



Official Opening Programme

Saturday 4th May 2019 at 2.30pm
Service led by Rev. Helen Kirk
Superintendent Minister
Opener: Mrs Pauline Latham



The WELCOME Space



PURPOSE of the Church Welcome Project:

“To provide the rapidly growing Aylesbury town centre with an attractive, accessible, meeting place, able to offer a warm welcome, simple refreshment and a listening ear.”

The WELCOME Space Official Opening

ORDER OF SERVICE led by Rev. Helen Kirk

Welcome

Opening prayer

Hymn: 409 Let us build a house

The story so far and vision for the future

Reading: Mark 5. 25-34: Mrs Pat Martin Seehusen

Commissioning of Listeners

Prayers

Thanks: Peter Green

Opener's remarks: Mrs Pauline Latham

Hymn: 611 Brother, sister, let me serve you

Blessing

Procession to The WELCOME Space

Unveiling of plaque: Mrs Pauline Latham

In the hall afterwards:

Cutting of Celebration Cake

Refreshments

ALL ARE WELCOME

A message from Rev. Helen Cameron, Chair of the Northants District

I am sorry that I can't be with you today as you formally open and celebrate the Welcome Space. I want to encourage you in all that you will do to provide a generous and warm hospitality to those who use it and an attentive listening to those who enter. The District is proud of your hard work, faithful witness and commitment to make this new work possible. I can't be with you today but I will continue to hold you, and this work, in my prayers.

The CONTEXT of the Church Welcome Project

26,800 new homes are planned in the Aylesbury Vale between 2013-2033.

- Many cuts in local budgets have meant that the opportunity for social interaction becomes ever more difficult for those in need.
- According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), In 2013, the number of people who felt lonely some or most of the time were:
 - 29% of those who live alone
 - 45% of those restricted by health or disability and
 - 63% of those who had been widowed.

The VISION of the Church Welcome Project

In the context of the needs of today, it is our vision to create a welcoming space that offers:

- A place of belonging for all but especially those in the community who struggle to belong.
- An extension of our community centre offering hospitality and engagement with our user groups.
- Internet access enabling people to be included in a digital world and offering support where needed to access information.
- An opportunity to share simple refreshment, and when feasible, reasonably priced meals, for those who are on their own or struggling financially, emotionally, physically or mentally.
- A welcoming, friendly, supportive, non-judgemental listening ethos.

The AIMS of the Church Welcome Project

1. To refurbish our church entrance and vestibule to match the standards of our community centre.
2. To continue to open our volunteer-run coffee bar six mornings per week.
3. To offer a variety of Fairtrade drinks of coffees and teas, plus cakes and other snacks at reasonable prices.
4. To appoint a volunteer part-time Outreach Co-ordinator to identify local needs, especially of the lonely and disadvantaged.
5. To initiate, partner, enable and encourage activities that meet these needs.
6. To encourage the afternoon and evening use of the space by these special interest groups.
7. To recruit, train and promote the service of Listeners, to help people who need a sympathetic ear.

Our THANKS go to...

OUR FUNDERS

- The Vale of Aylesbury Circuit, Northampton District and Connexional funds of the Methodist Church for funding over half of the cost
- WREN and Allchurches Trust for their generous grants and support
- The members and friends of this church for their unstinted giving of their time, talents and money through fund-raising and direct giving.

OUR CONTRACTORS

- Ian Hambly of HFP Architects for the original plans
- Phillip Eades of Andrews Eades, chartered surveyors, our Project Manager
- Jet Construction of Milton Keynes, our main contractors
- Sub-contractors:
 - Nelson Catering Equipment for the Welcome Space kitchen
 - Frameless Glass Curtains for the folding glass screen and doors
 - Assay Abloy for our automatic entrance doors
 - Signum Signs for our internal and coffee shop signage
 - Clearly Secure for our glass manifestations
 - M. R. Barrett Electrical for electrical work and testing.

OUR PROJECT TEAM

- The late Brian Latham, our first project champion and leader
- Paul Ingram, who took on Brian's leadership role
- Lynn Bernstone, Rosemarie Bucknell, Peter Green, Rev. Helen Kirk, Gill Marks, Dave Rogers, Chris Sara and Jackie Simpson-Tyda

Introducing our WELCOME Listeners

In today's busy, noisy world, some people feel they have no one who really listens to them. We therefore aim to provide a welcoming safe place to anyone over 18 who has something they want to talk about. Trained listeners can help people to find their own way forward. So, 20 volunteers from the church have begun their Listener Training to help get our ears open for those who need them.

Research shows that people who are listened to feel respected, valued, loved, significant, empowered, helped and affirmed. We look forward to setting up and developing this valuable service for people of all faiths and none, who live in and around Aylesbury.