

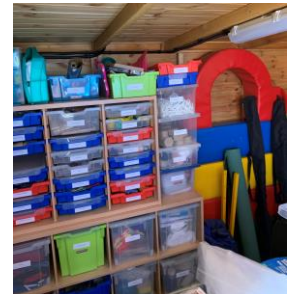


# The Methodist Church

## Cornerstone House

### Affirming the inclusivity of a church on a housing estate with many families with low incomes

Cornerstone House is a community and worship space that sits in the heart of the Salisbury Village housing estate in Hatfield. There are no other churches on the estate and it is the only Christian presence. There is a community room, toilet, conservatory, outside space and storage shed.



## Summary

### Regular activities

#### *Journey Light*

A fresh expression of church, with informal worship and a time of reflection.

#### *Craft café and Board game café*

After school café for children to attend with a parent or childminder, with crafts and games.

#### *Cuppa'N'Natta*

A chance for conversation and fellowship on a weekday morning.



#### *Trails on the estate*

At Christmas and Halloween, residents put pictures in their windows for children to find in order to complete the 'hunt' and gain prizes. At Easter, there was an Easter Egg hunt on the playground, with letters on the eggs spelling 'Jesus is Risen'. At Christmas, a Posada depicting Mary, Joseph and a donkey also trailed around the estate, with families inviting them in to provide hospitality.

#### *Halloween House of Light*

At Halloween, Cornerstone House was lit up as a House of Light, with crafts and refreshments, to provide residents and children with an alternative to trick

### Other events



---

Cornerstone House was created using rooms that belong to the Manse. Access is via a separate gate and door from the rest of the Manse. There is a keypad to access the gate and door, meaning the space can be accessed without a key to the Manse, which is kept separate by locked gates and doors.

## Process



Cornerstone House receives an annual donation from St Albans & Welwyn circuit, as part of their outreach. Cornerstone House ask for donations but don't take a collection as standard at their events. They also apply for grants to cover the costs of their non-missional community activities. As a result, there is no requirement for Cornerstone House events and worship to be self-funding. This means the members of the community know there will be a continuing Christian project within their community, regardless of the financial status of their community.

---

## A place for discipleship



Cornerstone House runs community activities but also Christian worship and opportunities for spiritual reflection.

Cornerstone House meets people where they are and provides a path to discipleship, which has led to baptism and confirmation into the Methodist Church.

---



---

# At the heart of the community



Cornerstone House is centrally located within the estate. Events are run on the playgrounds and there are trails around the estate, including people's homes. Events are held in the midst of the community.

The minister at Cornerstone House walks the community to get to know people and become known. Leaflets are given out and people who attend a group or event are invited to others. Alongside word of mouth, social media is used to advertise events, via a Facebook group.

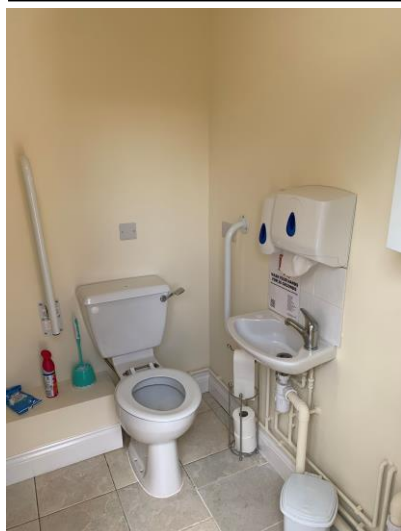
Cornerstone House hosted a party in the park and also a tree-planting ceremony, to celebrate the Queen's 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee.



Cornerstone House is situated on an estate with a lot of social housing and students but also has families with children in private schools. The events at Cornerstone House are open to all. It is an inclusive project, not something 'done for' or 'done to' low-income families.

## Inclusive

There is disability access and the toilet is disability-friendly.



Cornerstone House is a safe space for all, including those who are vulnerable. Safeguarding procedures are central to how Cornerstone House runs. A register of attendance is kept at all events. There are clear boundaries to each role. The door and gate from the project to the Manse are locked.

All are welcome at Cornerstone House, including non-Christians, at all events.

---

Cornerstone House provides a location for community activities on an estate that has no community hall (except one run by the school and thus with very limited accessibility) or library. There is an after-school cafe, which is important for all parents, a child minder, and especially parents on night shifts. Food is provided at all events: a crucial need for some families.

Cornerstone House is located centrally within a housing estate. People can walk to it. There is no requirement for people to drive or take public transport.

# Cares for the whole person and community, not just people's spiritual needs



Cornerstone House invites local councillors to come and speak with residents. They do not run political campaigns on behalf of local people but provide a space where councillors and residents can work together to address material concerns, such as rubbish, university students and noise on the estate.

During lockdown, Cornerstone House delivered craft packs to families on the estate, providing activities for children that were a lifeline to families.

## The Methodist Church affirms Cornerstone House because it is:

### ❖ Safe

- There are thorough safeguarding procedures

### ❖ Inclusive

- Intentional steps are taken to be inclusive to all, including those who are disabled

### ❖ Serves people, meeting their needs

- Recognises the needs of people within the community and puts on events to meet those needs

### ❖ At the heart of its community

- Events within and amongst the community
- Communicates with people in ways that works for the community

### ❖ Provides space for discipleship

- Fresh expressions worship events that are designed to enable those in the community to reflect spiritually, with a pathway to membership of the Methodist Church

### ❖ Can meet the needs of a low income community without needing to be self-funding or becoming a charity project rather than a church

- All events are open to all in the community and not solely aimed at those on low incomes
- Partially-funded by the Circuit and Community Grants

❖ **A commitment to further becoming more inclusive**

- Repeatedly reaching out to residents to invite them, open conversations and identify the needs of different groups of people in the community