Booklet updated
22nd September 2026



BUILDING TOGETHER

a forever home for Open Hands

BRADGATE PARK







In 1928, Charles Bennion purchased the Bradgate Park Estate and then handed it over in trust to the city and county of Leicester.

One hundred years on, millions of people have found Bradgate Park to be a safe and beautiful place to visit. It was a gift to the people of Leicester and Leicestershire, and continues to be a wonderful blessing.

A gift...
to a city...
for its people...
forever.







20 YEARS
300,000 VISITS
140 NATIONALITIES
400 PARTNERS
1000 VOLUNTEERS
QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE



OPEN HANDS

In 2006, Open Hands began.

Twenty years on, we have welcomed around 300,000 visits to our Compassion Centres.

We are now planning to build a new Compassion Centre together to bless the city of Leicester.

One hundred years from now, we will have welcomed over a million visits to our 'forever home'. A safe and beautiful place of blessing.

A gift...
to a city...
for its people...
forever.








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We are incredibly grateful for the homes we have enjoyed over the years, first in Highfields and now at our leased Compassion Centre in St Matthew's. Today, we want to share our vision for the next chapter of the Open Hands story.

We are going to build a new Compassion Centre on an incredible site on Frog Island which will bless the City of Leicester. One hundred years from today, we will have received over a million visits to our centre and people will have found it to be a safe and beautiful place of care. Open Hands will have a permanent home of its own for the first time, securing the long-term future of the charity. It is going to cost around £5 million to build.

"A gift... to a city... for its people... **forever.**"

The words of Jesus continue to inspire and challenge us: *"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."* *(Matthew 25:35–36).* As a charity, we long to respond faithfully to this call.

Our prayer is that this new Compassion Centre will lay the foundations for a space that will make it possible for people in Leicester to receive love, care and support for generations to come. We hope that, as you read this booklet, you will catch our vision and be inspired to partner with us in making it a reality.
Thank you for walking with us.

DAVID AND SUSAN HIND

Open Hands Trustees & One Church Senior Leaders




Open Hands



WHO WE ARE

Open Hands is a Leicester charity providing practical, essential support to people in need. We work alongside low-income families, people experiencing homelessness, refugees, asylum seekers, and those who are unemployed or facing social isolation.

By meeting people at their point of need, we help them overcome immediate challenges while creating opportunities to build confidence, develop skills, and connect with their community. Our services include food, clothing, furniture and household essentials, education, chaplaincy, and volunteering opportunities.

PRINCEY'S STORY

Princey came to Open Hands when life in the UK became far harder than she had imagined. After moving from India with her husband and four children to build a better future, an accident, job losses, and mounting debts left the family struggling. During one of the most difficult periods of their lives, Open Hands provided food, practical support, and a listening ear with prayer and encouragement. Today, Princey has secured a new role as a Care Home Manager, and her family is preparing for a fresh start.



"Thank you so much for all the help you have given my family and the prayers. We couldn't have managed without your continued kindness."

With your support, more families like Princey's can access the practical help, encouragement, and community they need to navigate life's toughest seasons with dignity and hope.


WITH SHELTER
THE NAKED
WOMENS



THE NEED IN LEICESTER

Many people across Leicester are struggling to meet their basic needs.

31% struggle with essential living costs

32% have difficulty paying bills or buying food

40% of children live in relative poverty*

Leicester City Council Health & Wellbeing Study 2024

*after housing costs, Office for National Statistics 2024/25



Rising living costs, housing pressures and economic uncertainty mean that many people are struggling to afford the essentials for everyday life.

For some, this means choosing between heating their home and buying food. For others, it means moving into an empty property without even a bed to sleep on. Almost a quarter of UK households cannot afford to replace broken or worn-out furniture, leaving many without the essentials to live safely and with dignity*.

Many people face more than one challenge at a time. Alongside financial hardship, they may be coping with poor health, insecure housing, unemployment, language barriers, or loneliness. More than crisis support, they need practical help, someone to turn to, and opportunities to rebuild their lives.

Open Hands exists to meet this need.

*End Furniture Poverty, 2026.





A FOREVER HOME FOR OPEN HANDS

As demand for our services continues to grow, so too does the need for a permanent home.

For the past 20 years, our Compassion Centres have enabled Open Hands to respond to the changing needs of Leicester. We are incredibly grateful for the leased buildings that have served us so well, first in Highfields and now in St Matthew's. Within these walls, thousands of people have found practical support, friendship, and community.

Now we have an exciting opportunity to secure the future of Open Hands. Our founding partner, One Church Leicester, has generously offered us a piece of land in Leicester city centre on which to build our new home.

A purpose-built Compassion Centre will give us the confidence to plan ahead and continue responding to Leicester's changing needs for years to come.



no.12 frog island

august 2026

Designed with our guests and partners in mind, the new centre will bring together all of Open Hands' existing services in one welcoming, accessible space. People will be able to access essential items, skills courses, pastoral support, and volunteering opportunities, all under one roof.

Dedicated rooms will enable partner organisations to provide advice, counselling, and one-to-one support alongside our own services. Bringing these services together will make it easier for people to access personal, joined-up support and find connection and hope.

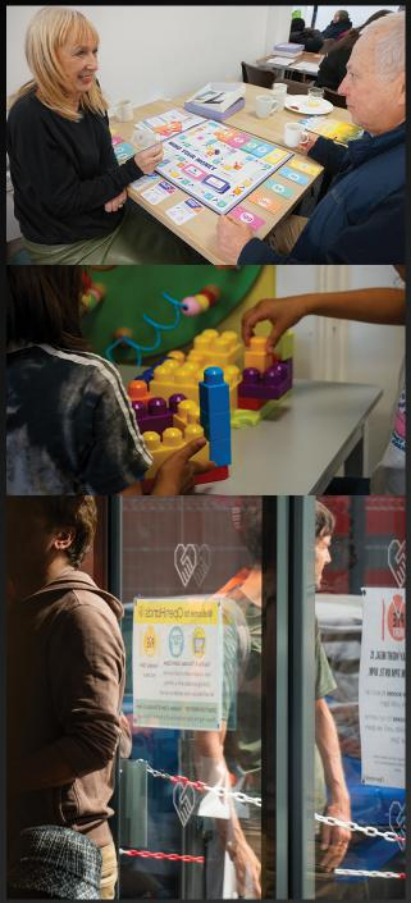
> *As more services across the UK move towards digital-first access, many of the people we support face increasing barriers to getting the help they need. A new Compassion Centre has the potential to become a vital community hub that will make a lasting difference to thousands of people for years to come.*
>
> BRITISH RED CROSS, LEICESTER

BUILDING TOGETHER

Open Hands couldn't exist without our partners. Every day, we have the privilege of working alongside volunteers, supporters, churches, businesses, charities and partner organisations, united by a shared commitment to help people facing hardship. Together, we achieve far more than any one organisation could alone.

Our vision is for the new Compassion Centre to strengthen these partnerships even further, creating a place where people can access the support they need and organisations can work together to serve our city.

Building a new centre to serve the growing needs of our city will cost around £5 million. This is an investment in Leicester's future - strengthening communities, creating opportunities, and ensuring that compassionate, practical help remains available to people in need for years to come.

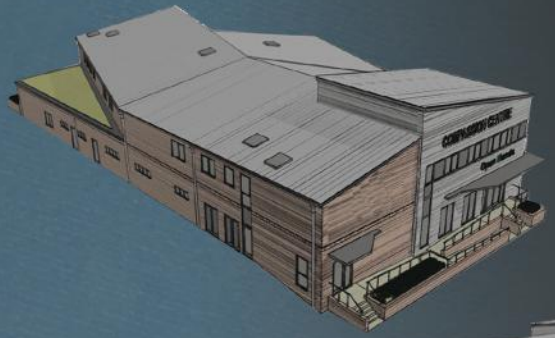


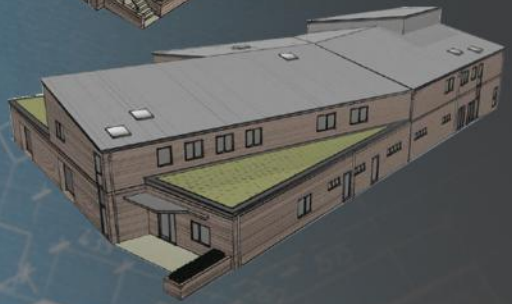

BUILDING
TOGETHER
We are
Breaking
the cycle
GO



new compassion centre

drawings for planning_ jul26







HELPING TOGETHER
LOVING TOGETHER
CHANGING LIVES TOGETHER
PROVIDING TOGETHER
TEACHING TOGETHER
SUPPORTING TOGETHER
EQUIPPING TOGETHER
FEEDING TOGETHER
CLOTHING TOGETHER
DOING IT TOGETHER

BUILDING TOGETHER

The story of Open Hands has been shaped by people who chose to play their part in serving our city. Today, we are inviting you to be part of our next chapter as we write the future of Open Hands together.

There are two ways you can help.

GIVE

Every gift will help create a forever home for Open Hands, where people who need it most can access essential practical support, gain skills and receive advice, helping them move forward and become part of a stronger community.

BANK TRANSFER

Account Name: **Open Hands**
Sort Code: **40-28-26**
Account Number: **61454757**
Reference: **'Building Together Fund'**

CHEQUE

Payable To: **Open Hands Trust (Leicester)**
Please indicate on the back: '**Building Together Fund**'
Address: **Open Hands, c/o One Church, One Centre,**
10 Frog Island, Leicester LE3 5AG

INVITE OTHERS TO GIVE

We would love your help in introducing us to others who may want to partner with us to build this Compassion Centre. There are two ways that you can be involved in this:

DIRECT CONNECTIONS - Personally share the vision with friends, family, neighbours, colleagues and invite them to consider partnering with us to build the new Compassion Centre.

WIDER CONNECTIONS - Share with us the details of wider connections you may have outside your personal network and we will connect with them with your permission.

We have created resources to help you to do this. Visit our dedicated building project website to access more resources with the information you need and to fill in a connection form:

WWW.BUILDING-TOGETHER.CO.UK

Thank you for considering what you can give and for helping to connect us with others who can make this vision a reality.

GIFT AID

giftaid it

Gift Aid is a UK government scheme that allows charities to claim an **extra 25p for every £1 you donate**, at no extra cost to you. It's the simplest way to make your donation go even further.

To qualify, you must be a UK taxpayer and make a Gift Aid declaration to Open Hands, confirming that you have paid enough tax to cover the amount being claimed. This means a donation of £100 becomes £125, and we take another step closer to the goal of building a forever home for Open Hands.

To enable us to claim Gift Aid, please complete the online form by using the link or scanning the QR code.

Thank you for helping your generosity go even further.
If you have any questions about Gift Aid or would like to discuss your giving, we'd be delighted to help.

If you need support, please ask.

https://tinyurl.com/openhandsgiftaid

NEED HELP?

If you have any questions about giving, would like to discuss making a larger gift, or would like to speak to someone about supporting the project, we'd love to hear from you.

Email: **buildingtogether@openhandsleicester.org.uk**
Telephone: **0116 326 1857**
Website: **www.building-together.co.uk**


PYE NIGHT
FURNITURE
ESSENTIALS HUB
ENGLISH CLASSES
Open Hands
EMERGENCY FOOD STORE
SOCIAL SUPERMARKET
home essentials hub



QUESTIONS

What happens next?

This is an exciting season for Open Hands. Following the submission of our building pre-application, we will continue working closely with architects, consultants and Leicester City Council to develop the plans for our new Compassion Centre.

Over the coming months, we will complete the necessary surveys and prepare our full planning application. Once planning permission has been secured and sufficient funding is in place, we look forward to beginning construction of the new Compassion Centre.

Throughout this journey, we will continue serving the people of Leicester from our current Compassion Centre in St Matthew's while keeping our supporters updated as we take each step towards making this vision a reality.

What will happen in the new Compassion Centre?

The Compassion Centre will be a place of welcome, hope and community. It will provide practical support for people experiencing poverty and hardship, alongside English classes, advice and guidance, counselling and wellbeing spaces, and room for community activities.

What will happen to the current Compassion Centre?
We currently rent our centre in St Matthews. When the time comes to move, our hope is that another charity with a similar mission will take on the lease of the building and continue to serve the community and bless our city.

What happens if we are not able to raise enough money to build?
We are taking a phased and responsible approach to funding the project through giving, grants, partnerships and, if necessary, borrowing. If we have not raised enough to begin construction, we will continue fundraising until we are in a position to move forward. We are committed to, and expecting, the project to proceed. However, in the very unlikely situation that we are ultimately unable to do so, the trustees will explore all options and decide how best to honour the purpose for which the gifts were given. We will write to everyone who has made a known gift to explain.

What if I'm not in a position to give. Can I still be involved?
Absolutely. Your encouragement, prayers and advocacy are just as valuable to us. You can help by sharing the vision with friends, family, churches, businesses or organisations who may be interested in supporting it. And if you pray, we would love you to pray for the project, for wisdom as plans progress, and for the many people whose lives will be impacted through this new Compassion Centre.









A gift - to a city -



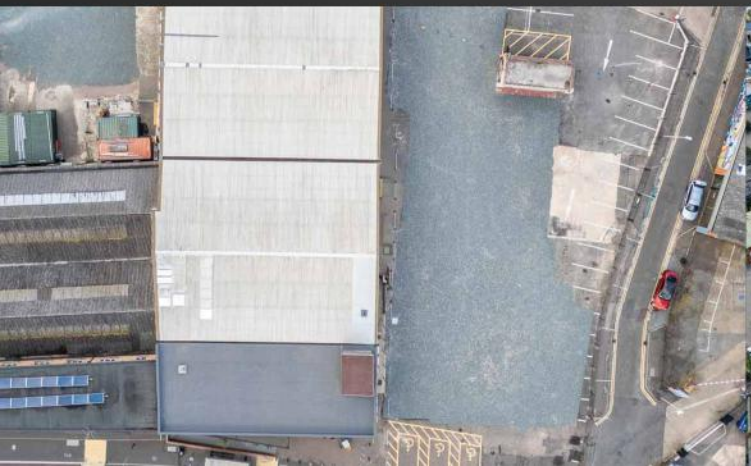








- for its people - forever





THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read about our vision. For the past 20 years, Open Hands has been privileged to serve people across Leicester. None of this would have been possible without the generosity, prayers and encouragement of people like you.

As we look to the future, we believe that this new Compassion Centre will become far more than the home of Open Hands. It will be a place where people find practical support, where charities work together, where communities connect and where God's love continues to be demonstrated in practical ways.

Thank you for considering how you can partner with us in securing a forever home for Open Hands.




OpenHands



Open Hands
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@OpenHandsLeics

www.openhandsleicester.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1121334