



## Welcome to Openshaw



Like moths to a flame, the children of Openshaw were attracted to the cameras as this year's Home Mission film crew landed at Mersey Street Baptist Tabernacle. So they were enlisted to give the viewer a lively welcome to the film depicting the refusal of our church to lie down and die.

The Home Mission video features our story along with two films made by youth groups about the work of Home Mission.

After decades of deprivation—and feeling isolated from our Church family—being the focus for the video gave us a real sense of being

loved and supported.

It was wonderful to see Baptist Union General Secretary, David Coffey learning from the wisdom of David and Ida as they told the church's story. Asked how

she feels about the church's future, Ida burst out, "We've no flaming option!", a clip which was shown twice to the 3500 delegates at the recent

Baptist Assembly in Cardiff. But, of course, Ida was right. If we are to be a Christian presence in our community, then we have 'no flaming option' about where we work. This is our home. We love it—and God loves it!

"We've no  
flaming  
option"

## Homeless?

As we reported last time, the area in which Mersey Street is situated is to be redeveloped over the next few years. For the last three years we have been working with the Primary Care Trust and the various regeneration agencies in East Manchester to develop a Healthy Living Centre into which the church would be able to move when our existing building is demolished.

Sadly, the costs of the Healthy Living Centre were too high—not for the church, but rather for the City Council! The GPs are, therefore, going ahead with a new surgery of their own leaving us, for the moment at least, without a partnership and without any money to redevelop the old cooperative building, which is still owned by the regeneration partnership.

The consequence of this is that the church may well find itself without a home at all in a couple of years' time. Although we still hope to develop the HLC, it will take many months to re-build partnerships and to find the capital required (some £2.5 million!). In the meantime, the land on which Mersey Street is built will be required sooner rather than later for the new housing on which the regeneration depends. We are left, therefore, exploring possible options to ensure that we continue as a living Christian presence in our community, but feeling rather insecure.



Our much-loved 'sanctuary' will have to give way to new housing

[www.openshawconnection.org.uk](http://www.openshawconnection.org.uk)

[www.openshawconnection.org.uk](http://www.openshawconnection.org.uk) 'went live' on February 1st. Here you can catch up with all the latest news from Openshaw and share some of the liturgical resources we have developed in response to our life in an area of regeneration. If you create an account, you can enter into our discussion areas, post your own responses to our stories and even - yes, we know it is sad - have a game of Space Invaders!



Openshaw Connection is one way of sharing our faith journey with the wider church family. We will continue to add to the resources available, but we hope that you will join us to turn Openshaw Connection into a real 'virtual community' of those who wish to share in our faith journey.

## Contact Details

The Openshaw Connection is a two-way process. Please get in touch with us to share your stories and reactions to our stories.

**website:** [www.openshawconnection.org.uk](http://www.openshawconnection.org.uk)

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## Connecting

We have also been connecting in a variety of ways. Together with Mary Cotes, we have developed a workshop entitled *Old Socks and Communion Wine* to help groups examine their theology of Eucharist. Clare has had also some of her writings published by Roots worship resources