



READING FAMILY CHURCH



INTRODUCTION - WHO WE ARE:



Reading Family Church was launched in 2001. From small beginnings in a home in Whitley, South Reading, we have grown to a community of around 500-600 regular participants. Whilst we are a modern community church, the heartbeat of the church has always been to care for the needs of the disadvantaged and to partner to help these needs to be met.

Whilst the Christian Faith is at the core of our activities, we have an extensive network of 'non-faith based' relationships helping us serve communities within our town. We are particularly active in the South of Reading helping individuals and groups who require advocacy or support in their home, family or work life. Our many groups are open to all and we highly value diversity and inclusion.

We hope this booklet will help you understand some of what we do and our desire to purchase a facility which will be a home for our church and a hub for our local community.





ACTIVITIES IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

We have been active in the South of Reading for the last 16 years. Over that time, we have built up a portfolio of activities and relationships in our local community:

• **SUNDAY WORSHIP:** Our meetings are at 9am, 11am & 6pm; these meetings include children's, youth and student work. The meetings are open to all and are attended by a racially and culturally diverse mix of people.



• **ADULTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS:** For the past five years we have been running monthly Saturday meetings supporting adults who have learning difficulties. These sessions use the Makaton sign language, dance and craft activities, as well as offer refreshments and connection. We also host an annual day to give Carers a well-deserved time of relaxation.

• **JOB CLUB:** Our Job Club was started in 2013 and was launched with the support of Reading West MP, Alok Sharma. It works in partnership with the local Job Centre to support individuals to get back into work. Our clients are offered a light lunch and receive help with their CV and interview techniques.

• **YOUTH GROUP:** The church runs a youth group on Friday nights which is attended by 30+ local teenagers. This is an environment that aims to be fun whilst equipping young people to thrive in their evolving culture.

• **SURE START:** For the past few years the church has partnered with Sure Start in Whitley to deliver a Christmas Party for families in the South of Reading. In 2017 we also partnered for the first time with Sure Start West Reading to deliver their Christmas party.

•**FUNDAYS & STREET PARTIES:** Our church pioneered and continues to support the South Reading Churches Funday, which has run annually for a decade (regularly attracting 4000 local residents). This is the same planning group who ran the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Street Party on Northumberland Avenue (attracting 6000 residents).

•**FOOD BANK:** The church is a key partner with ReadiFood, Reading's food bank. We collect food at each of our Sunday meetings and respond to emergency food requests as they occur. Church Members are involved in the sorting and distribution of parcels.

•**16-24 YEAR OLD 'NEETS':** In 2012 we started a joint initiative with Reading Borough Council and the Mustard Tree Foundation called Starting Point. This project aims to help young people aged 16 – 24 who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET). This project provides them with mentors and work experience placements where appropriate. Over the last 12 months we have worked with 32 young people; had 18 volunteers give their time to be mentors and seen 12 young people move into training or work.



•**COMMUNITY TODDLER GROUP:** Our pre-school group is based in Katesgrove Community Centre. Currently it has 70+ local families enrolled, the majority of whom do not attend our Sunday services. These families are diverse racially and economically and are brought together in a safe, supportive environment.

•**SCHOOLS WORK:** The church partners with local schools to assist the staff in the delivering of their Religious Education requirements. We also support them through assemblies as required, as well as at Christmas and Easter.

•**HOLIDAY CLUBS:** We have run several half term Holiday clubs for children who live in Whitley. These typically are in the mornings and are open to all. The costs are covered by the church.



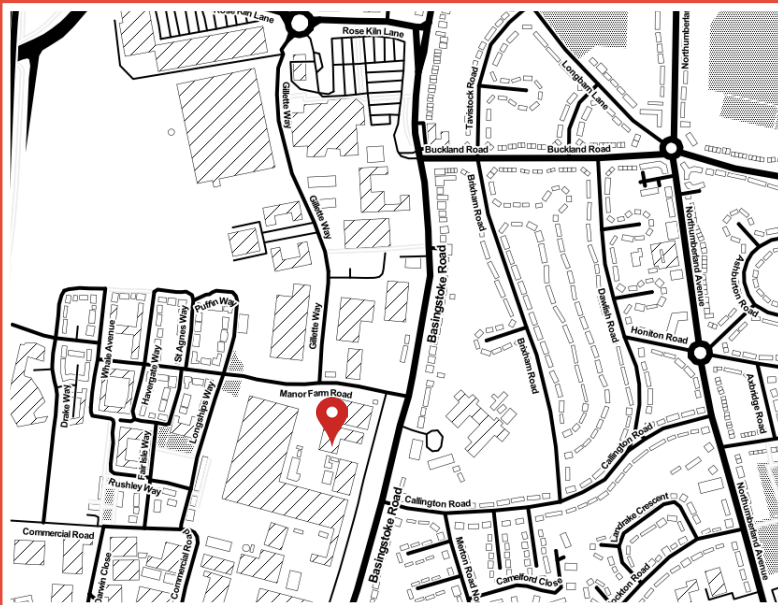


A HOME FOR OUR CHURCH, A HUB FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Our church membership is scattered throughout Reading, but the majority live within 3 miles of where we started in Whitley. For six years we have been looking to purchase a large building that we can use both for our Sunday meetings and as a hub for activities that the local people need. We have therefore been searching for a single site which can accommodate:

- Worship space
- Administration offices for the church and other local groups.
- Classroom and training space, including a hub for job seekers.
- Rooms for groups such as Mother & Toddlers, Parenting courses, Holiday clubs
- A Sensory Space for those with additional needs.
- A Community café
- Community Youth Hall / space
- Parking and good access to public transport and cycle networks

We believe that we have found an ideal site in the centre of the communities in which we are based (Kennet Island, Whitley and Whitley Wood), the Ultima building, 448a Basingstoke Road.



Ultima Building
448a Basingstoke Road
Reading
RG2 0RX



ADVANTAGES OF ULTIMA SITE

- Easy to find for all visitors, but not directly on a busy road
- Excellent public transport, cycle and pedestrian access.
- Secure site with self-contained access and parking
- Very flexible generous internal space capable of conversion without excessive cost
- Well equipped with utility services, toilets and kitchen areas
- Pleasant character – welcoming
- Private arrangement available for weekend use of additional parking on nearby employment site
- Quickly deliverable – premises vacant for more than 12 months and a willing vendor

NEXT STEPS

We are currently leasing the property and would like to purchase the Freehold in October 2018.

Discussions with Reading Borough Council planners have started, and we are hopeful of successful 'Change of Use' to the D1 category for part of the site during 2018.

If you have any questions regarding this proposal we'd love to hear from you. Please contact me using the details on the back cover.



Sean Green – Senior Pastor
Reading Family Church
January 2018

Artist impressions of proposal for 448a Basingstoke Road
(provided by Allen Associates Architects Limited)





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