

# **Poplars'**

## **Annual Report 2010**

**Financial Statements  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010**



**Poplars Christian Fellowship  
Registered Charity No. 275682**

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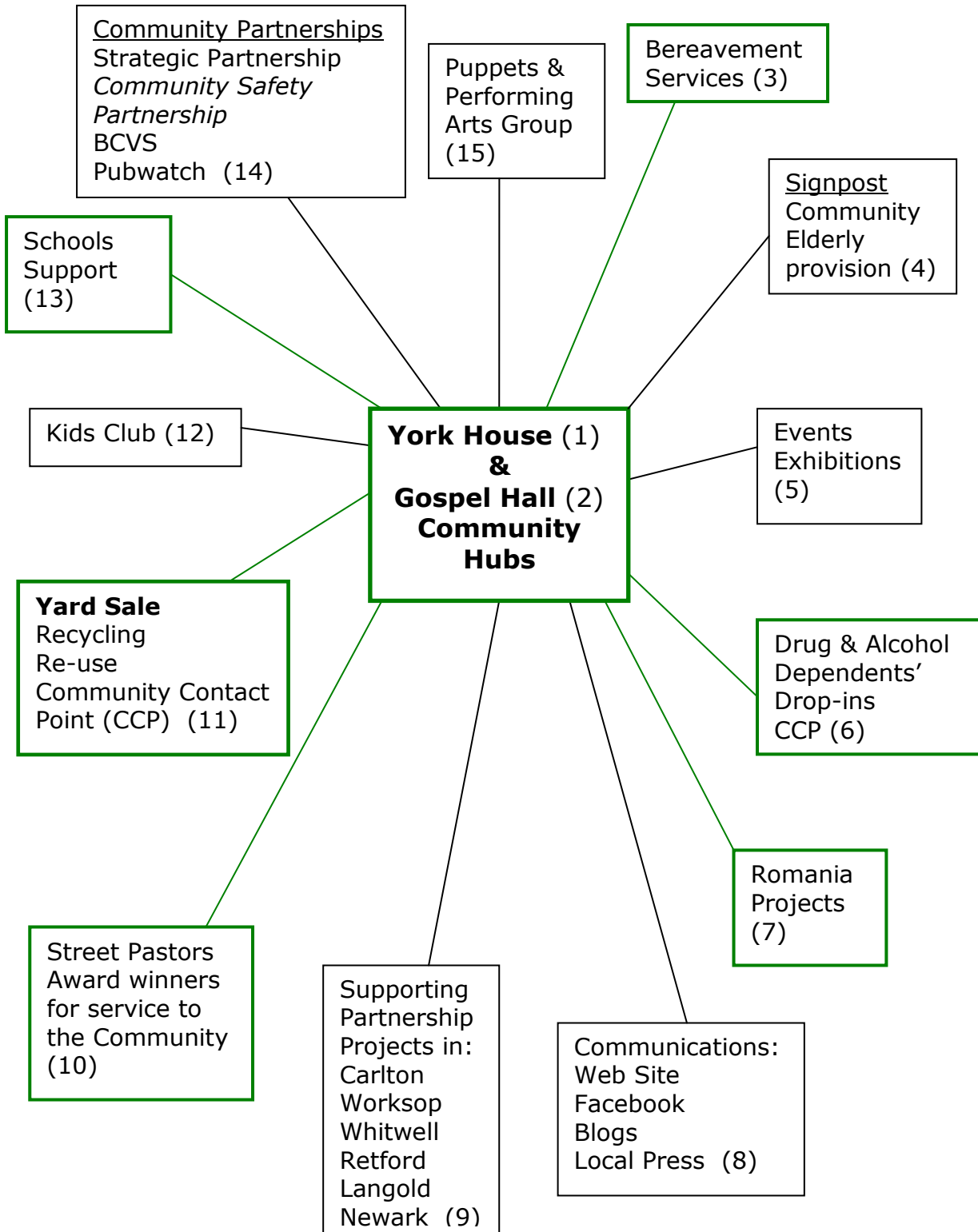
## **Introduction to Poplars' Annual Report 2010**

Every box on our year at a glance charts represents an aspect of our work; each could provide many moving stories and accounts of how our regular activities benefit the local and wider communities. Add to this the other acts of kindness that Poplars people do to express their faith and love in practical ways by serving the community, and a picture emerges of how a group of people following Jesus, as their main aim, add much to the notion of the Christian Church being at the heart of the community.

This report is written as a small snapshot of the things that are being achieved through Poplars' work.

**Poplars Annual Report 2010**  
**Our Year-at-a-Glance (A)**

Some of the ways in which we spend our time and money serving others is included in the boxes below. The numbers relate to the narrative and the boxes highlighted in green are given greater coverage in the report. All our activities are important and each box represents hours of voluntary service.



A local model of the Faith in action.

## Explanatory Notes to Box Chart (A):

(1) & (2) York House and The Gospel Hall in Worksop, along with (7) Hephzibah House in Romania, have become Community Hubs. They provide a strong vibrant centre, something that is essential to both stability and development. The staff and teams of regular volunteers bring their time and varied skills to the hubs contributing much to the ongoing effectiveness of Poplars' work. Regular activity within the hubs would include: effective and efficiently run admin for all church activities in UK and Romania, Retford & Worksop Street Pastors, Bereavement Services, Counselling/Mentoring work and the training of volunteers.

(3) We have developed a skilled team that specialises in the provision of funeral ceremonies – not unusual for a church you might think except most of our clients have no contact with the Christian Church and come to us recommended by local undertakers who appreciate our reputation for care and sensitivity. In times of grief and loss some people can be very vulnerable and in need of help and support to enable them to cope and adjust. This year our team has presided at nearly 100 funerals, each one is thoroughly researched and prepared to meet the family's personal need. This approach is very time consuming but is much appreciated by our clients.

Signpost (4) is a Community Contact Point (CCP) providing care for the elderly and is a partnership project amongst the Carlton Churches. Poplars' members are involved in every aspect of Signpost.

(5) We regularly attend local events and exhibitions to promote opportunities for volunteering and serving the community. We also provide speakers for community groups.

(6) We have pioneered a number of drop-ins for people caught up in the problems of drug and alcohol dependency. We currently provide three open drop-ins per week and support a churches partnership aimed at mentoring people towards professional help and rehabilitation. Our drop-ins average around 40 clients per week. Despite the massive investment by Statutory bodies, alcohol dependency continues to be a major problem within the community. Poplars are heavily involved in this work meeting many of the most vulnerable and needy in our community.

Romania (7): See separate report on page

Communications (8): This year we have significantly improved our communications, with a new website [www.poplarschurch.tv](http://www.poplarschurch.tv), joining facebook, in blogs - we write a regular article in the local press and have featured on local radio and in community publications.

Partnerships (9): We engage in and support partnership collaborative approaches to finding solutions to community needs wherever possible. This ethos takes us outside the box of preserving the work of individual churches and groups and leads towards and outworking of one Christian Church expressed in a whole variety of ways. Partnerships, we believe are the way forward and make a lot of sense in challenging economic times and would include agreements and protocols with Police and District Councils.

Street Pastors (10): Poplars have pioneered and facilitated the local Street Pastors' initiative, investing hours of time and energy to launch and develop the project. The effect has been dramatic - in the first twelve months Street Pastors,

many of whom are drawn from the Poplars' Community, provided 2,700 hours of voluntary service supporting the night-time community and have recently been awarded Nottinghamshire Police Divisional Commander's Commendation a copy of which is included in this report.

Yard Sale at York House (11): The Yard Sale serves as a major community contact point providing recycled and reused goods to a broad range of people, many of whom are transient, or elderly and from new community groups from Eastern Europe and Asia. The Yard Sale operates in all weathers and specialises in listening and caring and it provides a useful volunteering and training opportunity for a significant number of people. The Yard Sale partners with the Romania project and funds raised are channelled towards the work at Hephzibah House.

Kids Club (12): Kids Club meets at least three sessions per month and provides an outlet for energetic youngsters and respite for parents and carers who appreciate a few moments to chill out whilst others do constructive activities with the children.

Schools Support (13): Poplars continues to second Peter Hardy to a variety of schools and his work includes:- Advice on RE curriculum issues, Pastoral Care of staff, support of individual students experiencing difficulties and input into lessons and assemblies.

Community Partnerships (14): Part of Poplars' ethos is to serve the community and we have chosen to get involved in groups that make decisions and shape responses for local wellbeing, safety and improvement. Our participation in these committees helps build bridges with Statutory Agencies and private and voluntary sector bodies that are increasingly embracing the "one place" concept. The Church is not independent of, or separate from, the community and our involvement in this work has opened many useful doors to meet the needs of others.

Puppets (15): Several of our young people have their hands in the puppets, they along with a variety of music groups and bands, continue to be at the centre of our activity in performing arts.

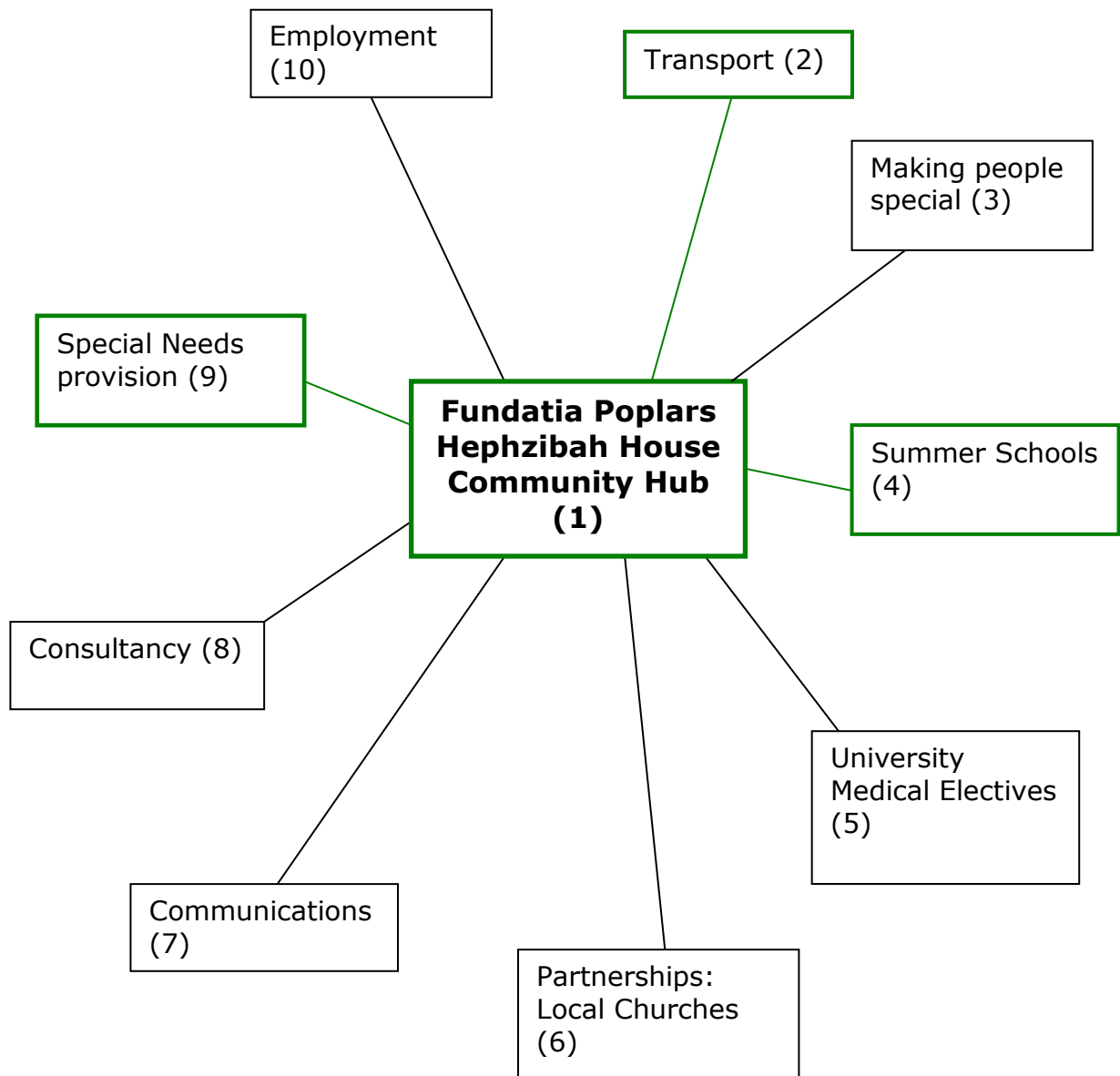
Measuring the success and effectiveness of our work as a charity can be done in many ways. We give a lot of time and energy to help others. An example of this would be the number of volunteer hours that Poplars' people give. Below is an illustration of some of the dedicated work by just 20 people.

Yard Sale (CCP) Volunteer Hours per year	3200
Monday Drug & Alcohol Dependents' drop-in Carlton (CCP) 4 volunteers x 4 hours per week x 40 sessions per year	640
Wednesday Drug & Alcohol Dependents' drop-in Worksop (CCP) 6 volunteers x 5 hours per week x 50 sessions per year	1500
Poplars support of Retford & Worksop Street Pastors 10 volunteers X 20 x 5 hours per year	<u>1000</u>
Volunteer Hours	6340

An analysis of the whole of Poplars' work in terms of hours given would reveal a massive contribution to the wellbeing of the community.

**Fundatia Poplars' Activity 2010**  
**Our Year-at- a-glance (B)**

Some of the ways in which we spend our time and money serving others include the information in the boxes below. The numbers relate to the narrative and the boxes highlighted in green are given greater coverage in the report. All our activities in, and for, Romania are important and each box represents hours of voluntary service.



## **Explanatory notes to Box Chart B**

### **Introduction:**

Although the Foundation was only registered in September 1997 the work of Poplars in Brasov goes back to March 1990 and initially offered much needed humanitarian and medical aid (estimated in the region of half a million pounds sterling), targeted at the needs of Brasov city and county. This aid served the people, including professionals, in areas such as Aids awareness training sessions, medical elective provision and placements in various hospitals, volunteer placements in a range of institutions, including schools, homes & orphanages, plus special needs provisions, emergency needs as well as general contacts into local communities and churches.

As time passed and local Romanian organisations improved, this input became more specialised and has concentrated on a continuing provision of social, emotional, practical and medical input by a range of professionals, medical elective students and voluntary aid workers into hospitals and institutions, plus the provision of Poplars' unique respite care centre which is not duplicated elsewhere in the district of Brasov.

Spring 2010 saw the twentieth anniversary of Poplars' work in, and for, Romania and in spite of severe financial pressures, we have been able to facilitate in excess of 3,000 voluntary aid workers (from the UK, Europe & North America) in placements and areas of need in and around the city of Brasov. At the same time Poplars have been active in mobilising, and benefiting from the energy and vitality of local UK voluntary input in areas of administration, fund raising, local schools, churches and specialist groups and organisations. Plus community involvement through the Yard Sale (Chart A, 11).

Hephzibah House (1), the Foundation's Hub Centre, has provided respite care for approximately 35 children, teenagers and adults, ages ranging from 5 to 45 years, on a 3 day per week basis over 47 weeks. Care appropriate to age and ability, in liaison with and support from parents, was provided by 3 full time and 1 part time members of staff, augmented by local Romanian and International volunteers. Activities such as: basic numeracy and reading, singing, film shows and life skills including: socialising, basic cooking, craftwork, painting and colouring have assisted individuals in dexterity, communication and empowerment. The input has been in liaison with the Special Needs Department of the Local Education Authority. A highlight was that one user was able to gain employment with a company in Brasov, obtaining an award for employee contribution.

Transport (2): Regular free transport to and from the centre has been a very important part of the provision for users and their families. Special one-off outings have included visits to the local zoo, castle and ski resort, fast-food restaurant and shopping centre. Poplars' activities have broadened the horizons and increased the opportunities for clients and their families to engage with and enjoy the wider community.

(3) Access to seasonal festivities and opportunities to honour users' birthdays and anniversaries have been great moments to have fun together, providing personal enjoyment, encouragement and affirmation.

Summer Schools (4): We provided two weeks of Summer School activities for users and their families involving: acting, face painting, water play, outdoor

sports and barbeques. This activity was provided by 16 volunteers from the UK Germany and Ireland, these events proved successful and enjoyable.

University Medical Electives (5): We provide placements in a number of hospitals for students at British Universities to have hands-on experience through medical electives in hospitals in Brasov. These students give and gain experience in cross-cultural medicine.

Local Churches (6): Following the partnership model in chart (9)A in Romania Norman Daniels and Peter Hardy have had input into local churches and in the UK have promoted the Romania work amongst a number of churches and organisations.

Communications (7): As part of (8)A we have continued to improve and develop our web and electronic communications to publicise and inform people about our work in Romania which has led to enquiries for volunteering from UK, Europe and North America particularly. We've also devoted time to creating audio-visual presentations to help with communication in schools and organisations.

Consultancy (8): The Romanian Foundation benefits from interest and input from three Romanian medical advisors who are consultants in their own spheres of infectious diseases, epidemiology and paediatrics. This brings a highly qualified, local, professional perspective to the work in, and from, Hephzibah House

Special Needs Provision (9): In light of our twenty years continuous input into Romania and the establishment of working relationships with schools and special need provision within the Local Authority the Foundation shares a number of activities which have proved to be mutually advantageous providing models of excellence for those with special needs.

Employment (10): Inevitably Poplars' input into Romania has given an enhancement to the local economy as well as providing full time and part time employment for a number of Romanian nationals. There has also been a similar benefit to the home base community where the Romania work affords many training, volunteer and resourcing opportunities.

Looking to the future we plan to continue the vital and important provision for those with special needs and their families. For some, being part of Poplars' work is a life changing experience and the highlight of their week. Despite difficult economic times we are looking to the future with confidence and we are having discussions with local people to diversify and expand our work in Romania. This may well include more community activities for the village of Sanpetru, possibly providing additional employment and volunteering opportunities and sustainability.

The Trustees and Management of Fundatia Poplars wish to express their thanks and appreciation to all who have contributed to the success of Poplars' work in Romania.

### **Treasurer's Comment**

My job as treasurer is made much easier by the generosity shown by the saints who make up the church. Over the year, we have drawn down on the reserves, as income has been a little lower than expenditure, but we have not had to alter any of the planned activities of the church as a result of financial restrictions. The Romania account, too, has drawn on its reserves, being much more reliant on responses to the published newsletters for its income, which can be a little more erratic. Nevertheless, the work has continued unabated. I remain confident that

the commitment of those who want to see the Kingdom of God expressed locally, and the people of Romania blessed, will ensure a stream of funds to enable this to happen.

### **Chair's Conclusion**

The annual report once again highlights the commitment and considerable freely given time by members of Poplars. It is the input of people and the giving of time rather than money that has such an impact on our community. Collaborative working with other churches and local organisations has enabled greater community support than could be achieved by working independently. The success of Street Pastors is a particularly good example of this.

The work of Poplars in Romania through Fundatia Poplars continues to provide a much-needed service and the opportunity for volunteering in a different culture. The public no longer sees Romania as needy but whilst Romania is very different to when Poplars was first involved the work done now is still unique in the area.

The Trustees are extremely grateful to all those who give their time, effort and money in whatever way.



## **DIVISIONAL COMMANDER'S COMMENDATION**

### **WORKSOP & RETFORD STREET PASTORS**

The Worksop and Retford Street Pastors offer an invaluable service to the community.

By patrolling the areas frequented by patrons of the night time economy, the Pastors give valuable support to the emergency services. Their visible presence and diplomatic approach diffuses violent situations. They also provide succour and comfort to injured individuals and by removing potential weapons and broken glass from the area, prevent further injuries occurring. The quality of life of residents of these areas has improved as a direct result.

Since the Scheme's implementation, the men and women undertaking the Pastor role have volunteered thousands of hours of their own time to turn out for duty, whatever the weather conditions.

This commendation is awarded in recognition of their dedication and commitment to provide this unique public spirited service and support.



CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT DAVE WAKELIN  
BASSETLAW, NEWARK & SHERWOOD DIVISION  
12 OCTOBER 2010