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LIFE PROJECT NEWS UPDATE

Summer 2025

Dear Readers

Welcome to our bumper Summer newsletter. We have had a very busy, exciting, year with many happy comings and sadder goings. We are delighted to announce we have two new members of staff – and a new volunteer. Without our volunteers we could not do what we do. We are so grateful. We are always looking for more!

Introducing:

Aimee ... Activity Leader, who enthusiastically works with our Makers on their creative skills. Many of you will remember her drama presentation of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', where our Makers captured the story-line and acted with great aplomb to a much appreciative audience. Whilst not attending Life Project, Aimee busies herself with her young family and loves being in the great outdoors.

Ruth ... Activity Leader. Ruth joined the team in January and supports Makers in a number of activities including cooking and craft. In her own words she says *'it has been an absolute joy to get to know all the makers and staff over the last few months and we have had lots of fun!'* Alongside her work with the Life Project she cares for her family and works as a designer and artist.

Andy ... is a new volunteer at the barn on a Tuesday and helps with Springs. He brings such joy to all our Makers. He comes from Elim church in Bath and is a humble, gentle and Godly man. He has told us that he receives more from the Life Project than he gives – and this has been echoed by many of our volunteers. Welcome to the Life Project family, Andy!

Unfortunately **Rich Blake-Lobb**, our CEO, has had a series of challenging health issues and this has resulted in extended periods of absence. We wish him well and continue to pray that the Lord will provide for his every need. As a result of Rich's absence the Trustees took the decision to appoint an interim CEO in the much experienced **Tom Peryer**, from All Saints Church, Weston. Tom knows many of our Members and Makers well, having frequently accompanied them on HCPT pilgrimage trips to Lourdes. Tom has worked in a variety of educational roles, including in special education, for all his working life. Welcome on board, Tom! God's timing is perfect!!!

On a sad note ...Our much-loved **Esme Neale de Zarate**, Day Services Coordinator, has left us to pursue her career in Occupational Therapy. We wish her well. In the time she has been with us she has brought great insight and energy to Life Project and we will all miss her greatly.

We also say a fond farewell to **Fiona Day**, Activity Leader, who, after years of loyal service to Life Project, has left to continue her training in Forest School and put into practice her recently developed training in neurodivergence.

Elsbeth has been on work placement with us from Bath Spa University this year, She has been such a blessing to us all. We wish to thank her for all she has brought to Life Project and our Makers and wish her well for the future.

Paul Bright, one of our trusty Trustees is leaving us following his move to South Devon. We shall miss your diligence, sense of humour and loyalty, Paul. You are not only a Trustee but you have become a true friend to the Life Project community.

We would like to say thank you to **Kathryn and Peter Spackman** who are stepping down from being volunteer cleaners at the barn. We are so grateful for the time they have given up each week to ensure the barn remains clean and tidy!

It would be remiss not to mention and give thanks to **Tom Riley, Jieun Lee and Sarah Moxham-Hendra**. They are the stalwarts of the Life Project. Their hard work, loyalty and dedication to their work and devotion to our Makers and Members, particularly over the last few months, has been exemplary. They have gone above and beyond to ensure Day Services continue to offer an excellent service, all three stepping into the role of Session Leader and taking on some of the essential managerial tasks. The

Trustees wish to express their gratitude to all Life Project Staff and volunteers and thank them for all their endeavours.

LIFE PROJECT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR, BEN STOKES

You will be reassured, as you read on, that the shortage of recent news updates is not a reflection on the amount of activity that has been going on. On the contrary!

It has been a real joy as Chair, working with such a talented bunch of Trustees, who are so generous volunteering their time to the service of the Life Project. Trustees have been engaging with the social and work programme of the charity. We have also been meeting bi-monthly as a group to provide strategic leadership to the charity. The main focus of our energy has been the implementation of the 2024 HR Review, work which is ongoing. This review looked at ways of making the staffing structure more effective and helping us to be a robust charity, with up-to-date administration and procedures, fit for the 21st Century. The newsletter holds much information about our activities and, most importantly, the people involved. I hope you get a sense for the wide range of things going on - and if it looks like fun, please grasp the various opportunities for you to get involved too. Now read on ...

LIFE AT THE BARN

Tuesday Sessions

This term we focused not only on hobbies and interests but also on sports and exercise.

Exercise plays an important part in our daily lives at the barn. After our usual walk (weather permitting), this is followed by an exercise session, which builds up a thirst for our well-earned cuppa at sharing time!



Mealtimes are always entertaining, and we've enjoyed all sorts of variations on pasta and rice, learning how to use simple ingredients to make delicious, low-cost, healthy meals. Yum!

Bon Appetit!

Carpentry skills



In woodwork the Makers made a step bench and very colourful dumbbells, as well as balance beams made from wood and bolts, (kindly donated by Jewsons in Bath). These were used as part of an obstacle course relay at our end of term special sports day celebration with a difference which included - slow motion running with an Olympic torch to chariots of fire ... a tug of war with commentary from one of our wonderful makers ... and a medal ceremony with medals made and designed by the makers, of course.

No sports day is complete without the parents' race! Makers enjoyed cheering them on as they tackled the challenges of the obstacle course which finished (you've guessed it) with an egg and spoon sprint to the line. It was a very joyous occasion and we thank God that we were spared both the rain and the scorching summer heat.



PIC-COLLAGE

This term in our Art Sessions our Makers enjoyed making and designing beautiful bowls, using colours and paints of their choice. These were proudly presented at our Sports Day.

Once again, we've seen Makers learn new skills, overcome their fears and grow in confidence, and deepen friendships as they have shared and supported each other through joys of celebrating birthdays and successes, as well as challenging times of sadness. We thank God for a wonderful term.

LIFE AT THE BARN & ALLOTMENT

Wednesday Sessions

When they are not at the allotment, Makers' days start with a healthy walk in the surrounding area of the barn. They have been encouraged to take note of their beautiful surroundings and as a result they have created their own nature walk photobooks.

Art



Makers designed and made hobby boards introducing their interests and hobbies. They were very proud of their efforts when they showed their boards at sharing time and talked about their favourite interests.

The Allotment



At the beginning of the term, work started by transferring the sunflowers, sweet peas and pumpkins from the greenhouse, and then it was time to plant the potatoes. Most

days we were blessed with sunshine. Makers were happy and surprised to see how big the sunflowers and pumpkins were growing. As in years past we can't wait to see who wins the prize for the heaviest pumpkin – always an exciting and satisfying moment for our Makers! After half-term, broad beans, garlic, strawberries, raspberries and red and black currents were harvested. All delicious and our 'resident chefs' produced some amazing plot to plate dishes!



P.S. Lunch cooked by Ruth on a Wednesday is always a treat – you should have seen the delight on Makers' faces when they were trying out a new recipe only to discover that the red cabbage had turned the egg purple in the fried rice :0) – it was very tasty though – you should try it!

Music



In the music sessions Makers prepared for their summer concert on 16th July and along with selecting a song of their choice, they helped compose the music and lyrics for two songs to fit the current themes – healthy living and hobbies! The performance was well received by a well-impressed audience.

THURSDAY SESSIONS

Cookery Skills

Makers who are not involved in the Art, Drama, Craft, Woodwork and gardening sessions, are improving their cookery skills with **Sarah Moxham-Hendra**. They have produced some delicious, healthy food. Mealtimes are always an opportunity to socialise with each other and catch up on news which was omitted during sharing time.

Productivity

Makers made furniture, props and clothes for the puppets which were on display at the puppet show on 17th July. They made them from cardboard, paper and fabric.



As you can see on **Anna** and **May**'s faces, they enjoyed the process and were surprised they could make furniture out of cardboard!

Drama

Jieun received sponsorship last year from Life Project to attend a puppetry workshop and she subsequently purchased two puppets. Before Easter makers focused on writing a script about communal living with friends and how lovely, but at the same time how challenging, it could be. (A very useful exercise). Based on their experience they wrote a script together and practised it using the recently-acquired puppets. Anyone who attended the show would have been amazed by the results of all the hard work of the narrators, puppeteers, musicians and stage manager! A huge thank you to all those involved!

Outreach

Continuing our close relationship with Kingswood school, we had four students doing placements with us this term. They immediately connected with our Makers and said their experience had really helped them understand more about working with people with learning disabilities. Thank you for choosing Life Project!

Kingswood students have been a continued blessing to Life Project over the years. This is largely due to staff member **Monica Corripio Dieppe Lopez**, who has been such an active link at Kingswood School, even running several times for sponsorship for Life Project in the Bath half! Thank you, **Monica**!



A well-earned lunch break at the allotment

Recently students and staff even helped clear areas of the allotment that had been overgrown with weeds. As this is hungry work, Makers made sandwiches for them, and they lunched together in style!

In September our sponsored (now annual) swimathon will take place and so our valuable 'special relationship' continues to flourish. A huge thank you to everyone at Kingswood for your support!

Art

During art sessions Makers have been representing their hobbies in art form through collage, paintings, and drawing images focused on their favourite hobby or hobbies. The Makers enjoyed using vibrant acrylic pens in contrasting colours and experimented with gelli plate printing, choosing colours they enjoy.

PUTTING OUR FAITH INTO ACTION



We recently held our Life Project Weekend of Prayer and Fasting and we want to say a heartfelt thank you to all who joined in. Whether you came to a gathering, prayed from home, or encouraged others to take part, we are so grateful. It was a significant few days of seeking God together for the future of the Life Project and the people we serve.

Friday evening began with around 40 people gathered at St Michael's and All Angel's Twerton

for a powerful time of worship and prayer. We focused on several key areas, including leadership, staffing and recruitment, volunteer support, and the challenges many in our community are currently facing. We also prayed for deeper involvement from local churches, and that more would catch God's heart for people with learning disabilities and the unique role they have in His Kingdom.

Saturday started with morning prayer at the Allotment, where we reflected on the theme of gardens in the Bible. This was followed by a drop-in day of prayer at the Barn, which was filled with creative stations and space for personal reflection. We were particularly encouraged by visitors from the local village who engaged deeply with the prayer space.

On Sunday, several churches included the Life Project in their services, either by praying for us or sharing about the work. I attended St Bart's, where the team lifted up the charity during their time of intercession. It was moving to know that many others were doing the same across the city.

Monday evening concluded the weekend with a joyful gathering of our Springs group at St Philip's in Odd Down. We ate together, and we ended the evening with hearts (and plates) full. It was a beautiful expression of community and God's goodness.

Thank you once again for your prayers. We continue to trust that God is leading us forward, and we're excited for what's ahead.

All glory to Him.

Kenny Nelson
Life Project Chaplain

SPRINGS UPDATE

Springs, as always has been a source of light and joy as we, Members and Volunteers, have met at the Weston Hub in fellowship together. In the Spring term we looked at different parts of the Sermon on the Mount followed in the Summer term by studying parts of Genesis and The Lord's magnificent Creation.

Members and Volunteers have played their part in leading our evenings. They have done this with humility, skill, humour and pathos, sharing God's love with each other. We have worshipped God with our voices, our hands and our hearts. Members and Volunteers have brought their concerns for each other, for us and for the world to

God in prayer. We have a new welcome song, commissioned and written by our regular worship leaders, Faith and Jess. Our Members love it!



Trustees Paul and Kenny, our Chaplain, during Springs worship with some of our musically-gifted Members assisting Faith and Jess, our 'resident' worship leaders.

Springs is renowned for its warm welcome

We have had several visitors from All Saints church to 'Springs' this term. one of whom was Rose, formerly a producer of Wildlife programmes and presently a trainee at All Saints, Weston. She delighted us with her talk on the wonders of God's Creation.

We also welcomed Carolyn who is on sabbatical from her work as a Baptist minister, and is carrying out research all over the country on how churches are actively engaging with people who have learning disabilities.

During the term we had a total of eight visitors from Welton Baptist Church, who were on a fact-finding mission. They said they were 'inspired' by their experience with us and we are excited to announce there is a new Christian Fellowship & Friendship Group starting in Welton (near Midsomer Norton) on 19th September. It will be run at Welton Baptist Chapel and is modelled on Life Project 'Springs'. Isn't it wonderful to see our members as disciples, inspiring others to follow their example?

Makaton training

Earlier in the year Volunteers spent a very special day at Fishponds Baptist Church at a Know and Grow Makaton Workshop generously funded by Life Project. It was very exciting to spend the day with other Christians learning Makaton with a special emphasis on Christian signs and symbols. One of the highlights was to learn to sign the Lord's Prayer and this is now a regular part of our Springs Worship.

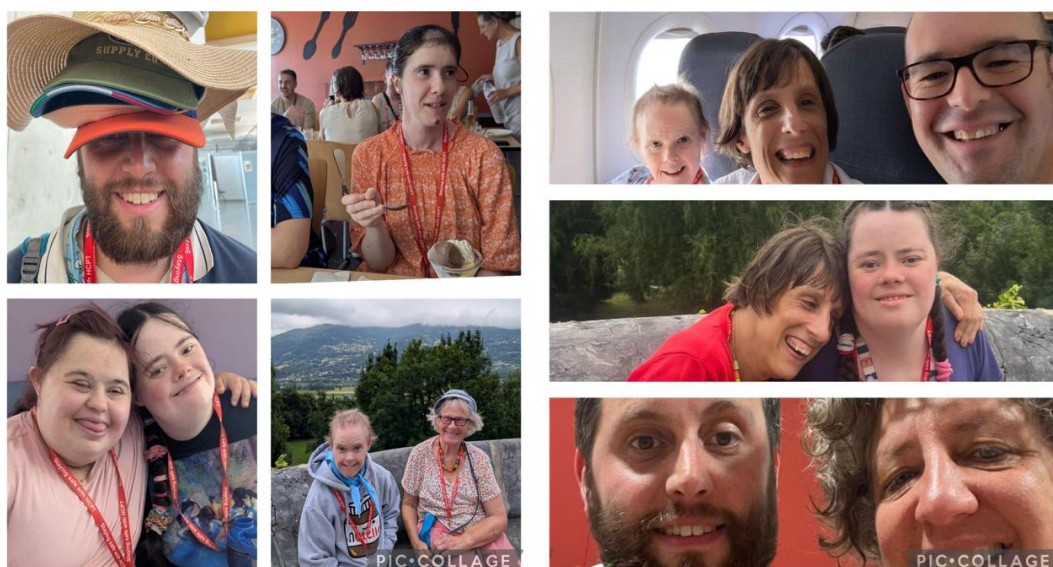
SPRINGS KNOWS HOW TO CELEBRATE



This year our Springs Season ended with a barbecue party (which purposefully coincided with the end of the Life Project Prayer & Fasting weekend). There were over 40 guests and volunteers present. Sarah E. (on the right) treated us all to an enthusiastic and lively dance demonstration. Thanks to all those involved in giving us a fantastic close to an amazing year. Thanks also to St Philips & St James for providing a great space in which to celebrate.

LIFE PROJECT JOINS PILGRIMAGE TO HOSANNA HOUSE, LOURDES

At the beginning of the month a group of 11 from Life Project joined Group 542 on their annual visit to Lourdes. Here is an extract from a poem written by Robert, (he's the one wearing the many hats), one of our Springs' Members, which sums up some of their adventures whilst they were away:



Day 2

*A gathering down in Lourdes we met
to hear the remarkable life of St Bernadette.
A trip to Le Cachet followed by a drink in our café
before our trip to The Grotto where many people prayed.*

*An afternoon we had at Lac du Lourdes
a beautiful area: forests, trees and forays.
We remember Jesus and his disciples out on the lake
Oh what adventures our God can make.*

Day 3

*A glorious day by the beach at St Jean de Luz.
Even in the sand and sea we had nothing to lose.
Through fields and valleys, we made our way there
and even in the coach we got some fresh air.*

*An afternoon stroll through the town we went -
with ice creams and sun, we knew what it meant.
We remember Jesus walking on The Sea of Galilee.
Oh how God calls us out of our boats both you and me.*

Day 4

*Another return to Lac du Lourdes
for swimming, crafts and games somewhat absurd.
Scavenger hunts were the game of the day -
some charming some with dismay.*

*An afternoon at Hosanna House we stayed
before a celebration of the world of books and a party wayhay!
We remember Jesus on The Emmaus Road -
what roads may look ahead for us God only knows.*

Day 5

*So it was off to the mountains and to Gavarnie we came
through windy roads, both small and main.
In Gavarnie we dined and took to the streams,
unaware of the storms we simply hadn't seen.*

*A delightful stop off at St Savin
with team photos, views and sights what a marvellous plan!
We remember Jesus speaking his sermon on the mount,
the Beatitudes of wisdom that we all must count.*

Day 7

*We come to this our final day.
Oh Group 542 what our Lord has given us both night and day.
As we return to our families and homes,
may we never forget that Jesus Christ is with us and we are never alone.*



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Each day started and ended with a meaningful service of worship, prayer and discussion. As well as being an amazing experience for the guests, this week gives a welcome respite to their families and carers. **Thank you to all the organisers, volunteers and helpers who, year after year, make this experience possible.**

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

As in years past, Summer sessions will be offered during July and August and we look forward to seeing the Makers enjoy all the activities that the staff have assiduously prepared for them. [Volunteers would be most welcome!](#)

RESOURCES UPDATE



A reminder that Community Matters Charity shop in Chelsea Road is this year donating its 'profits' to Life Project. If you would like to support us and have any good quality clothes or items, you no longer need please drop them off there. You will receive a warm welcome. Thank you, thank you, thank you! God's provision is great!

Thanks to St Philips & St James Drama Group who recently ran a Questions & Dancers Quiz & Cabaret night and raised £80 for Life Project.

Every donation counts, no matter how big or small. Are you able to hold a fundraising event for Life Project? All monies raised would go directly to enriching the lives of our Makers and Members. Apart from anything else, it's a great way of letting people know about our work.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

On **Wednesday 6th August at 1.30pm** at Rendcomb Aerodrome, Cirencester, **Sarah Moxham-Hendra** is doing a wing walk, raising funds for The Life Project. (No, she's not crazy, just mad about Life Project). If you would like an afternoon of thrill and entertainment, then you can't get much better than this! Thank you, Sarah, for your courage and tenacity and for supporting us in so many ways!!! To donate just follow the link below

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/sarahmoxham-hendra?utm_medium=CR&utm_source=CL

Annual General Meeting: Monday 10TH NOVEMBER, 7.30 PM at The Weston Hub, Penn Hill Road, Bath, BA1 4EH.

This year the Life Project AGM will be hosted by 'Springs'. As well as being kept informed of the latest Life Project news, you can expect great worship and a very warm welcome from our amazing Springs' Members and volunteers. Hot drinks, cake and biscuits will be provided. Please be sure to put the date in your diaries now!



Old Acorn Barn, Englishcombe, Bath BA2 9DU

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