

# Sharing Our Story...

## Abbey Road Baptist Church, Barrow



*Martin Cooper is the minister of Abbey Road Baptist Church. Here he shares something of the church's journey during the past year, in light of Covid...*

"Our after-school club started in January 2019. We had been praying about starting a club for young people but did not have sufficient people available to do it well. In the end, it came about as a result of a conversation in the school playground and as a joint venture with Network Youth Church. It started by offering the young people free hot chocolate and toast from a table in the church car park as they went past on their way home from school. Over a few weeks, the table was moved closer to the church door and then inside the church hall and relationships started to be formed.

Prior to the first lockdown in March 2020, we had on average 110 young people each week. Some of these got their toast and hot chocolate and left but many stayed to chat and play games. To stay in touch with the most vulnerable during lockdown, activity packs and food were delivered.

In September 2020 when the school re-opened,, we restarted the club outside and had plans for a gardening project using part of our church garden. The idea was to clear an area of the garden and use it for the young people to grow vegetables in raised beds. We have a builder who will work with the young people as the raised beds are made, and a gardener to advise on setting things up. A number of the young people signed up for this and were keen to get started. Many are from lower income families who struggle financially and the idea is that they will take the vegetables home with them and be taught how to cook with them.

We plan to get some older church members who have experience in gardening to come and sit with the young people and share their knowledge, life experiences and faith with them as they get to know them. This is a model that we hope will be used in other churches across the town as we seek to serve the community where we live and reach out to them demonstrating the love of Christ."



### **Questions to consider:**

*How could you reach out to, and continue to connect with, your local community at this time?*

*In what ways could older and younger people in the church connect together? What might we learn from people of different ages in our faith?*