

“I cannot thank you enough for all you did to serve the Lord alongside us this week at St Andrew’s... **without your help we would never have made those initial connections in the way that we did.**”

Rev. Sam Dickinson, St Andrew’s Church, Livesey, Blackburn



AMBASSADORS
FOOTBALL

IMPACT REPORT

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



"I lift my eyes up to the hills, where does my help come from?"

Psalm 121

Ten minutes' walk from where I live is Morecambe Bay. Across the water, when visible through the rain, are the hills of the Lake District. It is a beautiful place to live. Sometimes I cycle to work preoccupied with life and the slog of cycling and I forget to look up and see the beautiful hills that God created.

It can be the same with my work. I find myself bogged down, wading through issues that need to be resolved or problems that crop up from day to day. So this report is a great way to "look up" and reflect on all that God has done through Ambassadors Football GB.

Recently we added some new staff to our team, together with setting up a new office in Wales, plus putting in place an operations manager based in Yorkshire. And, more new churches have become involved in community football outreach. It is exciting to see!

Every staff member must have a church that sends them out and a team that commits to pray for them as well as people who give to Ambassadors Football. This ensures

we cover the costs of their salaries and expenses.

Expansion means stretching. That can be stressful at times. But we are seeing God provide in many ways through the teams that support every staff member. Our long-serving staff are also a tremendous blessing to me. Their selfless commitment to seeing the Good News shared through football encourages me on a daily basis.

We are also surrounded by sheep where I live. Jesus saw the crowds in Matthew 9 and said they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. He didn't tell his disciples to feed them or guide them, but he told them to pray, to "Ask the Lord of harvest to send out workers..."

I am so thankful for all that God has done both at home and abroad, but I know that we can do so much more if God provides the personnel. Please join us in prayer so that we can see more come to work alongside us in the harvest fields.

Yours in His team
Martin

TOURNAMENTS

We love to run football tournaments as it brings churches together to have fellowship and share a Gospel message. I have been involved in running tournaments since I joined Ambassadors and my heart for them is to serve the local church.

This has been the biggest year we have had four tournaments and we are already looking forward to next year!

We ran the London, Sheffield, Nottingham and National Churches Tournaments, alongside the Morecambe Girls and The Gathering Tournaments. In total we had over 1,300 players attending from 93 churches. We saw the Gospel message shared and handed out 64 bibles. ►



Tournaments continued

Here is some feedback from the church leaders:

“All of the children and parents had a great day; and parents on the edge of the church are closer in.”

“One family said this tournament was the best experience of their son’s life in football so far and they had the best time because he never had the opportunity before.”

At the Morecambe Girl’s tournament our prayer was that girls of all abilities would love playing football, make new friends and have fun. There was a lot of excitement and joy, with the girls asking to see who was in the top 5, running up to other players exclaiming “I am with you this match!” and cheering each other on when they scored goals. It was a real joy to see young girls enjoying themselves and congratulating other people when they did well.

Find out more about our tournaments online at <https://gb.ambassadorsfootball.org/what-we-do/football-tournaments/>



GLOBAL IMPACT

Ambassadors Football began with a few families moving to live and work in Bolton, England in 1990. Since then, fulfilling the great commission of Jesus has been at the heart of what we do. We continue to have a heart for the nations from here in Great Britain.

The Football Association regularly sends us kit via our friend Stuart Weir and we have been able to give this away overseas in recent months to places as diverse as Thailand, Laos, Cape Verde, North Africa, Albania, Uganda and Nepal.

We are excited to see the way Towards the Goal, created by Josh Fortune, is impacting thousands around the world already. A simple football based cartoon and booklet that leads kids through the story of redemption over a number of episodes. Please find out more via the QR code above.

British staff are also involved in training, playing and coaching around the world. This has included being part of recent tours to Rwanda, Spain, the USA and Mexico. We have sent staff to teach at coach education (TREC) courses in Africa and Asia.

A tour member to Spain commented: “Football is a universal language, and it was such a blessing to see it being used in a positive way and see Jesus move through it in Spain. An amazing week of fellowship, competition and exploring a new culture.”

These opportunities enable British churches to pray for and send out workers into the



harvest field. Many come back with testimonies of how they saw God at work and continue to be enthusiastic members of their local congregation upon their return.

Could you be part of what God is doing globally through Ambassadors Football? If you’re interested in being part of a tour or working overseas then please look at our website for further information <https://gb.ambassadorsfootball.org/what-we-do/tours/>

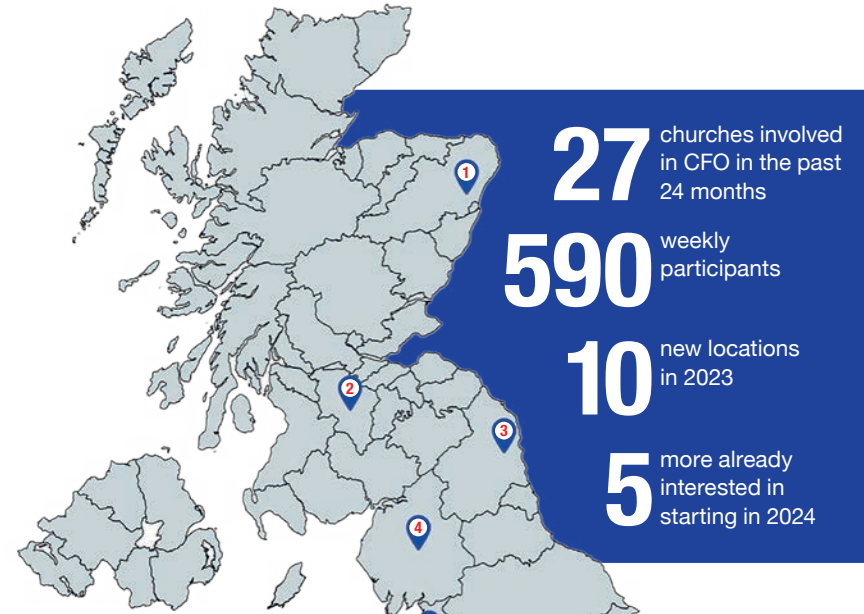
COMMUNITY FOOTBALL OUTREACH

There are two things you are almost guaranteed to find in every community, a church and a football pitch. Helping churches reach their communities through football is at the heart of what Ambassadors is about.

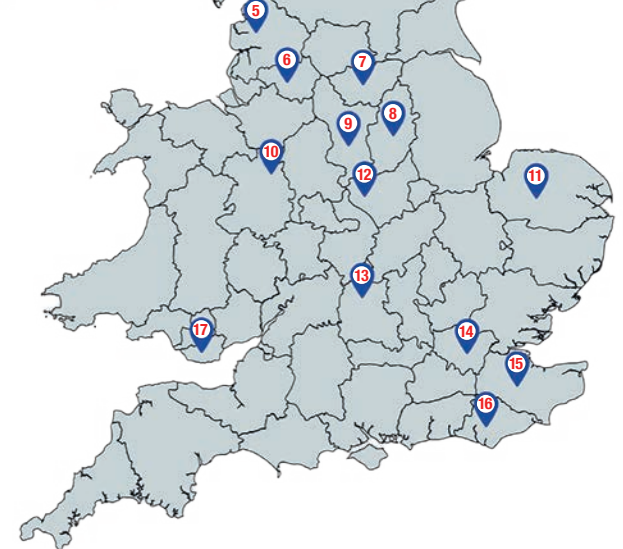
This year we have been encouraged by the number of churches willing to get out of their church building and have a presence on their local football pitch. Over the last year, 29 churches across the UK have taken part in the training to start a Community Football Outreach

(CFO). As a result, most said that they now believe starting a football outreach was more achievable and could have a bigger impact than first thought.

One church that kicked off a football outreach was St Saviour's in Finsbury Park, London. When they first got in touch with Ambassadors about supporting them in launching a project, they had no idea there was a purpose built football pitch tucked away in the middle of a housing estate, just a few minutes' walk from the church building! ▶



- 1 Aberdeen
- 2 Glasgow
- 3 Highfield / Newcastle
- 4 Kendal
- 5 Morecambe / Lancaster
- 6 Gorton / Flixton / Radcliffe
- 7 Sheffield
- 8 Nottingham / Newark
- 9 Shirebrook
- 10 Edgmond
- 11 Walsingham
- 12 Loughborough
- 13 Bloxham
- 14 Hackney / Tower Hamlets / Newham / Islington / Vauxhall
- 15 Bromley / Rochester / Crofton
- 16 Burgess Hill
- 17 Cardiff



Community Football Outreach *continued*

The project coordinator for the church explains how it went: *“Our CFO here in North London has got off to a fantastic start. We have been blessed by the presence and support from Ambassadors Football, helping us to think through the setup of a CFO.*

“Our volunteers learned a lot from seeing Dan, our CFO mentor, model a football session and introduce talking about faith to a bunch of teenagers who up until that point had nothing to do with our church.

“We have made connections with several parents and had teenage boys and some family members come into the church gardens for a celebratory BBQ at the end of the summer term.

“Even during the colder evenings at the moment, we have been regularly getting 10-14 teenagers each week, and we are currently thinking about also starting a youth club in church that we will invite them to as well. God is good!” The great thing about CFO is that it



is adaptable to your church's needs. If there is a passion to see more kids and families in church, then a kids' project could be set up. If it is to reach out to older isolated men, then walking football has shown to be a very effective model in St Andrew's, Leyland. In Cardiff and Sheffield we have a men's football night once a week with social activities and even an Alpha course for those who participate.

Could you start a CFO project in your local community? Email Dan Owen our CFO lead at dowen@ambassadorsfootball.org to find out more.



CAMPS

We're so thankful to God for how He's been working through camps! This year's camps have been our busiest summer yet, with over 600 kids attending 18 church run football camps across Britain. Three of these were entirely new camps.

We want our camps to be important bridges between the church and the community, so it's vital that the majority of our camp attendees are not already part of church communities. Therefore, we're delighted to report an increase with almost 75% of those taking part in camps being from outside the church.

After running a camp at his church in Blackburn, the curate said: *“I cannot thank you enough for all you did to serve the Lord alongside us this week at St Andrew's. It was absolutely thrilling to see 33 children enjoy the skill sessions and the games, and to engage so well with the drama and the memory verse. We pray on for deepening and continuing relationships with the players and their families, but without your help we would never have made those initial connections in the way that we did.”*

Here are a few things parents had to say about their camp:

“My kids LOVED it, and raved about the staff. I am pleased they heard the truth about Jesus.”

If you are interested in running a faith based football camp, please get in touch for further information and support.



GENESIS FOOTBALL



Genesis Football is a community football project for marginalised men currently running in Kent and East London. The projects have become well-established in the community and attract a lot of new participants through word of mouth.

Genesis Football aims to reach the marginalised through football, share the Gospel with them, provide community, opportunities for qualifications, free football sessions, tournaments, kit, team meals and many other things that really bless the guys that come along.

At the end of each session, we share a printed-out bible verse

with a 1-2 minute talk. Over 300 bible verses have been given to participants in 2023! Please pray that God will continue to sow seeds in their hearts.

Recently one of the team was asked by an observer of the project what do you like about Genesis football? It was encouraging to hear them talk about a wide range of benefits.

They had noticed that they had learnt to have greater self-control both within the project and outside. They talked about other social and emotional benefits and whilst not a Christian appreciated the fact we spoke about spiritual things also.

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL

Women's football at Ambassadors has continued to grow and expand. We know that football is a really accessible game, but it can also be very competitive and mixed groupings are not always easy. As a result, we are encouraging churches to have non-competitive football as an option for women's groups.

We have completed writing our wellbeing programme and it is now being used by churches and women's groups. This programme uses lots of questions to facilitate conversations around what it is to be female: our character, success and failure, identity, and building resilience. It does not aim to answer all the questions but points participants towards Jesus, knowing Him better and what He means for our lives.

The programme has a biblical foundation, based on the truths of the Christian faith. Writing this so that it can be used in a variety of contexts with lots of different girls and women from varying backgrounds is a challenge. But we really believe in the power of football and using it to channel positive, supportive conversations that are unashamedly based on Jesus.

In the last six months, we have had more contact with Christian female football players and coaches than at any other time in the last two years. These are ladies who play and coach football regularly and are excited about using it to share Jesus



with their teammates and students. We were able to meet recently online to talk about our situations and pray for each other. It has been a real encouragement to have females involved in football who want to share, support and pray for each other.

As work with women and girls has continued to grow over the last year, we have a new member of staff to work alongside Claire. Lydia joined us in October and will be based in Wales, focussing on supporting Ben in the local office and highlighting women's football in the area.

Contact Claire, our women's football lead at: clunn-rockcliffe@ambassadorsfootball.org for further information



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CFO

*We train churches to provide
Community Football Outreach*



TOURNAMENTS

*We run tournaments
for church football teams*



CAMPS

*We help churches to
run football camps*

TOURS

*We run mission trips
in the UK and overseas*



TOWARD THE
GOAL

