

THE HOPE TRUST OXFORD PRAYER LETTER

An update from our various ministry partners



And so it is nearly Christmas again! It seems this year has flown by at the trust. In the past months, we have gratefully welcomed a new trustee in Doug Watson, and a new administrator in Nick Breton. We thank the Lord for the energy, insight, and skills that both men have brought to the team. Administration may seem very mundane (and indeed it is), but as the apostles themselves realised in Acts 6, there is a good deal of dedicated attention, prayer, and practical consideration needed to sustain mercy ministries faithfully. We are so grateful for those joining us as we work to use the Lord's gifts well for our clients and community.

Most of us will be looking forward to Christmas - and rightly so! There is much to celebrate: each twinkle light in the growing darkness of winter reminds us of the light of Christ in a dark world. However, at the Hope Trust, we are also aware of what literal darkness and cold will mean for our CAP clients this year: either higher bills, less food, or the prospect of no heating. We are also aware of what Christmas might mean to the families in our city who are struggling or vulnerable, and particularly to all the children in care. This might be a very hard season for them too, as they see a world around them celebrating families, comfort, and hope when they don't have any of their own.

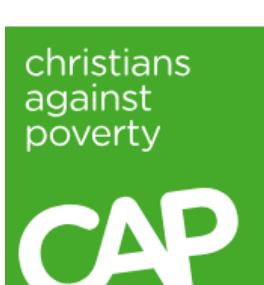
I am in awe of our CAP staff and our church and Safe Families partners who work on the frontlines of these ministries: it takes so much courage to enter into broken situations and walk with hurting people, knowing that you can't fix all their problems. But we do believe - deep in our souls - that we have a Saviour who can fix broken people and change hopeless situations. And it is this hope that we long to share in Oxford.

We thank you all for partnering with us in prayer as we seek to share this hope. We particularly thank all those who have given so generously to us, individually, through church donations, and through the recent Harvest Offering at Ebbe's Central. Please keep praying that we would use these gifts wisely and in line with the Lord's will.

In Christ,
Georgina Bartlett
 Chair of Trustees, The Hope Trust Oxford



CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY (CAP)



As we enter the winter months, we have much to thank God for, and much to pray for. We are half way through a Life Skills course, and have had a variety of people from interesting backgrounds and situations join the group. This has led to a bit of an unsettled start, with some inconsistent attendance. However the Lord has been answering our prayers, and we had a great re-start after the half term break with good attendance, and a feeling of camaraderie and community developing amongst the group. The inconsistent attendance meant we were unexpectedly able to do a couple of sessions on forgiveness, going through the parable of the Unforgiving Servant from Matthew, which was a great opportunity to talk about the abundant grace God has shown us, and led to some interesting discussions.

We ran a CAP Money Coaching group at St Ebbe's in the spring. For some, it was a helpful follow-on from Life Skills, enabling them to go deeper into the budgeting and money management side of what they had started in Life Skills. For others, it was their first time doing one of our CAP courses, and we were grateful for the opportunity to walk

alongside them as they started to think about managing their money.

We praise God that the move of the CAP Community Café from Grace Church Cowley to St Ebbe's Central went smoothly, and that the regulars have continued to come along to the new location. We have some new regulars as well, including a couple of women, which is an answer to prayer. We have introduced a hot cooked meal once a month which has proved popular. A highlight of the summer was a joint picnic in the St Ebbe's church garden with the Oxford Churches CAP debt centre, their clients and volunteers, and our clients, group members and volunteers. It was a relaxed, joyful occasion, and a beautiful reminder of our unity in Christ.

We continue to be busy on the Debt Help side of the work. At the time of writing, we are working to capacity and are fully booked for the next couple of months. We praise God that people are hearing of the help available. Wonderfully we had two clients go debt free recently! The coming months are a time of increasing pressure and worry for many of our clients and group members, with the extra costs of heating their homes through the winter, and the spending pressures they feel around Christmas, particularly for those with children. We pray that they would have their needs met and that ultimately, they would come to know the lasting joy and peace of Jesus. We pray that the hampers we give to each client for Christmas would give them a small glimpse of the love and care God has for them.

Prayer points:

- Pray for the remainder of our Life Skills course, that members would be able to take tangible steps towards achieving their goals, and that they would go into the Christmas season more confident about their ability to live well on a tight budget. Pray particularly for Andy Turnbull giving his testimony during our final celebration – that it would open the door to continued spiritual interest and engagement from the members, and that the members would be drawn to the beauty, grace and mercy of Christ.
- Pray for the opportunity to have more gospel conversations at CAP Café. Praise God for answering our prayers for more volunteers who can engage in conversation with participants. Pray the conversations might bear fruit.
- Pray for clients facing a difficult season of increased bills and expenses. Pray for provision and support for their needs. Pray that they might feel supported by the body of Christ, that they might come along to some of the Christmas events, feel warmly welcomed into church, and come to know the Prince of Peace for themselves.



Kirsten Beavan
CAP Debt Centre Manager

SAFE FAMILIES – hear an update on our partnership with Safe Families at our Prayer Supper in **The Pennyfarthing** on **Monday 10th November @ 7.15pm (all welcome!)**. The work is expanding in Oxford and they need more volunteers from our churches!

FINALLY - HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We're looking for volunteer befrienders, prayer team members and life skills volunteers. If you would like to find out more, or to be involved in the work of the Hope Trust Oxford, please contact info@thehopetrustoxford.org, or Scan the QR code if you would like Prayer Updates and event invitations to be delivered to your inbox.

