

I have been asked to speak today in relation to the youth development work that is happening within our church and the challenges we are facing in financing that work. Sorry, yes, this is about money.

I am lucky enough to be involved with some of the young people in our congregation, through BB, Duke of Edinburgh Award and as the session member for Ignite. As a result I get to see the great youth work being done in our congregation by Ashley, our Youth Development Worker (YDW) and others.

I will only take a few minutes of your time, I'm going to explain how youth development work fits into our church mission plan, show you a short video of the work that's ongoing, after which I'll explain the financial challenges and then discuss what we can all do about that.

You probably don't remember way back in 2010 when we drafted our congregational Mission Plan, which had 3 interlinked aims:

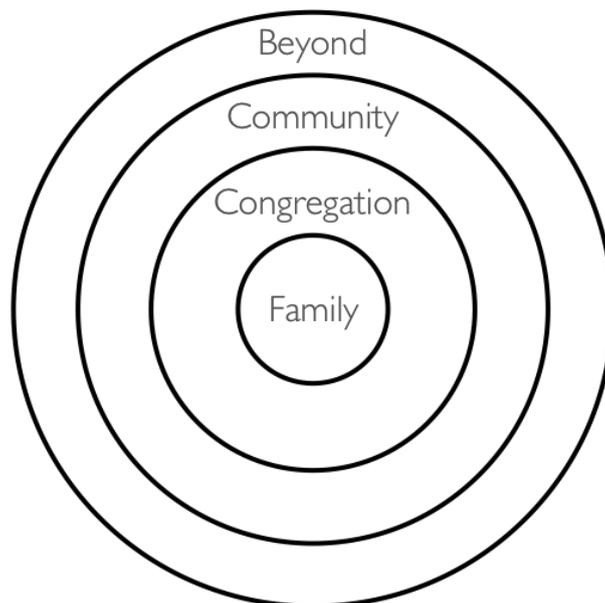
Equipping ourselves for mission

Serving God in our congregation and families

Serving God in our community and beyond

That's reflected in the concentric circles on the screen, which is how Ashley set out how he intended to meet our plan with groups in each of those circles.

As you will see in the video clip coming up, our youth development work is a major part of delivering that mission



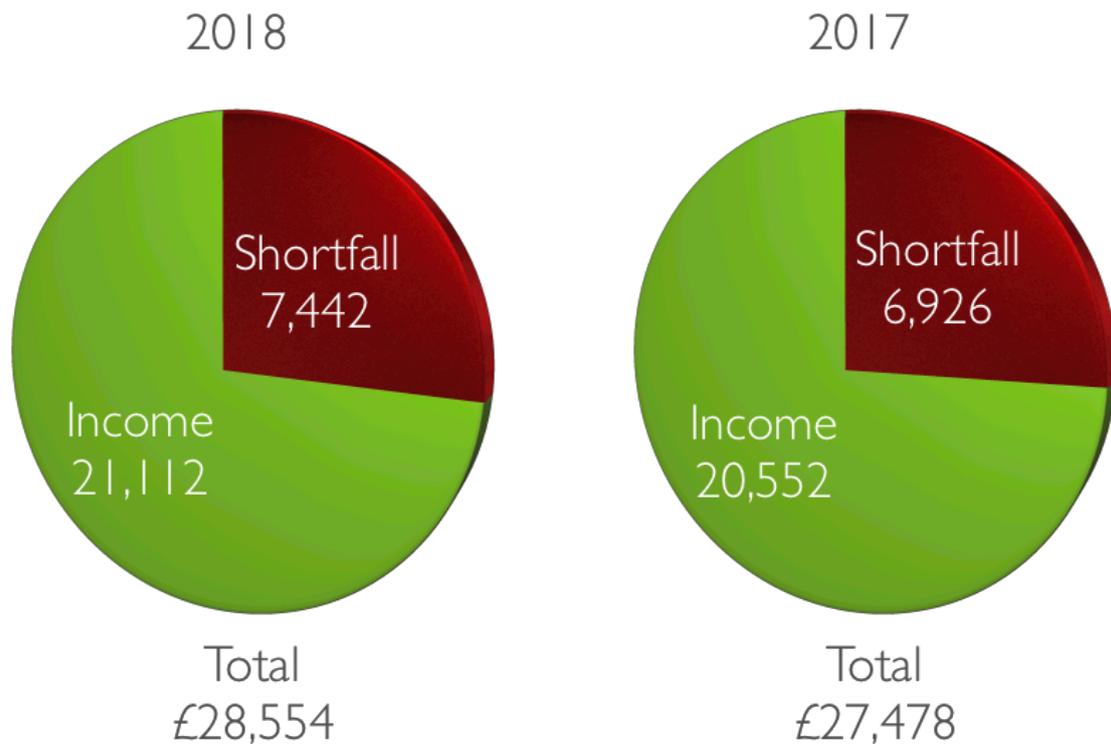
As you can see from the video there is an amazing amount of youth development work going on in our church, in our community, and also internationally.

I want to be really clear that our YDW, Ashley, plays a huge part in leading and coordinating that effort, but Ashley alone cannot do everything. He is supported by, and in turn he supports, the incredible work done by all the volunteers who work in BB, GB, Sunday School, Spark, Ignite, Flame, Summer Scheme, Holiday Bible Club and other events and everyone else I have most likely forgotten to mention.

I also want to be very clear that this isn't something new. In HPC we have been doing this for many years through the efforts of volunteers, but the impact of having a dedicated YDW is to focus and increase those efforts and the results, are we are seeing the benefits of that in our young people and youth groups.

But, getting to the nub of the matter, this success comes at a cost, and it all needs paid for.

Last year, this church invested £28,554 in youth development work, a slight increase on the previous year. To clarify, that is not all Ashley's salary – there are the other normal employment costs and all the expenses associated with our youth development programme.



You may or may not be aware that all youth development work is funded entirely from donations from the congregation. This year donations amounted to £21k, leaving a shortfall of £7500 to be covered from general church funds, a quarter of total costs. This is the second year running that this has happened, with a shortfall of £7000 last year. So, the situation is getting worse and has to be addressed. The impact of funding the shortfall from the general funds is that other areas must suffer and the overall financial health of the church deteriorates. Without more funding we will find it impossible to stand still, never mind build and expand on the foundations we have.

So, what can we all do?

As I said at the start, this is an appeal for support, and I do mean financial support, from the congregation.

I quite deliberately link this to the quite amazing efforts this congregation made to fund our Project 180 development. As I see it, Project 180 represented part of the first phase of our Mission Plan – equipping ourselves for mission. The premises we have give us opportunities to engage with young people, and many others. But providing a YDW is another key part of those preparations - enabling us to reach out from our own families, within our congregational activities, into the local schools and organisations in our community, and further into international mission.

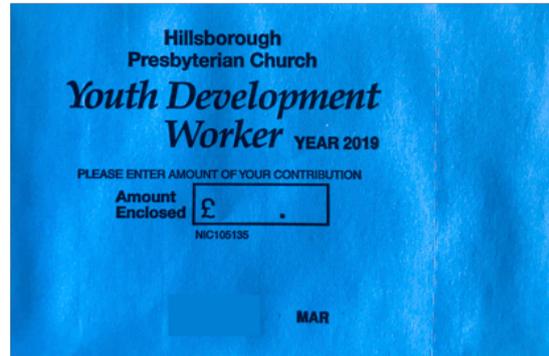
So what can we do?

My ask would be that each member of the congregation prayerfully considers their giving to the YDW funds, either through the blue YDW envelopes or preferably through direct debit giving using the forms provided today.

Direct Debit



FWO Envelopes



I want to be very clear that this is not an appeal only to the parents in the congregation. We all, as a church family, benefit from the efforts of our YDW. As a church family during each baptism we witness, we recognise and accept our responsibility to support and invest in the Christian development of our young people.

All of us gave generously to Project 180 and thankfully that commitment ended in June last year, ahead of schedule. My wish is that each of us would continue what Project 180 started, and consider giving even a small part of what we regularly donated to Project 180 to support youth development work in this church. This will enable it to grow and deliver even greater results, and ensure these wonderful premises are filled for another generation. Thank you