



Final Review

The Vision

Hope Bristol 2018 was a City wide mission (3rd – 7th April) aimed at engaging Christians in outreach and community volunteering projects across Bristol. This event brought together 72 churches from across Bristol to work alongside Müllers, Soul Survivor and Bristol Noise. Hope Bristol 2018 had three specific aims:

- 1) Serve the local communities of Bristol, showing God's love in practical ways and sharing the good news of Jesus.
- 2) Build unity within the churches that leads to action
- 3) Inspire life-long mission in our local volunteers and the youth brought through Soul Survivor

This report will tell the story of how these aims were met, and what lessons we have learnt for the future. We will also outline the long-term vision for what happens next.

"I was so proud of the young people who took time out of their Easter holiday to love and serve communities in Bristol. I was both humbled and encouraged by their witness as they proclaimed Jesus in their words and deeds."

Mike Pilavachi, Founder of Soul Survivor

"It has been amazing to see 1,400 Christians out on the streets of Bristol, bringing hope to vulnerable communities through the good news of Jesus. The unity across generations and denominations has been inspiring. We're grateful to all those who have served our city so sacrificially."

Tim Dobson, Co-Chair of Hope Bristol 2018



Serving Communities across Bristol



A key aim of Hope Bristol 2018 was to serve Bristol in ways that made sense for each local community. To ensure this was the case, we held networking meetings in 12 different areas to hear from local people about how Hope Bristol could support them. We then received invitations to help run events in these areas and referrals for projects that could practically support people in that neighbourhood. This allowed us to work in a sustainable and effective manner, as well as ensuring we were supporting the most vulnerable people.

During the week, we focussed on a different area of Bristol on each day; North Bristol on Wednesday, South Bristol on Thursday and East/Central Bristol on Friday. These projects ranged from painting St Pauls' Adventure Playground, litter picking in Hengrove Park to planting gardens in St George.

We also served Bristol throughout the week with events and clubs. The highlight of the week for many were the 15 family fun days that took place across the city. These included inflatables, live music, BBQs, prayer tents, face painting – anything that would show some love to the community. We also joined with churches to host 10 senior citizen events, 7 kids holiday clubs and 7 youth events. The majority of these events were held in the more deprived parts of the city.

Our hope is that this was a catalyst to seeing the church take a step further in serving their local communities. Whether it is churches remaining involved with Bristol Noise, continuing their events throughout the year or starting something brand new, we hope to see churches across Bristol seizing the opportunity to serve their communities.

I just wanted to email to thank your volunteers so much for the hard work in tidying up our garden on 4th April. So many people have commented that it looks so much neater and we've been so proud to be using our community garden again. The volunteers were so friendly, polite and hardworking, please pass on our thanks.

Jenny Coughlan – Avonmouth Children's Centre

Big THANK YOU to the team that cleaned out the Foodbank warehouse site for us and made the move possible. They did a really wonderful job and we are very grateful - its been transformed from a derelict and rather smelly unloved site to a safe place for storing food and a good place to work in. Great teamwork, amazing results!

Gail Chandler – North Bristol Foodbank

"Thanks to the people who cleared the lane. It looks absolutely wonderful, just what I asked for, and we are absolutely delighted with the job they have done. So many people have said to me "thank you Lynn" so I wanted to pass on that thanks to all the people who got involved that weekend. I am delighted, I really am."

Lynne Haynes – Brentry



Wellspring HLC: "Thank you to Hope Bristol for the awesome work they ploughed through at the Community Allotment! They were an absolute joy to work with and their efforts will bring pleasure to many in the community."

Building Church Unity



Although we can celebrate significant unity across churches in Bristol, we are very aware for the need for this to increase. In particular, we know that there remains a disparity between the resources of churches in the North of Bristol and those in East and South Bristol. A key aim of Hope Bristol 2018 was to foster relationships between churches in different areas and see churches working together with a common purpose.

We were delighted to see significant church involvement across Bristol. 72 churches in the Greater Bristol area participated in the mission, with many joining to run events and help at projects in their local area.

One example of churches working together very well through Hope Bristol 2018 was in the St George area. Here the churches joined together to run events every day, culminating in a family fun day in St George's Park. We are delighted to see this continuing on following the event.

We also saw churches working together across geographical divides in our city. We spent 33% of our time in both South and East Bristol, both areas in which Bristol Noise has had little activity in the past. It was great to be able to link churches and young people from North Bristol with areas very different to those they grew up in. Many of these young people had never been to these areas and found it both challenging and inspiring how different life can be for young people within the same city.

"We had been cutting down thick brambles along a hedge at the park and clearing out masses of rubbish from underneath it. A 11-year-old boy came to the park and said he was amazed as his mum and dad said the brambles had not been cleared in 20 years. He said he was 'gob-smacked' and went up to each of the group and said 'thank you so much'. We were really glad to be a positive influence in one of the toughest parts of Bristol."

Inspiring life-long mission



At the initial Hope Bristol 2018 launch, Mike Pilavachi shared that his hope for the week would be that we “raise up a generation whose hearts are on fire to communicate the Good News to the nation.” Hope Bristol 2018 has always been shaped around trying to find ways to engage young people in mission, not just for one week but for the rest of their lives.

For many of the team organising Hope Bristol this was motivated by personal experience, as they themselves had been affected by similar events in the past. Stewart North says that experiencing mission at Message 2000 was key to the last 17 years he has given to serving Bristol through the Noise. Similarly, our Mission Coordinator, Sam, sought to be involved with Hope Bristol 2018 because he had experienced the life-changing impact being part of a mission like this had on his faith as a teenager. So, whilst this is a hard aim to report on objectively and metrically, we are delighted to hear many similar stories from young people who took part in Hope Bristol.

A key aspect of the event for the 500 young people who took part were the morning meetings which gave a context for Bible teaching, worship and prayer ahead of going out to the streets. These were important times of ‘discipleship’ as we put gave some theology behind mission. Many young people commented that these sessions were key to giving them the confidence to get out to their afternoon projects.

We heard some great stories from young people about how taking part in mission had affected their faith. One young person from St Michaels’ church said, “If this is what the Kingdom looks like, I want to be a part of it!”, whilst a youth worker said: “My highlight of Hope Bristol was seeing my young people step out in faith and confidence this week.” It is impossible to know what long-term impact the week will have upon these young people. What we do know is that hundreds of young people had similar stories, and from our own personal experience these stories can be the start of a life committed to mission.

One aspect of the long-term impact we can measure is whether young people are inspired to continue serving their local communities. We know that the young people from Crossways Church are working with the Diocese of Sheffield to start something similar in

Doncaster. Christchurch Downend have already continued the style of outreach experienced during Hope Bristol by running a Noise event over the May Bank Holiday weekend serving their local school and community. With 'The Noise' having already been taken to Devizes and Lincoln, it has been great to see young people committing to mission in their own communities.

Without doubt the highlight of Hope Bristol 2018 was seeing at least 25 young people make a commitment to follow Jesus. 12 of these young people made this commitment at the morning meetings, with the other 13 being at events lead by youth delegates. At one of the youth events run by young people, we saw 10 young people become Christians. One young person shared her experience:

On Thursday during Hope Bristol, Mike [Pilavachi] asked if people wanted to give their life to Jesus. I took my best friend to the front with me and she and another person prayer for me. It was that easy but for the past day I've just felt amazing, light and at peace! I'm so excited for my journey with God!



Key Lessons Learnt for the Future

How does the North engage with the South of the city?

We have already observed the successes of working in South Bristol throughout Hope Bristol, however this was not without challenges. We were clear from the start that Hope Bristol 2018 was for the whole city. We set aside a full day to work in South Bristol and were always keen to work with churches there, however for most of the process there was an inability for us to connect effectively. The need in South Bristol is obvious but it was difficult for us to communicate clearly with churches in those neighbourhoods.

In the end, the hard work of a few very diligent individuals meant we could achieve a significant amount. However, we need to consider how bridges can be built to span the geographical divide.

Our hope is that this is a significant moment in the journey towards deeper and more open friendship between churches in North and South Bristol. This was the first time Bristol Noise has worked in some parts of South Bristol and we appreciate that it takes significant time to develop trust and friendship.

How does the Church engage with secular media and press?

Perhaps our biggest disappointment from Hope Bristol 2018 is that we did not get greater traction from secular press. Since the event, several Christian publications have run stories covering what happened. However, there was minimal coverage from Bristol Post, BBC Point West or similar organisations. This raises questions of how the Church can have its voice heard more clearly in the secular press.

The key lesson we learnt in this process is that the Church needs to be more intentional with how we communicate with the press. Our approach was very relational, using personal connections and social media to gain coverage. However, it is clear that the Church in Bristol needs to take a more strategic approach, similar to that we have seen in the political and business realm.

How does the Church in Bristol interact with national organisation?

There will always be a tension between local vision and that of a national ministry; both are God given and important but need to be clearly communicated and worked out. We found that throughout the process of Hope Bristol 2018, the priorities of Soul Survivor had to be carefully held in tension with those of churches in Bristol. For example, kids' holiday clubs often wanted the same team for every day of a holiday club, however this wouldn't give the delegates' the varied experience many of them wanted.

Bristol is an independent city with its own culture and priorities. However, it is important that this doesn't not prevent us from working with national and international organisations. Our recommendation is that the priorities are set out more clearly than we originally did with Hope Bristol 2018.

Proposals for the long-term legacy of Hope Bristol 2018

Building Bristol as a City of Hope

Key to Hope Bristol 2018 is a desire to see churches become more actively involved in Bristol life. We are aware that there is a window of opportunity for churches to step into positions of influence in our city, and we want to encourage churches to do so. That is why we have joined with Christian Action Bristol to support the initiative '*Building Bristol as a City of Hope*'. This cross-sector initiative is looking to involve churches and Christians in a wide variety of social justice issues in our city.

Building upon the momentum of Hope Bristol 2018, we are encouraging churches to hang a large banner outside their building that reads: '*Building Bristol as a City of Hope*'. This will act as a visible reminder for local people that the Church is active in the wellbeing of our city.

The Noise

In 2019, The Noise will be happening on 4-6 May 2019 (May Day Bank Holiday) and trustees and core team are looking including parts of the Hope Bristol model. Also over the summer period, the core team are looking at the infrastructure and needs to make a lot larger event happen on a sustainable basis and particularly around the key volunteers needed.

The identity of 'The Noise' in local communities in all parts of the city as representative of the local church has continued to increase. This is alongside the continued networking with statutory and voluntary organisations across Bristol, as well increased involvement with Bristol City Council and Avon and Somerset Police. Bristol Noise charity is also building resource packages so that churches in communities will be able to set up their own local based Noise days/weekend in the future.

City Youth Vision

Having seen youth inspired for mission we want to be committed to seeing this continue across the Bristol region. A small group of youth workers have been looking at ways forward to both encourage youth and youth workers to consider the mission and community impact issues that face the youth of our city and in particular the more marginalised neighbourhoods.

As yet plans need to be finalised but it is hoped that youth workers may be able to tithe some of their working week to serve parts of the city where Jesus is not being made known. This could be supporting existing youth activities that are struggling, caring for youth on the edge of education or pioneering new types of outreach within schools and communities. One of the highlights for many youth over Hope Bristol was the opportunity to gather and worship with 100s of other young people. Looking ahead we might investigate how the Noise next year could perhaps include a Hope Bristol youth stream that could include worship and inspirational teaching alongside showing God's love in practical ways through community action and fun days.