



*A Christ-Centred Family Sharing God's Love*

# Feedback from our vision lunches

Townfield has had a vision statement for a few years now. That statement says we should be *A Christ-Centred Family, Sharing God's Love*. But we've not had an official plan to say how we're going to try and live up to that good, and ambitious, statement.

So, between January and April 2018 we held 3 well attended 'vision lunches', to think together about the past, present and future of Townfield, to help us think about how we should move towards living out that vision statement more:

- On 28<sup>th</sup> January we shared our memories of when, in the past, Townfield has been most (or least) effective at being *A Christ-Centred Family Sharing God's Love*
- On 25<sup>th</sup> March we thought about what we do now, thinking about who we are, where we are connected with the wider community, and asking ourselves which bits of our vision statement the various Townfield groups and activities fit into
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> April we looked ahead to the future, asking whether there are things we could start, or change, to help us live out the vision statement more effectively

**This document is a summary of what we discovered at those lunches, and has been the starting-point for the Townfield Church Committee's (TCC) thinking about a way ahead.** There's lots of information here, but we thought you might like to see the full details of what we discovered from you at the lunches.

# Focus shaping lunch 1 Timeline Summary

(28 January 2018)

In groups we thought back to different time periods in the life of Townfield, and asked ourselves how we, as a church, were effective (or perhaps not effective) in being *Christ-Centred* (helping our faith to grow and go deeper), *a Family* (looking after each other) and *Sharing God's Love* (taking Jesus beyond our church community).

We recorded our thoughts on a time line which covered the entire history of Townfield. Those results are summarised here.

The question we were answering on the timeline: **When, and how, in Townfield’s past, have we been most effective at living out the 3 different parts of the mission statement, *A Christ Centred Family Sharing God’s Love*.**

<h2 style="text-align: center;">A CHRIST CENTRED</h2> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p style="text-align: center;">Something about</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Discipleship: growing and deepening faith for members of Townfield</i></p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">FAMILY</h2> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p style="text-align: center;">Something about</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pastoral Care: caring for and looking after each other</i></p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">SHARING GOD’S LOVE</h2> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p style="text-align: center;">Something about</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mission: taking Jesus to people outside of the Townfield community</i></p>
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### The first years of Townfield: 1992-1997

The largest number of memories during this period related to being Family (12 responses), followed by being Christ-Centred (9 responses), with fewer memories about Sharing God’s Love (5 responses).

Although the number of responses in each area of the timeline is not a scientific way of measuring Townfield’s priorities at different times, these responses suggest that we *remember* some aspects of church life more than others. If the font size relates to the number of recorded memories, Townfield’s reflection of our current mission statement in the early years looks like this:

## Christ-Centred Family Sharing God’s Love

The memories in each section have been collated and summarised in the columns below.

<p>In the early years, Townfield was a group made up mostly of mature Christians, who had a shared vision, working together on something new: bringing Christ to a particular part of the parish. The encouragement to “<i>Let’s get stuck in</i>” summed up a shared commitment which everyone was involved with.</p> <p>There were a number of small teams working together in the church, and once people had been coming for a while, they were encouraged to be in one of these teams, which was nurturing.</p>	<p>At the start, Townfield was smaller than it is now, and this made it easier for everyone to know everyone else, and to support each other.</p> <p>The sense of community and mutual support was developed by many social activities (talking over coffee, walks, Bank Holiday days out, picnics etc)</p> <p>Visiting (to those who were unwell, lonely or elderly) was particularly mentioned as being effective in these early years, done by both teams and (lay) individuals.</p>	<p>‘Mission’ generated the smallest number of recorded memories from the earliest years of Townfield.</p> <p>One group observed that, in the beginning, we were “not good at going out to the community ‘mission’-wise”, although some community surveys were carried out.</p> <p>The activities which were mentioned as being effective in the early years are mostly for children and young people: Little Fishes, children’s work, work in the school, and youth groups.</p>
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<p>House groups, Sunday Club, teaching for adults, and mid-week opportunities to get together are all remembered as being important for growing faith.</p>	<p>The prayer team is remembered as helpful, as are the development of the prayer chain, and practical support offered in response to material needs.</p> <p>It was observed that different ministers have had different approaches to pastoral care.</p>	<p>Christian Aid coffee mornings were also mentioned.</p>
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## 1997-2002

The largest group of memories from these years were grouped under Sharing God's Love (9 responses), followed by being Family (7 responses), and being Christ-Centred (5 responses). It may be that these comments are in addition to things remembered from the early years, so could be a reflection of *new* things between 1997-2002 rather than everything that was going on. But, if the number of memories recorded does reflect Townfield's priorities at the time, it might suggest our emphasis had shifted:

### Christ-Centred Family Sharing God's Love

<p>A 10 week course, an "Introduction to the Bible" was remembered as particularly important for deepening and growing faith in these years, alongside small group settings (homegroups are mentioned by several groups) and regular seminars. Perhaps this suggests participation in small group settings was particularly important.</p>	<p>As in the early years, 'doing things together' is remembered as the basis for caring for and looking after each other. Social events (quizzes, entertainment, bring and share lunches) are mentioned. But it's not just 'social' things which are mentioned. Housegroups, the weekend away, prayer support and discovering each others' spiritual gifts are also remembered as important.</p>	<p>As the largest group of memories for this period, the things noted as being effective in 'Sharing God's Love' are all 'events' which took place: Halloween alternatives, youth group missions in other parts of the country (mentioned by 2 groups), a 'mini-Olympics' event for schools, and carol singing in the community (mentioned by 4 groups), even leading to the police being called...</p>
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## 2002-2001

Sharing God's Love (9 responses) is again the category which attracted the most memories, followed by being Christ-Centred (4 responses) and being Family (3 responses). So the balance of recorded memories again is different from the earliest years.

### Christ-Centred Family Sharing God's Love

<p>Seminars, a weekend away, midweek 'digging deeper' sessions and a Bible overview course are all remembered as being significant in deepening and growing faith. This again</p>	<p>Social events (BBQs) are remembered as playing an important part of caring for each other, as well as events which combined the social with the</p>	<p>A few initiatives are remembered as particularly important in Townfield's mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A parish evangelism team (shared with St Andrew's) was involved in at least one</li> </ul>
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suggests that participation in small groups has been important.

(Question: is this the same Bible overview course that was mentioned in 1997-2002?)

more serious (Barnstondale days away).

In addition, pastoral care training is remembered as helpful in leading to a better coordination of care.

mission event a year in the 2000's

- Townfield started a number of new initiatives:
  - Toast Club (2002),
  - a creche in school (for parents' evening? 2002),
  - nativity on the triangle,
  - invitations to services for St Andrew's school,
  - school assemblies.

## 2007-2012

No memories from this period are recorded about being Christ Centred, but it would be unwise to suggest that this means no discipleship was happening! Equally, few groups recorded memories about being Family (3 responses), and the majority of post-it notes in this section of the timeline related to Sharing God's Love (29 responses). So the balance of recorded memories is heavily weighted in one direction:

# Family Sharing God's Love

Memories of caring for each other were not necessarily specific from this period: as one group recorded, there are "many, many ways to 'care'".

The only other recorded memories are quite specific:

- baby sitting
- ministers making follow-up phone calls to people outside the church after funerals

Most of the recorded memories are for specific events, although one group recorded "lay initiatives supported by the vicar", which is perhaps a common theme running through many of the named events:

- outdoor nativity (mentioned three times)
- men's walking group
- bonfire night
- football teams
- women's social
- church and school panto
- Messy church
- Café church
- Quizzes
- World food nights
- Messy church
- Walk and church lunch

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prayer walk</li> <li>• Christmas Fair</li> <li>• At school: Toast Club, Parents' evening creche, church member governors, sports day drinks</li> <li>• Weekend away</li> <li>• Christianity Explored course</li> <li>• Invites to former members</li> <li>• Holiday club (3 mentions)</li> </ul>
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## 2012-2017

Being Christ Centred (1 response) again gets few recorded memories, with being Family (9 responses) getting the most mentions, followed by Sharing God's Love (5 responses). This shifts the balance of our recorded memories again:

Christ-Centred **Family** Sharing God's Love

<p>'Digging Deeper' midweek groups are the one memory mentioned relating to being 'Christ Centred' in recent years.</p>	<p>Four developments in the prayer life of Townfield are remembered as being effective in helping us care for one another in recent years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prayer ministry being developed further</li> <li>• the prayer chain</li> <li>• prayer breakfasts</li> <li>• the prayer ministry box.</li> </ul> <p>One initiative is remembered as helpful in developing pastoral support: geographically based support groups (2015). And one initiative is remembered as unhelpful: support circles (which didn't grow out of natural networks, and had too much overlap with house groups).</p> <p>Practical support for individuals was remembered as important.</p> <p>And an important feeling of "belonging" was also remembered.</p>	<p>A few specific events were remembered as significant in 'Sharing God's Love':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday club</li> <li>• Carols on the green (2012-16)</li> <li>• BBQ at Thurstaston</li> <li>• Inviting people back to church</li> </ul> <p>Poverty Action Group was also remembered as being more active since 2012.</p>
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# Focus shaping lunch 2 summary

(25 March 2018)

This lunch was designed to find out all about now:

- *who* are we as a church
- *where* we all live, work, volunteer and socialise as a church
- *what* are we as a church (what all the groups and activities which make up Townfield are and do)
- and what, who and where we *could be* as a church

We did all this with surveys, maps, graffiti tables and lots of sticky dots.

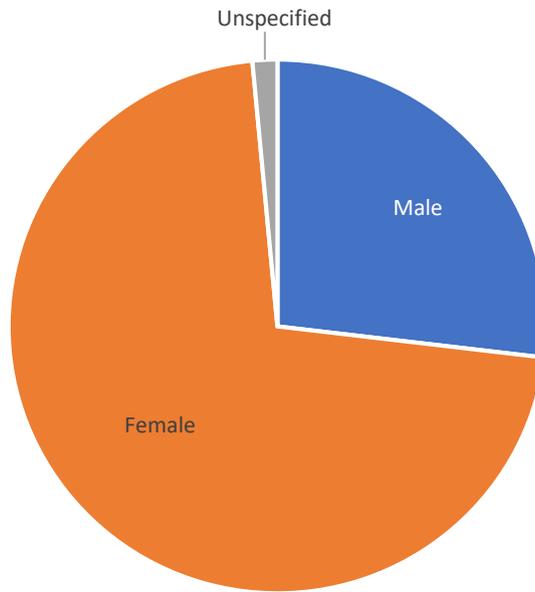


Townfield

# WHO are we?

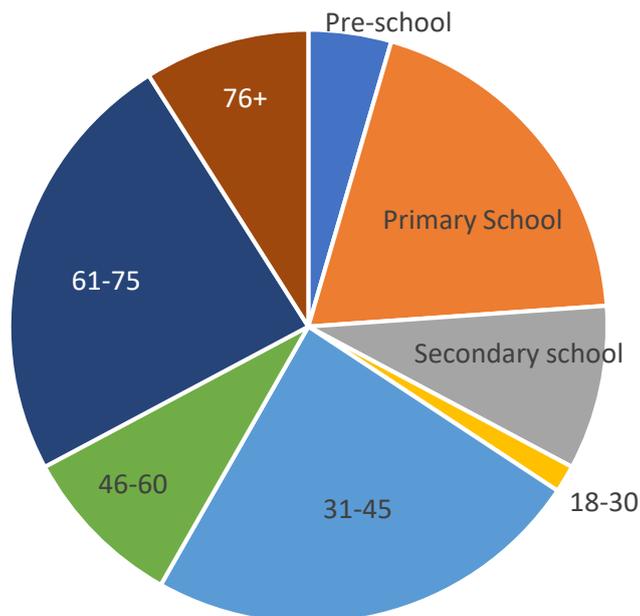
## Who filled in our surveys?

Gender split

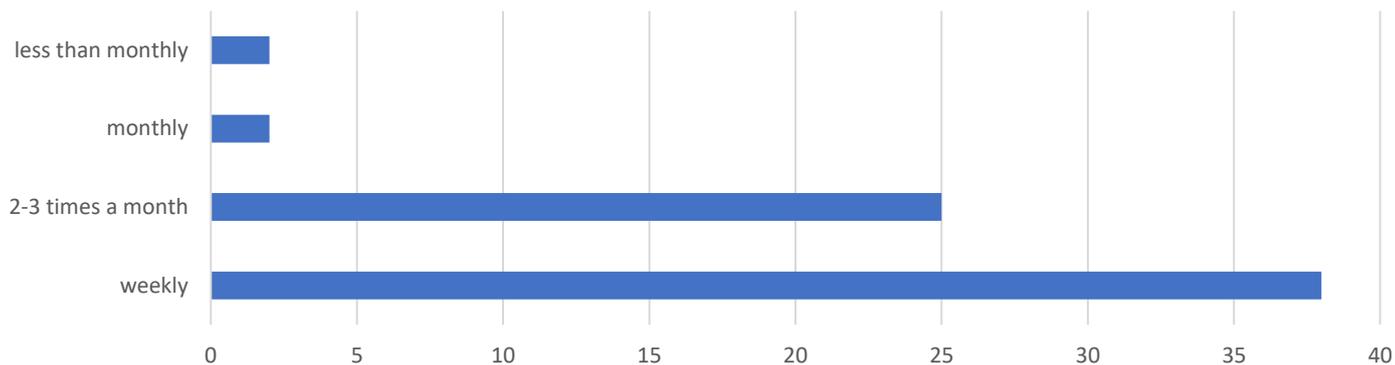


This shows more women than men. Does that just say something about men not liking surveys, or something about the gender split at Townfield?

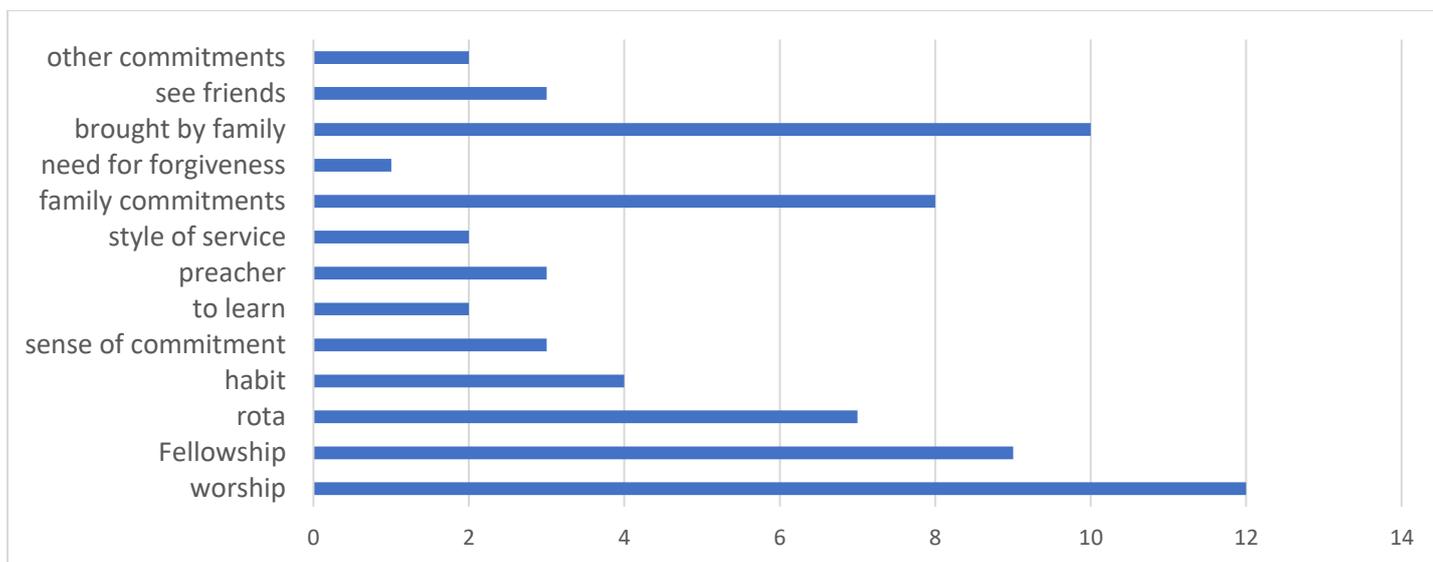
Ages



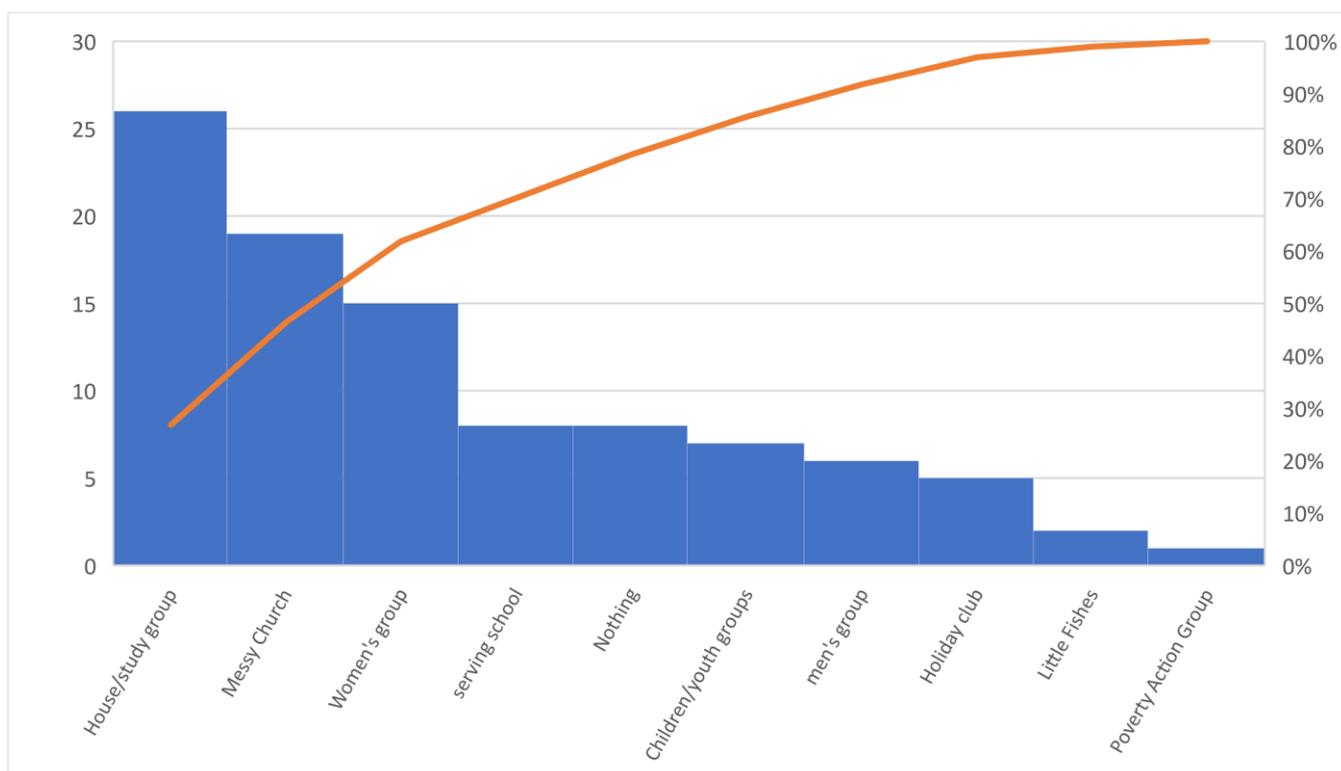
**How regularly do you come to Townfield on a Sunday?**



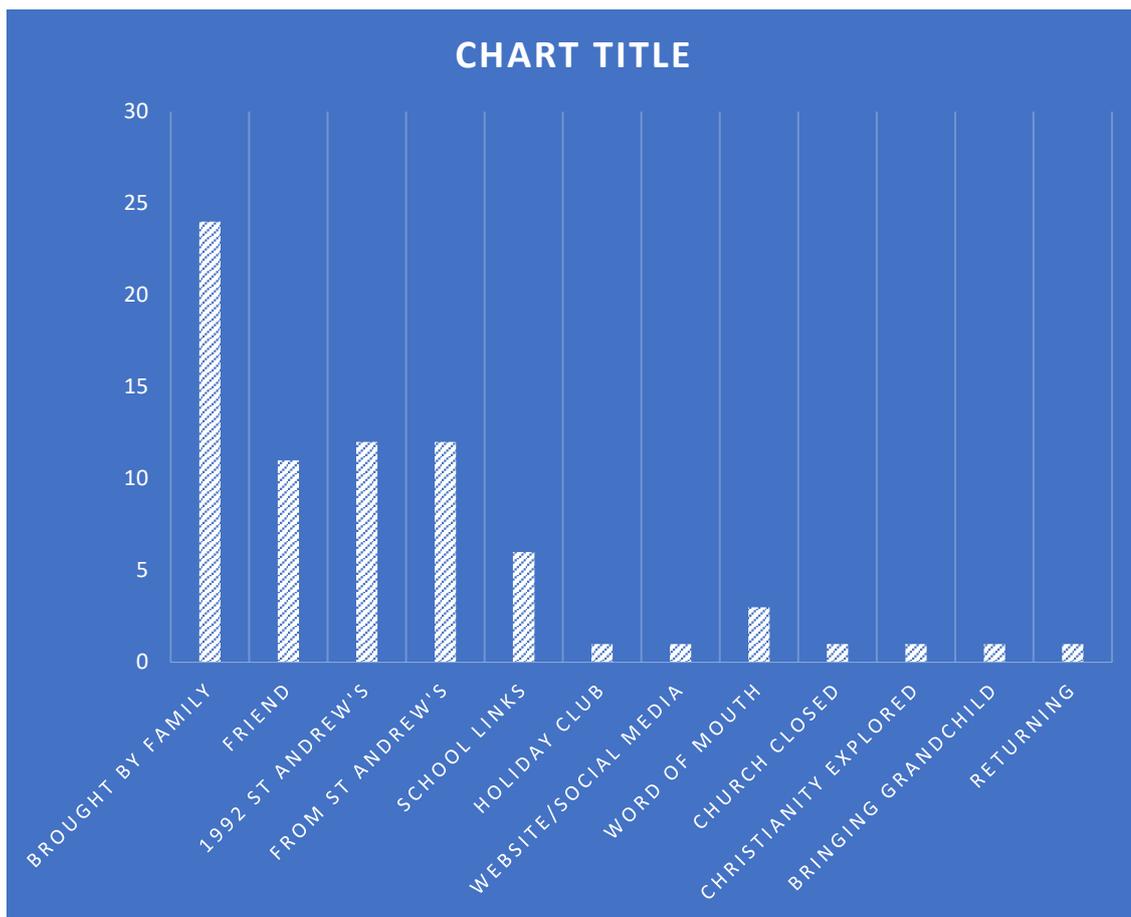
**What helps you to decide whether to come to church on any particular Sunday?**



**Please tick all non-Sunday Townfield (or St Andrew's and Townfield) groups you're involved with:**

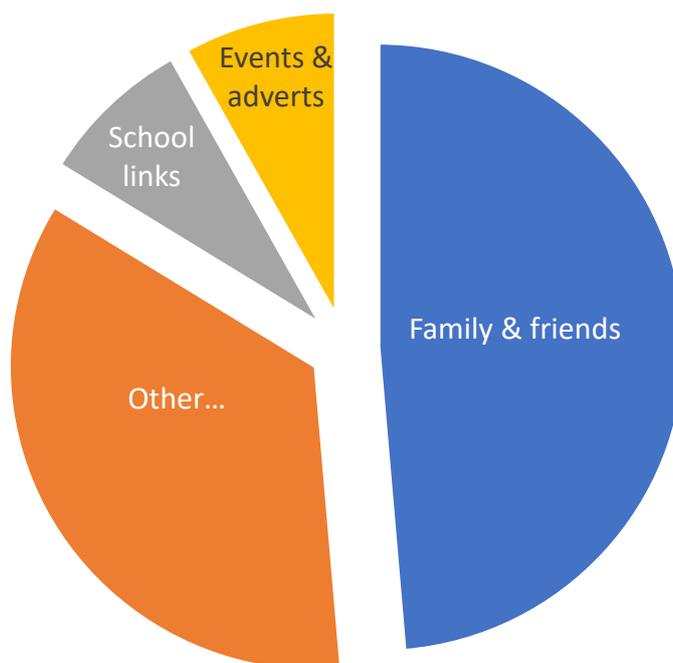


**What first brought you to Townfield (Sunday or midweek)?**

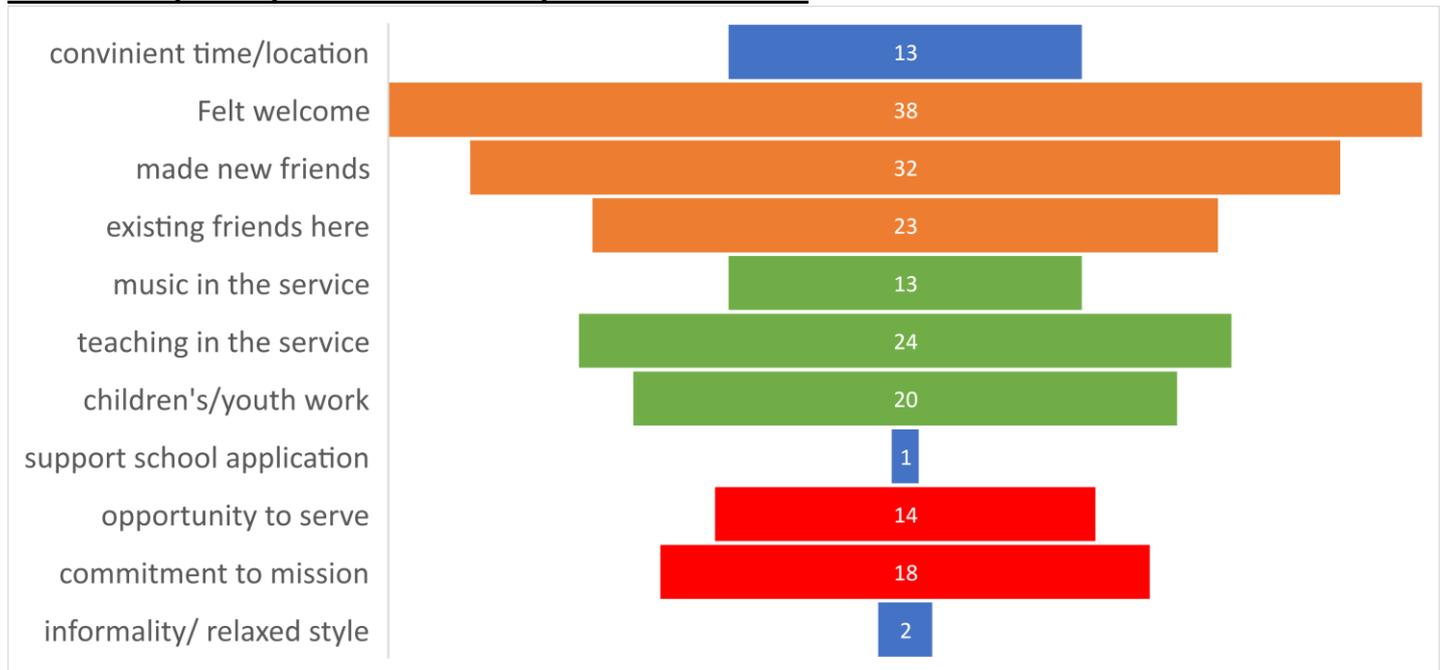


21 of the 23 'brought by family' replies were from children and young people.

When responses are grouped together, it's easier to see how important personal contacts have been in bringing people to Townfield for the first time, and how few people feel that it was a 'special event' or 'advert' which brought them along.



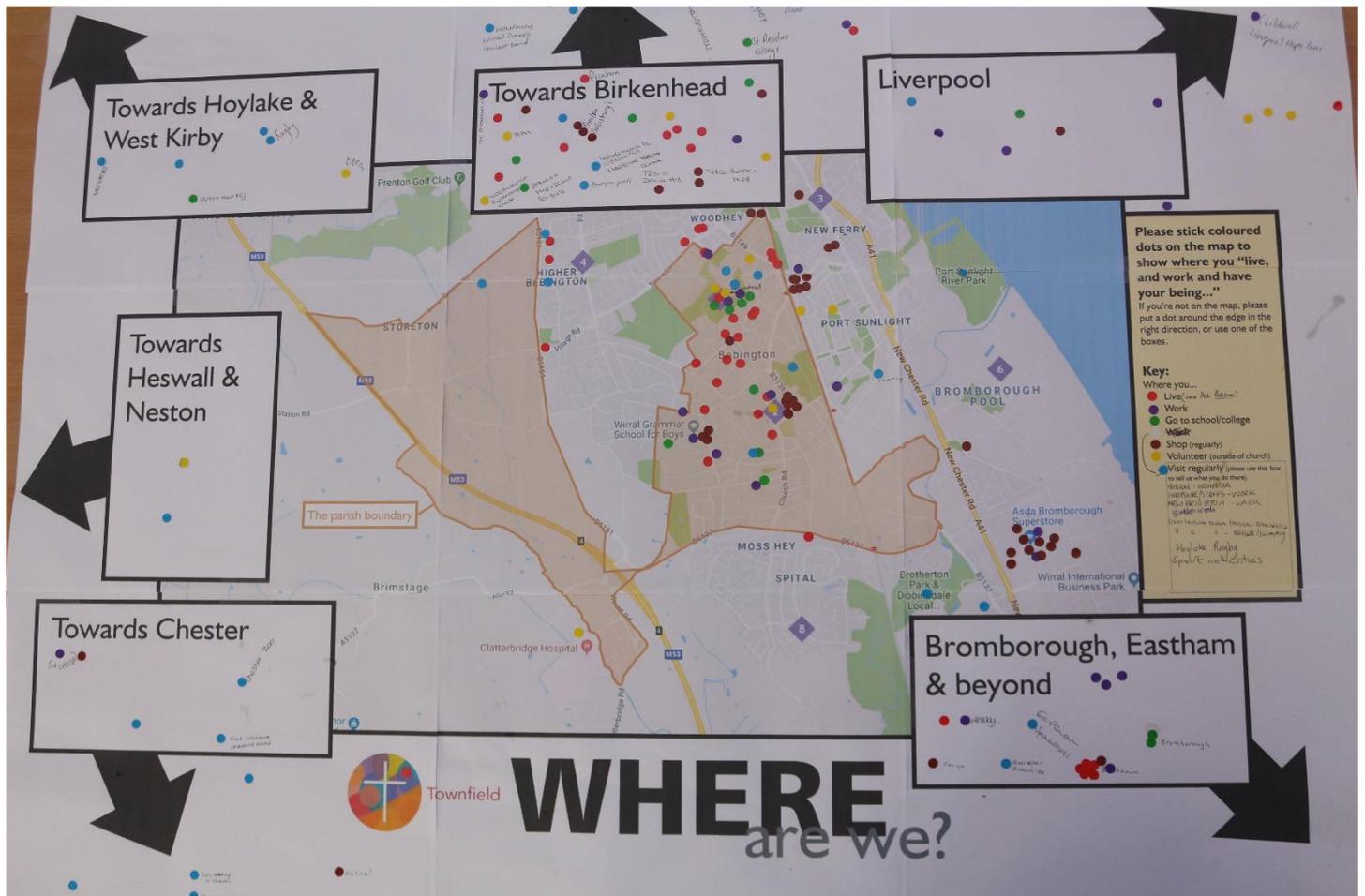
### What made you stay at Townfield after your first few visits?



Personal contacts (or “being family” to use the language of the mission statement) not only brought most people to Townfield in the first place, but they also kept most people coming back (see the orange bars above – 93 responses). Getting closer to God through teaching and worship (“being Christ-Centred”) was also important (see the green bars – 57 responses), and mission (“sharing God’s love”) motivates quite a lot of us to stay at Townfield (see the red bars – 32 responses).

# WHERE are we?

We asked everyone to mark where they live (red dots), work (purple), go to school/college (green), shop (brown), volunteer (yellow) and 'other' (blue) on a map of the parish (and beyond). Here are the results...



The results show that there are no obvious clusters of where we live, work, or hang out (apart from where we shop). A few things are noticeable:

- More people who marked the map live outside of the parish (26 dots) than in it (20 dots)
- Those of us who live in the parish are spread right across it, rather than being concentrated at the Townfield end (and those living outside the parish are also spread across a wide area).
- The 'other' things which we do are almost all musical or sporting activities, spread across Wirral and into Liverpool and towards Chester
- Not many of us work in the parish



Townfield

# WHAT are we?

We asked people to fill in surveys for all the groups they are involved in, saying which part of the mission statement they think the group/activity is aiming to meet, and whether it could do things differently to meet this aim more effectively. The responses have been collected by group or activity.

Some things to note:

- Where a question or category got no responses, it has been greyed out.
- If a category emerged as the majority view, it is highlighted as bold text.
- Some of the responses to the question *“How could this group or activity fulfil the mission statement more effectively”* could probably be described as an ambition, rather than a suggestion about how the ambition might be achieved.

## Group/activity: Sunday services

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

**Being Christ Centred: 71%**

Being Family: 24%

Sharing God's love: 6%

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Need to grow the 'up front' leadership team
- Seems to naturally and effectively be developing in positive and encouraging ways
- “music” (no further detail to say how or why this might be developed)
- Standard of teaching is very important - “currently excellent”
- Continue in current direction

## Group/activity: Children's Sunday groups

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred: 30%

**Being Family: 50%**

Sharing God's love: 20%

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- “brilliant”
- More adults involved in the teaching
- Would be good to have more children who don't attend church regularly (no suggestions how we might achieve this though)
- “Bring home blessings and prayers each week”
- “Need to show children that they are cared for”
- More drama so children can understand
- More role-playing drama

**Group/activity: Youth Sunday groups** (small sample – 2 responses)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred: 50%

Being Family:

Sharing God's love: 50%

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Better ongoing link to church for 16-18's (older than the Sunday morning provision)
- More drama

**Group/activity: Youth groups during the week** (small sample – 2 responses)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

Being Family: 50%

Sharing God's love: 50%

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- "continued encouragement of youth"

**Group/activity: Little Fishes** (1 response)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

Being Family:

**Sharing God's love: 100%**

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Grow team of helpers to make most of natural opportunity to come alongside families

**Group/activity: Messy Church**

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

Being Family: 9%

**Sharing God's love: 90%**

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Think how we can do more for parents – advice from Messy Church network?
- Encourage Messy attenders to be involved beyond Messy Church – possibly some 'going deeper' sessions to move beyond 'sharing God's love' to 'being Christ centred'.
- "It does it brilliantly"
- Use a wireless microphone for the 'talk' so can engage with the children more easily (i.e. get in among them)

**Group/activity: house group/ study group**

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

**Being Christ Centred: 50%**

Being Family: 36%

Sharing God's love:14%

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Meet more regularly (to be 'family') X2
- Bible study (to be Christ centred)
- "I think maybe I should be preparing more thoroughly"
- Encourage more to be in a home group (to be 'family')

Should the group be fulfilling a *different* part of the mission statement?

- One person thought their group is currently about being 'Christ centred', but should be about being 'family'

**Group/activity: prayer breakfast**

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred: 25%

**Being Family: 75%**

Sharing God's love:

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- More people joining in (to be 'family')

**Group/activity: Men's football** (just 1 response)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

**Being Family: 100%**

Sharing God's love:

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Shouldn't be 'sharing God's love' *instead* of being 'family', but noted that there is an opportunity with non-church people who attend.

**Group/activity: 'Fellship'** (just 2 responses)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

**Being Christ Centred:100%**

Being Family:

Sharing God's love:

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- More men involved
- More *Townfield* men involved

**Group/activity: men's mountains group** (just 1 response)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

**Being Family: 100%**

Sharing God's love:

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Invite wider family
- Explore communication options

**Group/activity: Women's' Fellowship** (just 1 response)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

Being Family:

**Sharing God's love: 100%**

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

**Group/activity: Ladies' social** (just 3 responses)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

**Being Family: 66%**

Sharing God's love: 33%

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

**Group/activity: Women's' prayer breakfast** (just 2 responses)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

**Being Family: 100%**

Sharing God's love:

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Encourage more to join X2

**Group/activity: Toast Club** (just 3 responses)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

Being Family: 33%

**Sharing God's love: 66%**

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

**Group/activity: Holiday Club** (just 1 response)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

Being Family:

**Sharing God's love: 100%**

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- More non-church families involved

**Group/activity: Music** (just 1 response)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

**Being Christ Centred: 100%**

Being Family:

Sharing God's love:

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

- Grow the number of those involved
- Involve more young people
- Include more songs for children

**Group/activity: Welcome team** (on a Sunday)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred:

**Being Family: 100%**

Sharing God's love:

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

**Group/activity: Tea and coffee on a Sunday** (just 2 responses)

Which part of the mission statement do you think it is meeting?

Being Christ Centred: 25%

**Being Family: 50%**

Sharing God's love: 25%

How could the group/activity fulfil its mission more effectively?

# WHAT/WHO/WHERE

could we be?

There was also an opportunity to graffiti some ideas for future directions, as starters for thinking. These ideas should, of course, be thought about alongside everything else we found at the lunches.

A list of the ideas written down:

- All age/ family walks, activities & trips (X6)
- Be seen more in the community (X2)
- A mature book club
- Church socials (X2)
- “Digging less deeper”
- Build up the music team
- Clubs and camps for teenagers
- More discussions about putting faith in action (eg food bank, support for refugees and asylum seekers)
- Football
- Playing outside after services
- Support for families
- “Monster party”
- Parenting course?
- Church outings
- Movie nights
- International evenings
- BBQs (X4)
- “first mince pie of Christmas” (advent event)
- “Can’t get to housegroups” (someone else added comment “Mums?”)
- Barn dance
- More women’s socials
- Something for those on their own
- Panto

# Focus shaping lunch 3 summary

(22 April 2018)

At this final lunch we moved our focus to the future, and asked small groups to dream dreams about how we, as a church, might be more *Christ-Centred*, more like *family*, or more effective at *sharing God's love*. Each group came up with an idea, which was then developed and expanded by a second group, and then a third group developed this idea even further.

## Idea 1

**Original idea, aiming to build 'Family':** "More church/family events (e.g. meet at Thurstaston for a picnic etc.). Invite people who may not have been to church for a while, or may have missed the newsletter.

**Development of the idea by the first group:** Do these events quarterly, to match the season, possibly Sunday afternoons (summer: picnic, BBQ, sports. Winter: indoor games, board games)

**Development of the idea by the second group:** Have a planning team with organisational skills, a friendship tea, for welcoming, plus welcome cards and newsletter of coming events.

## Idea 2

**Original idea, aiming to 'share God's love':** Have a youth club (not youth fellowship), a safe space, with games & activities.

*NOTE: this sounds very like the Friday night group we already run jointly with St Andrew's. Does this suggest that we need to communicate better what we're already doing?*

**Development of the idea by the first group:** difficult to have large equipment at the school, suggest board games night instead.

**Development of the idea by the second group:** develop into games and quiz nights, e.g. 'play your cards right' or 'pointless'

## Idea 3

**Original idea, aiming to build 'family':** Church based family events, including friends & neighbours

**Development of the idea by the first group:** annual nativity and/or pantomime in school hall, Passover meal, church organised walk.

**Development of the idea by the second group:** leaders to organise events catering for different age groups and their abilities

## Idea 4

**Original idea, aiming to build 'family':** pair a younger family with an 'older' person/couple to try and bridge generation gaps. Makes sure everyone is cared for, and allows difficulties to be shared.

**Development of the idea by the first group:** consider practicalities of how to pair people: age brackets? By location? By friendship groups? What would the pairing involve - purely social, or prayer support? Could the pairs be mixed up/rotates every 1 or 2 years.

**Development of the idea by the second group:** Suggest pairings done randomly from people who have opted into the scheme (names from two hats – one with 'older' and one with 'younger' people).

## Idea 5

**Original idea, aiming to build 'family':** Social event to get to know others and invite others. E.g. quiz night, dance, food night, wine tasting, which don't make people feel pressure to come to Townfield.

**Development of the idea by the first group:** Good as a structured way to get to know people. Offering childcare at the events would allow both parents to come along.

**Development of the idea by the second group:** "please do not leave it to single people to offer to babysit"

## Idea 6

**Original idea, aiming to 'share God's love':** "events to invite non-Christian friends to, including whole families"

**Development of the idea by the first group:** form an events team to make links with the school (event ideas: cheese and wine, quiz night, summer fun day, bonfire night)

**Development of the idea by the second group:** ask for volunteers to be on events team. Make funding available. Liaise with FSA.

## Idea 7

**Original idea, aiming to build 'family':** shared lunches as Sunday mornings (i.e. lunch = the service)

**Development of the idea by the first group:** use the main kitchen. Assign responsibilities to individuals. Offer child care in the same space.

**Development of the idea by the second group:** Need TCC agreement. Costs? Think of ways to provide/cook/store food. Have team to organise creche/activities/crafts/games. Consider who is invited.

## Idea 8

**Original idea, aimed at building 'family':** family activities (picnics, games in the park, walks, "awesome walls")

**Development of the idea by the first group:** limitations of using the outdoor spaces at the school. Consider Mayer Park or Barnston Dale. One event each half term?

**Development of the idea by the second group:** beaches could be another location to consider. How would these involve older people (chess in the park? Scrabble?)

## Idea 9

**Original idea, aiming to build 'family':** a welcome pack

**Development of the idea by the first group:** include information about all our activities, and welcome cards (“how can we help you?”)

**Development of the idea by the second group:** electronic version for those who never read ‘paper’. OR identify people to be “walking, talking welcome pack” – new people can be overwhelmed, but seeing the same person consistently who is guaranteed to talk to you and introduce you to others can be very reassuring.

### Some possible things to think about:

- There is a strong emphasis on suggesting events to build the church family. That’s an important thing to do, but we should be aware of looking for balance across the whole mission statement (there’s nothing in these ideas about developing how we are ‘Christ-centred’, and not much with a direct ‘sharing God’s love’ focus). We shouldn’t be afraid to think of ideas which push us outside of our comfort zones.
- Remembering what we discovered at the second lunch (about ‘friends and family’ being what brought most of us to Townfield, and kept us coming back), should we be wary of jumping too quickly to planning new ‘events’? Events will always have a place, but the research suggests they work as part of a bigger strategy – is that bigger strategy in place yet?