Centre in town, they offer free, helpful and confidential advice on debt and how to manage money. They are fully staffed by volunteers from local churches and have received full training in debt advice.

Although their debt advice is similar to that provided by other organisations, Money Lifeline has a strong Christian ethos, and all their advisers are active members of local churches; they have always had a policy of "going the extra mile" for their clients. Many people who get into debt have somewhat chaotic lives and they are able to provide a listening ear on issues which are not directly debt related.

Our gift would be put towards their running costs – mainly telephones, printing & postage plus annual insurance and fees to their national charity 'Community Money Advice', who provide their cloud-based computer system, training and practical advice. They are also needing to replace the computers in their office in the coming year.





## **CEDAR TREE**

Cedar Tree is a brilliant local counselling service located in central Basingstoke, providing affordable, professional counselling for the whole community by practising Christians. They seek to provide a professional service demonstrating God's love and care for each individual.

There is no fixed charge made for counselling, but an agreed contribution for each session is requested. This is discussed during the first visit. They suggest a contribution of between £5 – £35, however no-one is refused counselling for lack of money. They would not wish anyone to be deterred from making enquiries because of anxiety about cost, and they welcome ongoing financial support from friends and former clients.

Our gift will go towards supporting the recent move to Church Cottage from previously sub-standard rooms in town. The new premises is ideal, but one of the 2 counselling rooms is very small. Our gift would be used to divide the main reception area to provide a better space for a second room. Demand for their service is high, so this is a priority to enable more sessions to be released to the people across Basingstoke.

# BASINGSTOKE CHAPLAINCY

Basingstoke Town Chaplaincy are a fantastic, dedicated team of trained Christians serving and supporting people in the workplace and in the community in the Town of Basingstoke. They have a true love for Basingstoke Town and believe that the work carried out here is important.

They are not paid by the employer and anything discussed will remain confidential. While all the chaplains are all committed Christians, they are there to support everyone, whether Christian, of another faith, or no religion.

Our gift will go towards their general running costs; which include management, the cost of their office in Festival Place, uniforms, training and preparation and printing of materials to hand out.





## BASINGSTOKE FOOD BANK

Basingstoke Food Bank are a vital charity supporting some of the most vulnerable people in and around Basingstoke. Their ethos is they don't think anyone in the community should have to face going hungry. Therefore, they aim to provide three days' nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to them in crisis. They are part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by The Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK; who are based on, shaped, and guided by their strong Christian principles.

Numbers of food referrals have been high through the summer holidays, and they are hoping that the recent harvest collections will help them top up their warehouse to meet the needs of what will be a challenging autumn/winter for many.

In addition, they will again be packing up 'Christmas Hampers' to deliver to households who will struggle to find money to buy any extra food and toiletry 'treats' over the Christmas season.

As their monthly donations are registering as lower than this time last year, they will truly appreciate funds which they will use to buy additional food & other essential items that would usually go into their 3-day packs for our clients.

They also offer a great opportunity for our Church community to get involved. They are actively seeking volunteers – who they see as the 'driving force' behind foodbanks. There are many volunteering roles available to view on their website.

# BASINGSTOKE COMMUNITY FOOD LINK

In the UK, 1 in 3 children are living in poverty and an estimated 14 million people, one fifth of the nation's population, are suffering in 'impossible situations' where paying bills and putting food on the table can be incredibly difficult. The wonderful Community Food Link are based in Basingstoke, and they collect fresh, nutritious food that cannot be sold from their partner supermarkets. Their team of volunteers sort, repack and then deliver it to their distribution partners, charities, schools and play groups so they can help the most vulnerable in our society by giving them wholesome and healthy food for themselves and their families.

They are part of the 'Starfish Enterprise Trust', which is an arm of OneChurch Basingstoke and is a charity set up to assist members of churches in the Basingstoke area to develop appropriate projects to demonstrate the love of Jesus through service to the local community. They currently work with around 30 organisations in the local community sharing free food from supermarket surplus (including Sochi's Youth Café work at Jolly Ollies each Monday.)

Our gift will help with general fuel and maintenance costs for their two vans; and keep them on the road so that they can continue their work. They are also looking to replace the vans, which are coming to the end of their life.

Like FoodBank, they offer our Church community an opportunity to get involved through volunteering. They are always looking for people to help pick up food from their supermarket partners, sort and deliver out to their partner charities. They are also after people to help run the admin and back office.





## BESOM IN BASINGSTOKE

Besom are a brilliant Christian charity based in Basingstoke. They have a passion to see every Christian having an intentional involvement with those living on the margins of society. They help people to make a difference, by providing a bridge between those who want to give time, money, things or skills and those who are in need. It ensures that what is given is used effectively, and the service it provides is free. The name 'Besom' derives from a broom made of twigs - hence Besom's strapline of 'sweep away suffering'.

They exist for members of churches in Basingstoke to connect with those in need and see transformation in those who give and receive. There are people all around the town of Basingstoke who want to give. They may be refurbishing a room and have good quality furniture to donate. Many offer to buy a cooker, fridge or washing machine for someone who is moving to an empty new home. Others give money or offer to do an act of kindness to help someone who struggles to cope. For the past 15 years, Besom – manned by people from churches around the town – has matched the gift with a recipient in need.

The Besom aims to make a bridge between these people and God's church in Basingstoke. There are all kinds of ways in which members and groups from Basingstoke churches can get involved and make a genuine, lasting difference to people's lives. Our gift will help with their running costs of their van, which is vital to their work, and general charitable work such as the starter packs and baby packs.

# STREET PASTORS

Basingstoke Street Pastors are a fantastic charity, made up of dedicated and inspiring trained volunteers from local churches, who truly care about Basingstoke and the local community. They are sharing the love of Jesus in a very practical way.

They are part of a national team, first pioneered in 2003, which has seen Street Pastors continue to grow throughout the UK and across the world. They are on patrol from 10pm to 4am(!) every Friday and Saturday night to care for, listen to and help people who are out on the streets; essentially assisting the Police and Ambulance services in keeping the people of Basingstoke safe on the streets at night.

They are led by a local Coordinator and also have support from many local churches and community groups in partnership with the police, local council and other statutory agencies. They are funded in part by the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner, with donations from local churches and individuals.

They are always looking for volunteers, and would be delighted if anyone from our Parish would like to help in any way.

Our gift would go towards general administration costs, purchasing supplies (lollipops, flip flops, water, safety blankets, first aid and PPE equipment) and training costs. It costs around £300 to train each Street Pastor initially and then there are ongoing costs to keep up to date.





## THE SAFE

As a non-profit charity, The Safe offers vital help and support to families of all ages across Basingstoke and North Hampshire. All of their services are completely free and open to all. They are able to give support for Pregnancy Crisis, Post-Abortion, Miscarriage and Bereavement.

They also provide a whole host of other fantastic support through their Dads' Hub, Parents' Groups, Clothing and Equipment help (including School Uniform and school supplies), Hope for Carers and Grandparents' Groups as well as Social Signposting and Interagency Referrals.

They have a baby clothing and equipment service that aims to support mothers, fathers couples or extended family who are struggling financially to provide for their baby with the necessary equipment or clothing.



## 4M UK

4M UK are a transformational UK based Christian charity that specialise in offering unique 'mind, body & soul' experiences called Xtreme Character Challenges (XCC). Through these adventures in the wild, they challenge the thinking, beliefs and mindsets of individuals to enable them to make different life decisions which positively impact themselves, their home, workplace, faith and community.

XCC events are run as a journey to discover identity and purpose. Faith is therefore a key element and is something they heavily focus on, specifically from a Christian perspective. These are truly lifechanging events that a number of men from St. Leonards can testify to, having attended multiple events over the last few years. One of our congregation had his life changed significantly through starting his faith journey and deciding to follow Jesus whilst on an XCC in Wales.

These videos below help show the impact of an XCC for men in today's society:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUY5nMBDlcY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV63SI2T6XO>

At this economically challenging time 4M UK are especially aware that cost is a barrier to entry - often for those who might most need this life changing experience - so they need funds to ensure their Xtreme Character Challenge event is "free to anyone who needs it" Our funds will go directly to supporting men who cannot afford to attend.

# CHILD OF HOPE

Child of Hope is a wonderful Christian-based charity making huge improvements for slum children and their families from its schools in Eastern Uganda – by providing free education, healthcare and welfare to kids from the poorest and most vulnerable families.

They also offer support to help mums start a small business, which can help lift the whole family out of the worst excesses of poverty.

One of the areas Child of Hope works is in Namatala slum, Mbale, Uganda, relieving the hardship and distress of lives lived in poverty. They've recently built their own school and work holistically, delivering education, welfare and enterprise activities for children/families offering practical support and prayers. Any gifts given will support local staff in this work. Specifically, a primary school teacher costs £93 a month: a gift of £1,116 will support a teacher working with between 50 and 60 young children for one year.



# MONTGOMERY HEIGHTS



Montgomery Heights Zimbabwe Children's Foundation supports the work of Montgomery Heights Christian Care Centre who care for orphaned and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe; which houses up to 60 children from birth to 18 years of age.

Montgomery Heights Christian Care Centre is a Social Welfare registered home for orphan and destitute children and is under the covering of Voice of Triumph Ministries, a nondenominational Christian ministry. There are weekly church services and Bible studies held at the home, which are attended by members of the local community as well as the staff and children who live at Montgomery. There are also a number of church outreach works from the home into the community.

The children at Montgomery Heights attend an on-site preschool class after which they move on to a local government primary school and then secondary school. After completing their secondary school education, depending upon their academic ability, the older children are then able to pursue either higher academic studies or practical skills training courses at different educational institutions, supported by Montgomery Heights as much as possible. There is also a small clinic on site to cover the medical needs of the children and staff.

Our gift would pay for replacing 50 of the chairs in the library/learning centre and dining room



## CHILDS TRUST

Established in 1999, the work of CHILD's Trust has seen hundreds of children's lives changed.

CHILD's Trust is an amazing local Christian charity that exists to empower schools and families to care for the most vulnerable children across India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

It was during a trip to Delhi, India in the late 1990's that Mark and Julie Thomas were handed a baby girl by a poverty stricken mother. This touched their hearts and ignited a God-given desire to support children in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Mark and Julie have self-funded numerous annual visits to Asia and have built close relationships with locals, who work on the projects that CHILD's Trust funds. These funds are used to alleviate poverty for children, giving them a hope and a future

In 2006 CHILD's Trust pioneered a scheme called 'House of Hope'. The scheme supports a small family to take in and adopt up to 8 orphans (who have no parents or wider family to care for them) and raise them as their own. This fully embraces the charity's ethos of 'Developing children to their full potential' thereby giving them a hope and a future. There are currently Houses of Hope in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Our gift would be used to support the on-going local projects in India, Nepal and Bangladesh that place orphans in amazing families. Childs Trust also enable very poor families to send their children to school to gain a great education. Their aim is to break the cycle of the orphan and poverty.

# SNOWDROP FOUNDATION

The Snowdrop Foundation, amongst other things, supports and finances a Christian orphanage and school in a town called Kakinada in eastern India.

The school educates and feeds 500 children and houses and feeds 50 orphans.

The Snowdrop Foundation continues to focus on the most vulnerable: orphaned children, widows, families who cannot afford education and young mothers or mothers-to-be who do not feel financially or emotionally prepared for the challenges ahead, and desperately need help from somewhere.

In short, the Foundation is a way to encourage prosperity and reduce hardship and suffering by helping those who need it most.

Our gift will go directly towards the cost of food. Due to the exchange rate, western currencies can buy a lot of Indian Rupees meaning that £500 will be enough to buy food for 500 children and 50 orphans for two weeks - which equates to (circa) 8000 meals.



# MALAWI ASSOCIATION

The brilliant Malawi Association for Christian Support (MACS) has been working in Malawi since 1993, one of the poorest ten countries in the world. They work in partnership with local people on education, health and community projects in the rural areas, where the needs are greatest.

Last year St. Leonard's gift assisted with the conversion of an existing classroom at the Training Centre to provide for setting up the library required by the Malawi Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education Authority. This work has now been completed and the students have a dedicated quiet library space, bookshelves and desks.

The Training Centre continues to address topics such as agriculture, home crafts, accountancy and management. Students (mostly women) are selected twice yearly by rural parishes with a view to passing on their knowledge and skills in their villages after completion. MACS continues to pay the fees for several students each year.

Our gift this year will be spent on books for their 'Chilema Ecumenical Training Centre' project.

