



## **Together4Bristol / Churches Together in Greater Bristol: Annual Report 2021**

### **1. Introduction**

This has been a very busy and exciting year for [Together4Bristol](#) / Churches Together in Greater Bristol (T4B), which is a “unity for mission movement” across the Bristol region. There is so much happening, that it is impossible to mention it all. Below are some highlights, to give a flavour of what God is doing!

### **2. Churches**

a) Churches Together in England (CTE) over has [50 denominations](#) which are full members. We have had several Zoom calls with them across England during the COVID-19 crisis and an in-person national conference.

b) Carmen Carrol is the [Keyboard Trust](#) networker, to help connect more than 40 black-led churches and has written a separate report. She holds Zoom events such as: “Racism and the Church”, which has led to a [Facebook group](#) with nearly 200 members, and [Refuelling for Church and Faith Leaders](#).

T4B also links with about 20 Churches Together (CT) groups (or similar).

c) Many churches and CT groups are involved in missional activities (see 4) below including through [The Noise 2021](#), with over 400 volunteers serving through practical projects over the May Bank Holiday weekend. Also the [Noise 365](#) was launched, showing God's love in practical ways every day of the year

### **3. Prayer**

a) Sheena Tranter and Derick Mulubwa co-ordinate T4B's prayer networks ([Arise Bristol!](#)) across the Bristol region. There has been regular prayer during the COVID-19 crisis, including on WhatsApp and on the hills surrounding Bristol. A “Praise and Prayer Bulletin” is produced three times a year.

b) Silas Crawley, Fatima Sibanda and Lee Barnes led three prayer morning Zooms over the year for church leaders, with between 40 and 70 gathered, with the Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees. Silas and Annie Crawley also lead [One Church, One Day](#), including 30 days of continual prayer, leading up to the Mayoral Election in May, with 54 churches praying for the peace of our city.

c) There are also regular prayer gatherings (on Zoom and now occasionally in person) for the Whole of Life, the [Arts](#), [Business](#), [Education](#), [Health](#), and [Family](#) spheres. The prayer WhatsApp group prays for the churches and a different sphere of life each day.

### **4. Whole of Life**

a) There have been gatherings for Christians in the different spheres of life. These spheres are Sport, Health, Education, Family, Politics and Social Action (Christian Action Bristol, or CAB), Arts, Media, and Business and Workplace.

- b) The election of Marvin Rees as Mayor of Bristol has opened the door for much greater engagement with the council by the Christian community, led by the [Politics and Social Action](#) sphere, called [Christian Action Bristol](#) (CAB), with Andy Street as chair. At a recent Zoom gathering of the City Office, 40 out of 400 participants were from the Christian community. CAB facilitates 14 networks of social action, such as Debt Advice, the Environment, Food Poverty, Homelessness and Housing, Prison Ministry and Ex-offenders and Vulnerable / Working Women.
- c) CAB has led the Christian community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and especially food poverty, emergency fostering and other issues. There have been regular Zoom meetings with about 40 church leaders. The response to food poverty was extraordinary, reaching tens of thousands of families and vulnerable people, as [this film](#) shows.
- d) CAB is helping lead the Christian community's contribution to the [Recovery and Renewal](#) of Bristol, emerging from the pandemic, over the next 3 to 5 years.
- e) There was a summer gathering, [Building Bristol as a City of Hope](#), with over 70 church, prayer and sphere leaders, including the [Presidents](#). There was follow-up work (including at the AGM) on the emerging Christian Community Vision to 2050, to help Bristol move away from being a tale of two cities and to help engage with City Office's [One City Plan](#) to 2050.
- f) CAB has helped the Christian community to make several "Offers and Asks" to City Office, including:  
The [Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter](#) which had a grant to cover the extra B&B costs this year and hundreds of volunteers from 14 churches.
- g) [Christians Against Poverty](#), which provides debt advice in Children's Centres and in South Bristol.
- h) The [Churches City Fund](#), raised over £130k in 2020 to help alleviate food poverty during the COVID-19 crisis. In 2021, it is raising donations for a sustainable supply of food for the network of Foodbanks across the city and also for the work of [Transforming Lives for Good](#) (TLG) to provide mentors in schools for vulnerable pupils.
- i) The [Arts](#) sphere, or [Kingdom Creatives](#) (facilitated by Erica Bebb), has connected and mentored about 50 creatives, including with regular Zoom calls with about 20 participating. The [Bristol Passion Play](#), has started preparations for the provision of the people and [funds](#) needed, for a wonderful procession in the streets of Bristol, on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.
- j) The [Business and Workplace](#) sphere (facilitated by Jez Sweetland and Tim Simpson as prayer co-ordinator) has had fortnightly prayer. There are about 20 Christian Workplace Groups, supported by a WhatsApp group and monthly Zoom calls. Jez and the [Bristol Housing Festival](#) team, had a virtual [EXPO 2021](#) in October, with 100s of people attending and over 70 speakers.
- k) The [Education](#) sphere (facilitated by Jane Gillis) works closely with Bristol Schools Connection and other organisations and prays regularly for several Christians involved in key positions in Education across Bristol. They work with CAB and the council, to help churches connect with [Transforming Lives for Good](#) (TLG) to provide mentors in deprived schools (about 10 so far).

l) The [Family](#) sphere (called Love Family) is co-facilitated by Jane Auld and Sarah Abell. It links closely with the National Parenting Initiative (NPI) and several other charities, including new ones such as Parent Buddies and The Relationship Academy. There is fortnightly prayer and NPI's parenting courses have gone online and on Youtube. Working with CAB, [Home for Good](#), found over 60 Christian couples, in response to the council's request for emergency fostering (see [this film](#)). Jane Auld is retiring in February 2022, after leading the sphere and NPI, in a pioneering and inspiring way.

m) The [Health](#) sphere (co-facilitated by Clare Fleming and Sheena Tranter) have weekly Zooms for healing and for a Healing Centre Project (with about 40 people). Healing Rooms take place weekly.

n) The [Sport](#) sphere (co-facilitated by Akeel Yousaf) links several Sport charities across the city, such as World Sport Ministries, Christians in Sport and Christian Surfers UK, with occasional prayer gatherings.

o) Also, CTGB partners with a couple of Projects, called Local Friends (social prescribing, with Paul Hazelden) and Dementia Awareness in Faith Communities (Adam Biddlestone).

## **5. [Together4Bristol](#)**

a) Roger Allen stopped in November 2021, as the Enabler of Mission and Unity (ten hours a week), to focus on the spheres work. His successor is Ian Taylor, who starts in December 2021.

b) T4B connects with [Gather](#), which links about 140 “unity for mission movements” across the UK. There are Zooms with Gather and Movement Day (linking to cities globally) during the pandemic.

c) The [Together4Bristol](#) website was designed by Mark Orriss and was built and is updated by Adam Hudson.

d) T4B partners with over a [dozen denominations and networks](#).

e) T4B is accountable to eight senior regional Church Leaders or Presidents and facilitates lunches for them twice a year. The Presidents are Bishop Renford Brown (Bristol Black Churches Council), Rev Nigel Coles (Baptist), Bishop Vivienne Faull (Church of England), Majors Ian and Jean Harris (Salvation Army), Bishop Declan Lang (Catholic), Rev Dr Jonathan Pye (Methodist), Rob Scott-Cook (Celebration) and Rev Ruth Whitehead (URC).

f) The Trustees and enabling group consist of representatives from the historic denominations as well as from the newer and Black churches: the Trustees are Eric Aidoo (Chair, Baptist), Roger Allen (Celebration: from November 2021), Chris Dobson (Vice-chair, Diocese of Bristol), Carlotta Kromsky (Diocese of Clifton), Derick Mulubwa (T4B Prayer networks), Stephen Newell (URC), Mark Sellers (Salvation Army), Fatima Sibanda (RCCofG), Sheena Tranter (T4B prayer and sphere networks).

The following are members of the Enabling group, but not Trustees: Chris Bond (Congregational), Carmen Carroll (Keyboard), Patsy Holdsworth (Moravian), Alan Paginton (Treasurer), Chris Willmore (Quakers), Osien Sibanda (RCCofG) and Jayne Webb (Methodist).

Many thanks to them all, especially Alison Paginton, who stopped as Treasurer after many

years. The AGM was held on 25 November 2021, with over 40 on a Zoom call, including discussion the Christian Community Vision to 2050.

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