

This is not the version of record. The final published version of Baverstock, Alison, Steinitz, Jackie and Cowie, Andrew (2022) How can shared-reading be used to develop community connectivity within the contemporary church? *Logos*, 33(1), pp. 36-45 can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1163/18784712-03104031> .

## **How can shared-reading be used to develop community connectivity within the contemporary church?**

Rev Professor Alison Baverstock, Jackie Steinitz and Rev Andrew Cowie

Alison Baverstock was an ordinand whose sending parish is St Nicholas Church in Thames Ditton, of which Rev Andrew Cowie is the incumbent. Jackie Steinitz is an economist and data analyst who has worked with Baverstock on a range of book-related research projects. Baverstock and Steinitz first established a book club together in 1995.

### **Abstract**

This paper reports on a project to use, within church communities, previous experience within universities and schools of shared-reading within the context of widening participation, outreach and community inclusion. It outlines and explores the experience of selecting a book, and its subsequent discussion amongst a group of parishioners, to promote a sense of connectedness and belonging. The outcomes have implications for creating and strengthening links within existing church communities, offering outreach to those who live locally but are not regular attenders, and drawing others towards involvement with the church from the wider, and not necessarily geographically local, community.

### **Background**

The importance of reading for pleasure within the development of a rounded individual has been widely explored within a variety of different disciplinary contexts, from neuroscience and child development to publishing studies and literacy.

The research outcomes are consistent: that a reading habit develops the individual and correlates with a number of positives for the future life of those involved, from improved articulacy and higher earnings to greater safety and happiness. Associated research can be found internationally, within the different disciplines within which it has been studied, or collectively (The Reading Agency and BOP Consulting, 2015). Summarising the value of this research, the former CEO of Random House, Dame Gail Rebeck, commented (Guardian, 2011):

‘They found that “readers mentally simulate each new situation encountered in a narrative.” (Halsey-Collins, 2011). The brain weaves these situations together with experiences from its own life to create a new mental synthesis. Reading a book leaves us with new neural pathways... The research shows that if we stop reading, we will be different people: less intricate, less empathetic, less interesting. There can hardly be a better reason for fighting to protect the future of the book.’

Reading has also been shown to correlate with positive mental health. Reading can offer a safe escape space from current difficulties, a chance to be objective about an experience that may be personally relevant but has been so far unencountered and see it through someone else’s eyes, and an inexhaustible range of resources with which to continue the habit (because so many books exist). Best-selling author, Marian Keyes, has talked memorably about the part books can play in aiding positive mental health. (Keyes, 2017).

Reading can tempt you out of comfort zones and widen your perspective, which can be useful in business. In addition to commenting on the value of a book club in general, business analyst John Coleman (Coleman, 2016) commented:

First, book clubs make it easier to commit to systematic reading habits. Each year, I commit to reading at least 12 books unrelated to my work. The book club I belong to is an essential

reminder of that goal. Groups help reinforce commitment. In a world in which only 8% (Diamond, 2013) of people achieve their New Year's resolutions...

Engaging with diverse content — fiction, history, biography, social science — can pull you out of your day-to-day routine and help you make connections between ideas from other fields that might be relevant to your work or life.

Kingston University has experimented with, and analysed, the use of shared-reading within its welcome for students, sending a free book to every individual about to join them to let them know they are expected, reduce anxiety about arrival, offer common ground for conversation – and, in particular, offer something to talk about on the dreaded first day. The university attracts a high number of first-generation students (the first in their family to attend higher education) and who are hence often unable to draw on supporting reassurance from their family and are consequently nervous. The arrival of a free book, bearing the university's logo and with a welcome letter from the author, reflecting on how they felt to be starting in higher education, has been shown to reduce anxiety, increase a sense of belonging and promote personal confidence. This has been recorded, analysed and reported in a series of academic papers (Baverstock and Steinitz, 2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2019; Baverstock and Somerville, 2018).

Other experience of shared-reading in the development of family connections and wider community-building has been undertaken through the project *Reading Force*<sup>1</sup>, which encourages Forces families to share books in order to bridge gaps in communication, particularly when families are separated through deployment, training or the prospect of another move (Baverstock, 2013; Baverstock and Gordon, 2013 and Baverstock, 2016).

### **Particular context for this project**

The pandemic of 2020 led many churches to move their operation online; to find new ways of interacting and building community. Within St Nicholas Church in Thames Ditton, a range of new initiatives were tried, from a weekly quiz, organised by the curate Rev Sarb Klair, to a book group. It is the latter that is the subject of this paper, both its operation and how the findings might be relevant to the church as a whole.

This paper reports on the first five meetings of the group, and explores members' responses to a subsequent survey, asking about the book group and its relevance to their lives, membership of their specific church, wider community and the Church of England as a whole. The specific context of the pandemic is relevant, as in more usual times it is likely that the first meeting would have been in person. During the pandemic those involved also potentially had more leisure time than usual and were not able to meet in their regular ways (e.g. church congregation and house groups).

### **Structure and operation of the St Nicholas Book Group**

Based on previous experience of the use of book clubs in connecting community, plans for a church book group were communicated through various ways: during the 'notices' at the end of online services, within the parish newsletter and by word of mouth. A community newsletter, in print and online form (*About Thames Ditton*, edited by Susie Morgan<sup>2</sup>) also tweeted references to the group. The group met for the first time in June 2020 and has thereafter met monthly, on the last Thursday of each calendar month. It met for the first time the week after the final parish quiz, organised throughout the first lockdown by the curate, taking on the slot in the week that parishioners were used to. At the point at which the research took place, it had held five online meetings, each for 75 minutes.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.readingforce.org.uk](http://www.readingforce.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [About Thames Ditton – the directory of who's who and what's what around about Thames Ditton](#)

The first meeting concentrated on how a group might operate, based on the experience of others. Thereafter, and based on expressed preferences at the first meeting, the group has either concentrated on a particular title or met to discuss reading in general. The first two books were titles from the list of Kingston University Big Read choices and surplus stock was placed at the back of church for collection – or posted/hand-delivered to the housebound. Subsequent book choices were made by members of the group, with the sponsoring member introducing the title to all present. Attendance was generally around 9-12, with a core of regulars who attended every time.

In November 2020 a survey was developed to ask participants about the experience of taking part. This was based on the surveys used in Kingston Big Reads, so comparisons could be made between the two projects.

The survey included a range of different question types, from rating scales and preferred options to regular opportunities for free comment. While the respondents were assured of anonymity, and that names would not be available to those managing the feedback, a certain courtesy bias needs to be allowed for. The group mostly came from the area close to the church, had chosen to be part of an initiative that encouraged more reading. All are now known, to some extent, to the book group coordinators, and a tendency to be positive about an initiative they had been part of since the book group began can be assumed. It should also be noted that the sample is small, and based on an area that is relatively prosperous.

The survey was sent out twice, each time as an 'option to click' within an email from vicar and first author of this paper. The response rate was very high. Between 4-18<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 15 people filled in the questionnaire, out of a possible total of 16. The age-range of responders was fairly broad, ranging from 30-75+, though the majority were in the age-range of 30-75+ and female. All but one of the responders identified themselves as white (one preferred not to answer), and there was a mixture of household sizes. All but one lived in the parish or locally, but not in the parish. Slightly more than half were book group novices, so although familiar with the concept of a book group, they had not previously participated themselves before. In all questions requesting a scaled response, recipients were asked to grade their response on a seven-point scale, ranging from indifferent to very keen.

## **Key findings**

### **1. The idea of a parish/local book club**

Participants were asked about their response to the idea of book club, when they first heard about it. The response was overwhelmingly positive. While one responder reported themselves 'indifferent', 14 reporting a response or moderately to very pleased.

### **2. Books being chosen by others rather than the individual reader**

Book groups come in many different formats, but a common one is the choice of a book that all will read by a single group member, resulting in members having their reading material effectively chosen for them. This can be an interesting experience and given that the majority of members had not belonged to a group before, itself a surprising aspect of the project, was a significant area to explore. The range of responses was more varied than to the idea of a book group, being spread across the range from moderately pleased (3) to very pleased (4).

Given the opportunity to comment on this, most were positive. Key themes included a valuable opportunity to broaden horizons, take on a challenge and read books participants might not otherwise have come across. Comments included:

I enjoy reading, but struggle to find books that I want to buy when browsing in a bookshop/online. It is great to be able to get to hear about books from other people, with different backgrounds as it is a good way to be exposed to other views and ideas. I have not been disappointed yet!

I find this a challenge -- we each have different tastes, some of us are drawn to romance, others to a good crime thriller, others to the great classics. I feel we can each benefit from opening our minds to books which we wouldn't necessarily buy for ourselves if left to choose. Refreshing to know how much there is to learn if given the chance.

Most respondents (13/15) generally finished the books.

### 3. Wider discussion of the book group and book choices

When asked if they had discussed the books with anyone outside the group meeting, the response was high:

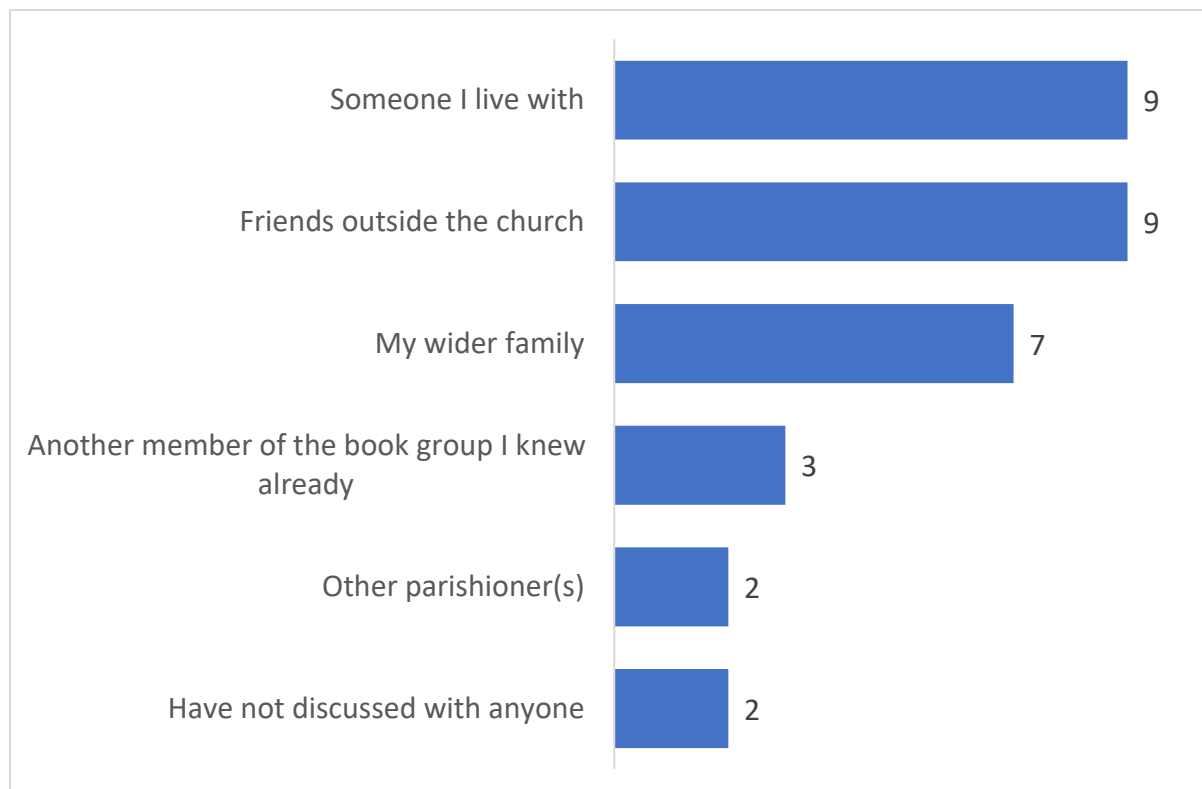


Figure 1: Have you discussed the books with anyone outside the group meeting?

This replicates the responses to other book-sharing initiatives referred to, where a very common response is to talk more about books, with a variety of individuals. Thus book sharing can be deduced to lead to further conversations about books – and wider connectivity.

### 4. Other impacts of involvement in the book group

Book group members were also asked about how their involvement in the book group sat alongside a number of other church- and faith-related involvements, such as reading the Bible or taking part in a prayer or study group. Participants were asked whether they had considered taking part in, or increased their involvement in, these activities.

Participants commented on:

- A deepened sense of connection with the book group & St Nicholas Church
- Greater likelihood to consider joining another church-related forum
- That they were already involved with such groups and so a low level of *increased* involvement reported in the findings might be because they were already taking part. Their

commitment to such activities, as evinced by greater likelihood to consider joining another church-related forum, can be deduced – although was not specifically asked about.

A section of the discussion during each book group was also allocated to the search for Christological parallels in the chosen text (themes that relate to the life and ministry of Christ), led by Rev Andrew Cowie. These drew particular comment, and related discussions were generally considered impactful. Respondents thought they were more likely to consider looking for Christological parallels in secular books. For some the word ‘Christological’ was not familiar, but having been alerted to it, there was a general response that this was a useful part of the book group discussion although generally one of which participants had not been aware before. Verbatim comments included:

I missed this discussion but it's something I keep meaning to look up and know more about.

I had not thought about this aspect before.

### 5. Involvement in the book club leading to a wider sense of connection

Participants were asked what impact belonging to the book group had had on a sense of belonging to wider groups: the local church, the book group and the wider Church of England. It is noticeable that the sense of connection was marginally stronger with the local church than the book group (an average of 5.5 out of a possible 7 with the church, compared to 5.3 with the book group) although it was higher than their sense of connection with the Church of England as a whole (3.3 out of 7).

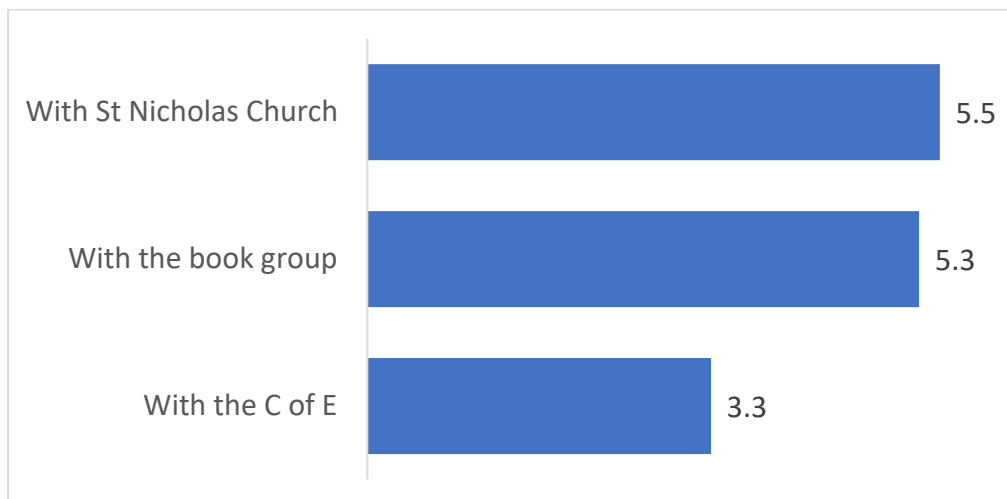


Figure 2: What impact has being part of the St Nicholas Book Club had on your sense of connection with the following groups: St Nicolas Church, the book group, the Church of England? Responders were asked to grade their sense of connection on a seven-point scale, ranging from ‘no sense of connection’ to ‘significant sense of connection’.

### 6. Participant feedback on how book club involvement relates to the development of faith

Every session of the book group has so far included a brief consideration of Christological aspects of the title chosen, with this part of the discussion facilitated by Rev Andrew Cowie.

Participants were asked an initial question on whether the discussion within the book club relating to Christology impacted them? A broad definition of Christology was given as ‘looking for parallels with the life or teaching of Jesus). Offered the option of a seven-point scale, an average response was 4.3.

Respondents were also asked to comment on changes in their intentions or behaviour relating to faith-based activities since joining the book club.

	Likelihood of considering	Extent to which become more actively involved
Looking for Christological parallels	4.3	3.4
Joining another church-related forum	4.0	2.1
Reading the Bible	3.2	2.6
Joining a prayer group	2.8	2.2
Attending a house or Bible study group	2.8	2.1

Figure 3: Since joining the book club, have you found yourself more likely to consider any of the following? (Followed by a list of options, as offered above). Since joining the book club, have you found yourself more actively involved with any of the following? (Followed by same list of options). Figures represent an average Score on 7-point scale where: 1=No effect, 7=Much more likely/much more involved.

Participants were able to make additional comments on the religious impacts of the book club and these included:

I enjoy discussing the parallels of book themes (pilgrimage/loss/grief etc) in the context of Christianity and the teachings of Jesus and would even encourage a bit more of that (say five minutes dedicated to that per session).

For some participants, both the word Christology and the concept of looking for parallels of Jesus in secular literature, were new:

I had not thought about the Christological effect of book reading before

Some found responding to the associated questions difficult as they were already engaged in the activities listed, so these could not be itemised as outcomes of the book club. For example:

I have scored the questions above but have been involved with all of these church activities prior to joining the book club.

## 7. Format of the book club

Most were happy to meet either online or in person, recognising barriers and benefits to each format. Several people suggested mixing the formats once 'life becomes more normal', so accessing the benefits of reduced meeting (e.g. going out in the evenings when it's dark; general accessibility; warmth). There were comments about it being difficult to know online when it is your turn to speak, and the value of having an effective chair who can encourage participation from the less vocal.

The length of the sessions – 75 minutes – was considered to be effective, particularly for those who spend a lot of time online during the day.

Benefits mentioned to online meeting included:

- Easier to turn up/join in
- Convenient/comfortable/less tiring than having to go out
- Possible to contribute even if you have caring responsibilities
- No need to travel on wet/windy night
- Feel safe at home
- Increased focus on individual who is talking
- Very welcome in these 'strange times'
- Provides interaction for people who are shielding or have mobility issues

Barriers mentioned to online meeting included:

- Less human contact and connection with others; the book club experience feeling less personal
- More difficult to read body language and signals as to timing/appropriateness and amount of speaker's input
- Don't get same "side-bar" conversations/less opportunity to form friendships or have informal chats before/after
- Technical issues/delays in responses/sometimes people talking simultaneously
- Might preclude some people joining or participating fully

#### **8. Overall benefit to the parish (whether or not you like the books chosen)**

Participants were asked whether or not the book club was overall beneficial to the parish, and to do this irrespective of the titles chosen to share. All respondents rated it as between somewhat and very beneficial, and the average score on a seven-point rating scale was 6.1 out of 7, which is very high, particularly in comparison with other book-sharing initiatives run by the authors of this paper.

There were similarly positive responses to the likelihood of recommending belonging to a book group to others, and this was not limited to parish or faith-based involvement. Ten people (out of 14) responded as 'very likely' and the average score was 6.4 out of 7.

Respondents were also asked to comment on the barriers and benefits to organising a parish book club.

**Perceived barriers included:**

- Perceptions of what others might think:  
"People might think it is a holy huddle"  
"Might some think we would only read books about God"
- Perceptions about who is invited:



“Inviting friends who are not Christian”

“No barriers, other than technical, to taking part, but it must be careful not to be seen as exclusive or “high-brow” or in any way make people feel they are not intellectual enough to join”

“The only barrier currently is me not being an active member of St. Nicholas parish, but I have been made to feel very welcome and not at all like an “outsider”. Other non-members may not feel like they are able to join the group if they are not active members of the church? (That would have been my reaction, if I had not been invited to join by another book club member) There is a good balance between the focus of reading books and sharing thoughts with the faith element.”

- Barriers caused by technology:

“Limit on numbers – will it become unmanageable?”

“Balance between welcoming new members and everyone getting a say”

#### **Perceived benefits included:**

- Connection/fellowship/feeling part of something bigger

“Providing connection and fellowship/allowing people to get to know each other and build relationships through medium of discussing books read.”

“Get to know people you might not come in contact with e.g. they go to different services.”

“Great way to develop new/build on existing relationships.”

- Socialising as a community

“Good to be relaxed and socialise as a community.”

“We are already family – it is pleasant to see each other in new, non-church ways.”

“It is good sometimes to have something which isn’t ‘churchy’”

- Christological reading of books

“Reading books Christologically gives us a gentle and not overtly evangelistic way of bringing faith into the conversation without it being threatening or too strong”

“It allows me to express faith-related sentiments in a non-judgemental environment”

- Stimulating

“Meeting new people with varied backgrounds which sparks new ideas and general comprehension of books but also life in general”

- Expanding reach

“As a non-parishioner, I am now more aware of St. Nicholas and its activities. The book club gives St.Nicholas a wider reach into the community than it would perhaps normally have?”

‘I can think of nothing better than a book club which becomes a permanent feature and part of St Nicholas’s activities. It’s a tool for learning, one feels included and it’s good to be given a voice and an opportunity to express your thoughts as well as to listen to those of others. I can think of nothing better.’

#### **9. Additional suggestions by the respondents**

The questionnaire offered regular opportunities for respondents to add additional thoughts, and these included a number of valuable suggestions.

- Possibilities for meeting in person some months, online in others
- WhatsApp group to supplement the meetings/share ideas
- Discussion each meeting on parallels for the book themes (e.g. pilgrimage / loss /grief) in the context of Christianity and the teachings of Jesus

- Rotating topic areas/genre with selected book choice for each meeting
- Possibly setting out to choose books related to topics of the Christian faith such as trust, honesty, truth, respect and forgiveness. (However “Not sure how successful that would be”)

One area that received wide comment was on how to make the book choice, with suggestions including:

- Not too long
- It being available in libraires
- Not too high brow
- There being no limit to the selection
- Ensuring a variety over the year in genres and levels of approachability

It should be noted however that respondents had commented earlier in the survey, and positively, on reading books they might not have come across themselves.

## **10. Conclusions**

There are several important outcomes to this research project.

1. The importance of shared-reading in connecting a community is confirmed.
2. There was strong validation of the St Nicholas Book Group by respondents. They were pleased to hear about it, liked the concept of reading books chosen by others, discussed the process of belonging and taking part with others and would strongly recommend belonging to a group to others.
3. The value of Christological discussions was affirmed, as both (largely) unexpected for secular books, and valuable to members. Rev Andrew Cowie commented that ‘searching for Christological parallels’ had entered the vocabulary of book club members, and hence leaked out into the wider congregation, in a way that he would not have expected outside theological college.

### **How useful is this research to the wider mission of the Church of England?**

This research took place at a time when it was difficult for congregations to be together, so it is possible that the book group was particularly valued because of this. It will be interesting to see if the high attendance continues once lockdowns and restrictions on social gathering are eased. While many of the constants thought useful for the establishment of any kind of book group (e.g. BBC Radio 4 Extra, 2014; The Reading Agency, 2021) there are some additional constraints that come from doing this online, some of which may turn out to outweigh the negatives.

The work is interesting in the context of the comments of Rev Nicky Gumbel, who spoke about the impact of being forced to move their current Alpha course online, when the pandemic began in March 2020. He commented in an interview that he had always assumed that the course would not work online, and needed to be an in-person activity. But when the first lockdown forced them to move their current course online for the last two sessions, and then meet online throughout for subsequent courses, he found that the benefits outweighed anticipated/actual disadvantages. In addition to the period of great uncertainty when people had more time and were looking for answers to big questions, practical benefits of operating online included: people feeling more comfortable in their own homes; participants from the outset referencing each other by name, because names are visible on screen; people being more open, more able to be vulnerable when not able to be together in person; quicker community connection; easier physical access; attendance by those who might not turn up to a public meeting (e.g. those from other faiths). He commented in particular: ‘I think we are in week five tonight; it feels more like week nine’. (Gumbel, 2020)

Other book groups have been set up during lockdown, to combat isolation. For example, author Robert MacFarlane announced a shared read over Twitter, which led to altruistic behaviours:

On Twitter, *Underland* author Robert Macfarlane has already recruited hundreds to his global read-along of *The Living Mountain* by Nan Shepherd, under the hashtag #CoReadingVirus. Some participants have even purchased extra copies of the book for those who cannot afford them. (Hunt, 2020)

Others commented on an online book group feeling like an authentic experience:

Without cues from body language, and with only one person able to speak at a time, the discussion required “more active management” than usual, says West. But “it went really well – so well that I woke up the next day and thought, ‘God, I haven’t cleaned up after book club last night.’ It was quite a long time before I went downstairs and realised it had just been me, sat on the sofa. It felt really genuine. (Hunt, 2020)

As well as having implications for the Church of England, there are also implications for those seeking to develop inclusion and connectedness within any institution. The finding that participants felt slightly more connected to the institution (Figure 2, in this case the parish) than to other group members has implications for the likely benefits of shared-reading within the promotion of institutional loyalty and organisational cohesion in other corporations.

In conclusion, a church book group has the potential to extend community, and reveal to the non-attending community that the church is at the heart of what else is going on in the locality. It normalises church activity and offers a ‘soft mission’ approach to those who would be unlikely to come along to church services as their first point of connection. The outcomes of this research also have the potential to build outreach for the wider Church of England; to raise its visibility as a point of community connection and discussion, as well as faith – and from which starting point faith may build.

## References

Baverstock, A., Steinitz, J. et al (2016). ‘The implementation of a shared-reading programme within a university: a case study’. *Logos* 27(2), pp.48-61.

Baverstock, A., Steinitz, J. et al. (2017a). ‘What was the process and response of university staff and students to the availability of a shared-reading scheme for those embarking on a university education? A case study.’ *Logos*, 28(1) pp.29-44.

Baverstock, A., Steinitz et al. (2017b) ‘How do you choose a book for a pre-arrival shared-reading scheme in a University?’ *Logos* 28 (3) pp.41-56.

Baverstock, A. (2017) ‘Librarians as partners – engaging and effective’, *CILIP Update* (June 2017), pp.38-40.

Baverstock, A. and Somerville, C. (2018). ‘Does free mean without value? And is free ever worth stealing? The process, outcomes and learnings from a practice as research project encouraging recipients of books for pre-arrival shared-reading at a university to value what they receive. *Logos* 29(1) pp.38-54.

Baverstock, A., Steinitz, J. et al. (2019). 'Using pre-arrival shared-reading to promote a sense of community - between 30,000 students, 10,000 staff and over 450 miles. A case study across two institutions.' *Logos* 30 (1) pp.123-138.

Baverstock, A., Steinitz, J. et al (2020). 'The Big Read collaboration between Kingston University, The University of Wolverhampton, Edge Hill University and the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), 2018-19.' *Logos* 31 (1).

Baverstock, A. (2013). 'Reading Force: practice as research in the context of a shared-reading project for Forces families', *Logos* 24(2), pp.24-32.

Baverstock, A. (2016). 'What are the barriers to trying to reach, and evaluate the impact of working with Forces Families? Assessing the effectiveness of *Reading Force*, a programme to promote shared-reading within the Forces community'. *Logos*, 27(4), pp.36-56.

Baverstock, A. and Gordon, H. (2013). 'Reading Force: can an experience of shared-reading be used as a conduit to effective communication within both services families and their wider communities.' *Children in War: The International Journal of Evacuee and War Child Studies*, 1(10), pp.77-88.

BBC Radio 4 Extra (2014). Running a book group. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/book-club/running-a-club/> [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021].

[Coleman, J. \(2016\). Why business people should join book clubs. The Harvard Business review. Why Businesspeople Should Join Book Clubs \(hbr.org\)](#) 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. [Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021].

Diamond, D. (2013). Just 8% of People Achieve Their New Year's Resolutions. Here's How They Do It. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dandiamond/2013/01/01/just-8-of-people-achieve-their-new-years-resolutions-heres-how-they-did-it/?sh=712f6fe2596b> 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021].

Gumbel, N. (2020). [Nicky Gumbel on Alpha online - YouTube](#) 19th May 2020. [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021].

Halsey-Collins, E. (2014). Reading and the brain. Reprinted with reusable license from original paper of 2011 [Reading and the Brain by Esme Halsey-Collins \(prezi.com\)](#)

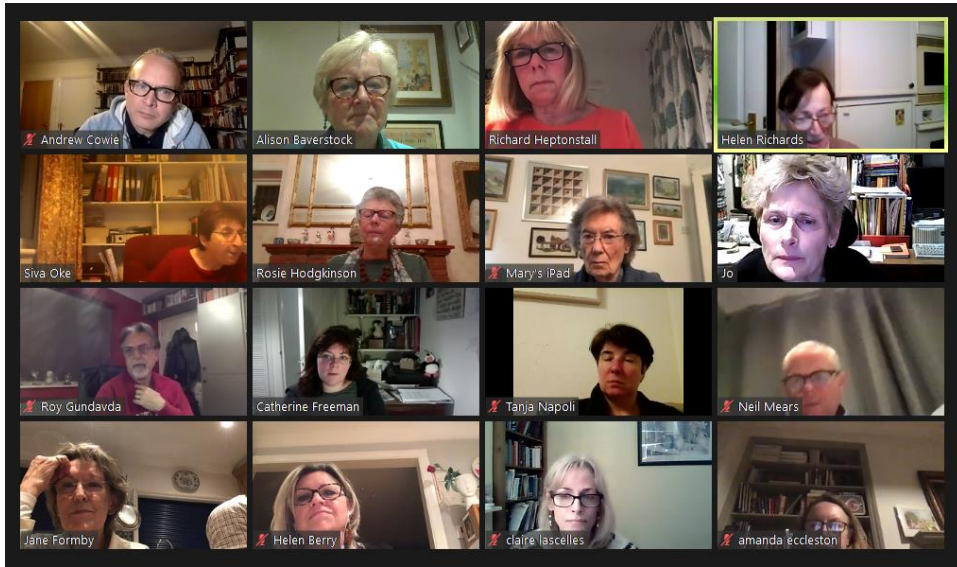
Hunt, E. (2020). The perfect time to start: how book clubs are enduring and flourishing during Covid-19. *The Guardian*, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/mar/26/the-perfect-time-to-start-how-book-clubs-are-enduring-and-flourishing-during-covid-19> [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021].

Keyes, M. (2017). Desert Island Discs. [BBC Radio 4 - Desert Island Discs, Marian Keyes](#)

Rebeck, G. (2012). 'Humans have the need to read'. Opinion, *The Guardian* [Humans have the need to read | Books | The Guardian](#) (30<sup>th</sup> December, 2011) [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2021].

The Reading Agency and BOP Consulting, 2015. Literature Review: The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment June 2015  
<https://readingagency.org.uk/news/The%20Impact%20of%20Reading%20for%20Pleasure%20and%20Empowerment.pdf>

The Reading Agency, 'How to start a reading group'. <https://readinggroups.org/resources/2270> [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021].



The St Nicholas Book Group in progress. Top left, Rev Andrew Cowie, next to him Rev Alison Baverstock