



Sussex  
**emmaus**

working together to end homelessness

# Direction 2030

*Our Community's strategy into the next decade*



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# Direction 2030

- sets out the long-term strategic ambition for our Community into the next decade;
- creates a framework for implementing the strategic actions, projects and associated supportive work that will be needed to deliver on our vision;
- Intends an annual review, to ensure our plans are adapting to change and our work is funded and provides value for money;
- looks to establish and maintain a shared narrative for everyone within our Community.

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## Our heritage from the Emmaus Movement



We are part of the secular, national and international Emmaus movement. It began in post war Paris, where homelessness and poverty were big issues. It was the brainchild of Abbé Pierre – an MP, Catholic priest and former member of the French Resistance. When he met people in need, he chose to help them to help themselves, instead of providing ‘charity’. This simple premise saw vulnerable people begin to rebuild their confidence, sense of dignity, trust and self-respect, as well as developing new skills, relationships and self-belief.

These early ‘Companions’ (as members of Emmaus communities came to be known) set about building houses for homeless families and began collecting things that people no longer wanted and selling them on. This saw the start of the first Emmaus social enterprise, with Companions actively working in their own communities. ‘Work’ remains a core part of life and development for Companions within Emmaus globally and our Sussex Community. It was also the beginning of what we might now call ‘up-cycling’ and the increasing contribution Emmaus Communities now make towards caring for the environment.

Abbé Pierre's approach also sparked one of the most important parts of the Emmaus ethos - 'Solidarity' – working to help someone less fortunate than yourself. Acts of Solidarity can vary from raising money for a charity that means a lot to a Companion or particular Emmaus Community, to helping someone in the wider local community. Work and Solidarity boost both self-respect and self-belief.

**OUR VISION AND MISSION**  
We take these from the Emmaus Movement

**Vision**  
'A world in which everyone has a home and a sense of belonging'

**Mission**  
'To work together to overcome homelessness and social exclusion'



## *Our Own Community's History*

Our Emmaus Community opened on 3rd February 1997, on the site of the historic St Marye's Convent in Portslade Old Village. We inherited a 'listed' site with the responsibilities that carries with it. It was founded by a group of individuals who were inspired by other Emmaus Communities they had seen abroad and were passionate about doing something to reduce homelessness in our city. It opened with four Companions, one Community Leader and one shop.

## *What do we do?*

Sussex Emmaus now provides accommodation and meaningful work opportunities for up to 57 people with lived experience of homelessness and social isolation. We are different from other homeless organisations, in that we provide a home for as long as someone needs it, along with meaningful work in our Community businesses.

This stable environment is often just the support Companions need to rebuild their lives. Through structure and learning new skills to help regain confidence, and by addressing any issues that may have led to them becoming homeless, they can find a long-term way to overcome homelessness. For many, the opportunity of a home and meaningful work are life savers, a warm and dry place where they can feel safe and secure and will no longer have to worry about where they are going to sleep each night. Living within a community of peers provides friendship and support, helping to reduce loneliness and social isolation.

We support the single homeless, who are often more at risk of remaining so for longer, as they are not always seen as a priority for social, emergency or temporary housing. This offer is extremely valuable to those who take it, especially for older individuals, as there can be fewer options for them.



## OUR VALUES

- VALUE AND RESPECT EVERY PERSON, OPPOSING INJUSTICE
- BE TRANSPARENT AND HONEST IN ALL OUR DEALINGS
- DEMONSTRATE SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE IN NEED
- CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF EMPOWERMENT
  - SHARE AND EXCHANGE RESOURCES, SKILLS AND LEARNING
  - SUPPORT AND FOSTER INTERDEPENDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE
- WORK TO LIVE AND GIVE

**THESE VALUES ARE SHARED WITH EMMAUS UK, OUR UMBRELLA ORGANISATION.**

Our Community businesses, commercial rental income and donations generate 56.7% of annual operating income. The rest comes from Housing Benefit contributions and fundraising. These combined revenue streams help us to provide Companions with the basics of what they need whilst they are with us. However, we will look to increase our external fundraising activities in the years to come. This money will fill any shortfall in our requirements, along with providing some beneficial additions to enable Companions to grow and develop.

Companions living at the Sussex Emmaus Community are directly involved and play a vital role in the day to day running of the charity.

### *Our Purpose*

- To provide formerly homeless individuals (Companions) with a home - a place of warmth, safety and security for as long as they need it.
- To give each Companion the chance to settle and take stock, then benefit from our support and personal development opportunities through training, work and acts of Solidarity.
- To enable a happy, thriving and resilient Community that helps people to help themselves - building confidence, a sense of worth and dignity on a journey towards employment and independent living in the future.

# *Our assets and advantages*

We highlight the following key aspects of our organisation, which we want to maintain and develop, in order to ensure our long term sustainability and provide the best care for our Companions or 'beneficiaries' (the 'official' term for those in whose interests we aim to run our Community) :

## **Compassionate and person-centred approach**

Companions arrive at a time of need, so our Community offers companionship, peer support and care for particular individual needs and aspirations. It provides a unique opportunity for individuals when they need it most.

At the Sussex Emmaus Community, overcoming homelessness means more than just a roof over your head. We are not simply a hostel. We support people to work their way out of homelessness, helping them to help themselves. We provide purpose, rebuild confidence and offer the benefits of a Community – along with a stable home for as long as someone needs it.

## **A very special place to be**

We are very fortunate to own a beautiful historic site that is warm, welcoming and interesting. It feels like a safe haven. We have listed buildings, trees and green space, a folly, views of a neighbouring medieval church and manor house, lots of sky and a glimpse of the sea. It has a strong position in the heart of the local community, by location and reputation. We have built trust, relationships and a loyal following amongst local residents, who show acceptance and support of what we do and what we stand for, giving us a sense of belonging. A great place to visit. A special place to call a home and a workplace.



## Delivery of significant value with resilience and agility



Emmaus UK research has indicated that every £1 spent in an Emmaus Community provides an £11 return of social, economic and environmental benefit. We provide a home, work, support and rehabilitation for up to 57 Companions at any given time within a Community. This has a positive impact, both on homeless and employment statistics, as well as relieving pressure on the health, social care and justice systems.

We continue to grow, evolve and develop our Community and its social enterprises, despite facing many of the challenges common to the charity sector today. This shows up in the organisation's positive spirit and 'can do' approach to taking on new opportunities and improvements, and to be the best we can be.

## Business diversity

We operate under a number of separate brands: Secondhand Superstore, the Emporium, Greenhouse @ Emmaus, The Bedroom Store, Outfit @ Emmaus, The Cafe @ Emmaus and Emmaus by the Sea (our Southwick satellite shop). We are actively seeking new channels to grow our sales and ensure we are staying 'up-to-date with our customers needs' and current successful trends.

Our social enterprises not only provide a variety of sales channels for our donated goods and different reasons to visit our site as customers, they also create a multitude of roles and teams within which Companions can learn different skills – from catering to retailing, transport to maintenance, pricing to customer service.

## Environmental impact

Our retail businesses reuse and divert tonnes of perfectly good clothing, furniture and household items from landfill or incineration each year. There are many opportunities to grow our contribution in this vital area, which we will pursue with vigour. We are also aware of our site's environmental footprint and are making plans to enable us to reduce this where possible.



## Well-connected, respected and experienced

We are developing and maintaining strong stakeholder relationships in local and national networks through personal and community links. These networks include:

Referral agencies (bringing new Companions): Local and national public and private sector organisations, other third sector charities (especially those working in homelessness).

Support and health services providers: Counsellors, drug and alcohol support, debt advice, work-related skills and training contacts.

Fundraising: Grant-giving organisations, local, national and individual donors.

We have an impressive track record to show that our service works. Since 1997, we have provided this unique solution to combatting homelessness to over 1,500 Companions, many of whom have complex needs.

## *Our opportunities, challenges and how we will tackle them*

### Resources Available Limitations

We will never have enough resources to do all the things we want to do (but what organisation does?). Raising the funding we rely on is increasingly competitive in today's world (both charity and retail). The scale of our business and Community logistics and the reality of meeting Companion needs creates an unpredictable and often urgent environment.

We will provide the best care and support we can to enable and facilitate the health and wellbeing of Companions, staff and volunteers. We will prioritise the key activities to spend our time on, to ensure critical and regulatory needs are met and will make our decision-making processes as effective as we can.

### Optimising the Companion Experience offer

We are seeking and adopting best practices, from within the Emmaus Federation and wider third, public and private sectors. Change will be effected with careful 'management', optimum communication and following Co-Production principles (decision-making which appropriately involves Companions). We will also increase our focus on how we enable those who wish to 'move on' from the Community to be successful e.g. broadening affordable accommodation options, which are the key barrier at present.

### Threats to our Income Streams

Housing Benefits, forms part of our income stream. However, we aim to to minimise such dependencies, whilst ensuring we take full advantage of available funding to enable us to meet our objectives. We aim at having a diversity of sources to achieve continued financial resilience.

At present, we are limited in our ability to compare our impact with similar organisations, or track the

progress of Companions after they leave our Community. We need to find ways to gather more evidence to support our success in relation to core purpose. We are addressing this as a priority, in collaboration with our national support organisation (Emmaus UK).

## High maintenance site

Whilst probably our Community's greatest asset, the scale of maintaining the numerous properties and beautiful grounds within our site (as well as their conservation constraints) leads to very costly annual commitments, requiring constant attention, focus and resource. Work has begun on a 5 year maintenance plan of remedial work that is budgeted for annually to ensure our infrastructure is looked after.

The site also comes with restrictions which we need to work with; covenants, tree preservation, listed buildings, conservation requirements, local authority and local community needs etc.

## Operating efficient businesses within our Community

We need to meet increasingly high standards and targets within the general retail environment to improve revenue and customer experience. Equally important, is the fact that the majority of our workforce consists of Companions. This creates additional challenges around attendance, work ethic, motivation, skill gaps, confidence, responsibility and the encouragement required from our staff to nurture and train.

There will continue to be a focus on training and development for all, along with maintaining solid business plans. These will accommodate the needs of our customers in a changing market, e.g., online sales, ease of visiting us, reinforcing our Unique Selling Point (USP).

We face an increasingly competitive charity retail market. This heightens the threat from fluctuations in customer spending at a time when economic confidence is low and our ambition is to significantly increase our business revenues. Competition from online platforms, where people can sell their own unwanted goods, rather than donate, is also a factor.

We will carefully track trends and adapt to a changing environment. This includes investing wisely, measuring our success for lessons learnt. We have a compelling USP, which is very valuable.

## Environmental credentials and footprint

Our contribution to helping the environment as part of the circular economy, through reuse and recycling, is not well known. There are also opportunities to increase our effectiveness in this area.

We are examining our communications to ensure we use current and targeted channels and evidence. Also we will keep an eye on reducing our own footprint and honouring Emmaus International principles of Environmental Justice.

## Being a 'best kept secret'

We have been described as a 'best kept secret', reflecting the fact we are not as well-known as we could be (not enough people are aware of the wonderful offering - beautiful site, sustainable shopping, Cafe, that we provide). This significantly impacts the number of customers and donations for our businesses, amongst other things. Our Marketing and Communications Strategy focuses on remedying this gap. We will open up more opportunities to 'showcase' ourselves.

## *Our Plan; Direction 2030*

Direction 2030 defines the future development of our Emmaus Community into this and the next decade, founded on a vision that encapsulates existing strengths as well as addressing our challenges.

Our vision is for a thriving, diverse and resilient Emmaus Community, making the most of the amazing asset that is our extensive site in the heart of Portslade Old Village and the passion and skills of the people who make it tick.

We envisage:

### **A Community that is a Home and a Destination**

A transformative place where companionship for formerly homeless people is at the core of what we do – helping vulnerable individuals in crisis when they need it most, providing a home, work and the best life opportunities we can offer, for as long as they need.

A much-talked about place that attracts people from across the city and beyond to visit, explore, browse, shop, eat and relax – with a reputation for the experience we offer our visitors, from customer service to great bargains, enjoyable events and a unique, positive environment within which Companions play a key role and enjoy an enhanced life experience.

A place which is an integral part of the local Portslade community, that welcomes and involves all its members. This includes schools, businesses, other local charities, our volunteers, staff and Companions – **bringing all together and building a common bond.**

### **Delivering our vision: our Strategic Priorities**

We will continue to foster a spirit of opportunity, positive growth and independence within our strategy, embracing the changes needed to achieve our long-term ambitions.

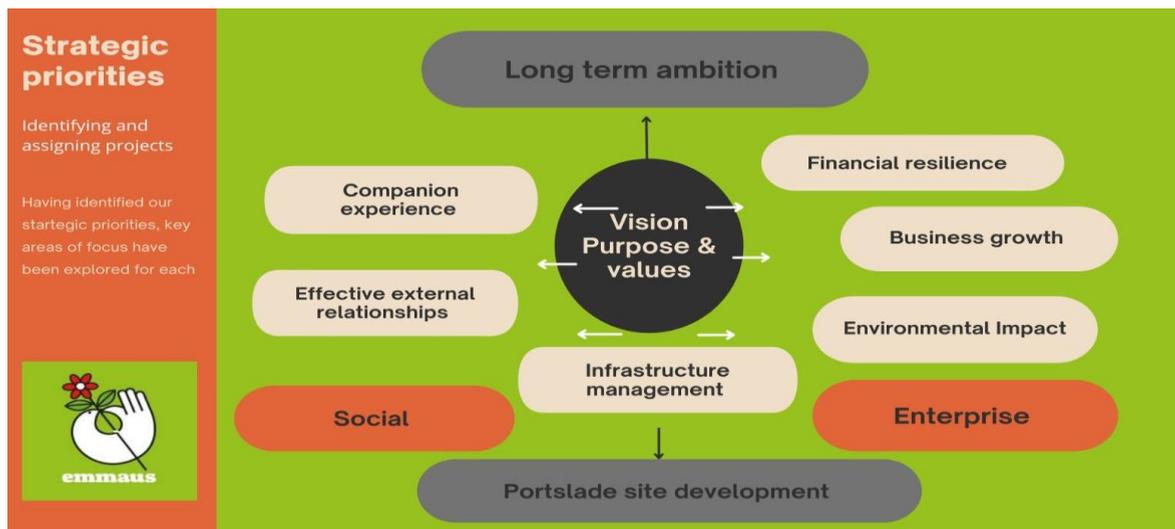
Alongside this, we will focus on ensuring we evidence the value (social and financial) we provide. Decisions will be based on gathering the pertinent facts and using \*SMART measures to assess outcomes.

\*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

It is key to get the right balance between delivering social impact and growing enterprise revenue. This is illustrated in our strategic map below, visualising the relationship between our strategic priorities.

## Direction 2030 Strategic priorities

Visualising the relationship between our 6 strategic priorities and the balance of Social Impact and Enterprise revenue.



### 1. Companion experience

The provision for Companions to have the best experience we can offer is central to our purpose and existence. Their journey begins with a warm welcome into our Community and a home that is safe, provides comfortable living conditions and offers the opportunity to grow through work, personal development and support. Our role is to help people help themselves and support Companions to build their confidence, skills and ability to live independently, achieve their potential and prosper.

Our core offer to them is a home and work activities for as long as they need it along with support to 'move on' when they are ready. They contribute fully to the success of our Community and will be widely consulted as we move towards 'Co-Production' in running our Community.

In 2021, we commissioned a review by Emmaus UK to look at the services we provide for Companions. We aim to use best practice development techniques and thinking, using evidence based decision making process.

## 2. Business growth

We will increase and optimise revenues, based on a 3-year business plan and forecast, to provide maximum possible opportunities to deliver on our charitable objectives. We need to provide the best donor and customer experience we can, along with value for money products, sold through innovative and popular channels. There will be continued focus on publicising our USP through social media and our website, alongside more traditional methods.

Companions are indispensable to the running of our social enterprises. These roles help equip them to grow, prosper and up-skill. It is therefore essential to balance business growth with maximising our Companion Experience ethos.

To underpin this, we will develop the skills and expertise of our staff. The use of volunteers will also be key to providing the help and support we need and supplying sufficient workforce numbers. Staff and Volunteers are also critical to our success and their contributions are valued immensely.

## 3. Financial resilience

We aim to be able to provide services to Companions in the long term and so demonstrate financial resilience, agility, compliance and best practice, now and in the future. We will continue to seek funding from government, regular fundraising activities and other sources, whilst progressively maximising the independent generation of our running costs from our social enterprises.

Funds will be earned or raised to invest in projects and supporting work, provided these are aligned to our strategy, have been agreed via our budgeting process and are backed by solid business cases.

The current economic environment (following on from the restrictions of covid) is 'harder' than ever, with inflation and utility costs growing. This requires increased vigilance and rigour in our approaches. However, we will not lose sight of our aim to expand and develop our Community as a whole and the quality of Companion Experience we wish to provide.

## 4. Infrastructure management

Our aim is Resilience, Reliability and Agility. We must maintain all areas of our infrastructure in good order, so that the community can operate well and to ensure we are not building up costly problems for the future. These must be treated with equal priority to other short, medium and long term priorities.

Assets cover our Portslade site, together with any subsidiary places. After providing and maintaining the best facilities we can for Companions to call home, this means utilising the remaining space efficiently, for the running of our social enterprises. Those who know and love Emmaus think it is a special place. A unique Community, not just an organisation.

Resources need to be well cared for and managed. Our staff, volunteers, workforce, IT infrastructure, policies and procedures, compliance and financial operations are critical to delivery of our charitable objectives. Our staffing structure will be affordable and fit for purpose. However, staff recruitment is challenging, as it is across the nation at the moment. We will need to be flexible, creative and supportive to give us the best chance of building and retaining our team.

## 5. Effective External Relationships

We continue to develop effective stakeholder and supporter relationships, both locally and nationally. We aim to foster understanding of our mission much more broadly and involve a wider group of people and organisations. These include the local Portslade community, financial, public, private and third sector bodies, donors, customers and volunteers. Current marketing, website and social media channels are being developed and enhanced to assist.

As well as guarding our reputation and good name, one of the reasons for this is to expand our 'referral' network (so we reach people we can help effectively) and review our services so they adapt to the changing face of homelessness.

Being more of a 'community hub' will attract new visitors to our site, be it through events, activities, work, acts of Solidarity, partnerships, collaborations, education, entertainment or inspiration. We can build on that, expanding the number and diversity of people who participate in, value and benefit from our Community, adding to our Companion Experience ethos.

We also take our role in the wider Emmaus movement very seriously, both nationally with Emmaus UK (EUK) and internationally. Solidarity remains a core part of what we do, especially as it is largely Companion led for us. There are opportunities to expand these activities after the limitations of the last few years.

## 6. Environmental Impact

We are improving on our own environmental footprint resulting from daily operations, honouring our role within the Emmaus Movement's position on Environmental Justice and using our land mindfully to respect nature, ecological diversity and wildlife. A 'Green' policy and strategy are being pulled together (building on current activities) and form the basis of current and future plans to reduce our carbon footprint.

We will continue to develop, recognise, evaluate and publicise the benefits from our social enterprises, which come from recycling and reuse of donated goods. It is a great example of the 'circular economy'.

## Identifying and assigning projects

Having decided on our strategic priorities, key areas of focus have been explored for each. From these, projects have and will be identified, which will take us along the path of delivering on our strategy.

Each will have a robust business case and clear metrics to evaluate success. They will be prioritised and assigned to a financial year for implementation, according to priority, available resources, internal monies and likelihood of attracting external funding. However, projects which 'pay back' within that financial year (or almost) can be given the go-ahead.

The list will be a 'living' document which will be reviewed at least annually, or as circumstances change.

## Risks

The following risks to the successful delivery of this strategy have been identified and will be handled through our risk management processes. Our intended mitigation of the risk is shown in italics.

### Cultural dissonance: acceptance of challenge and change

- *clear strategy agreed with strong change management approaches*
- *Focus on effective communication*

### How best to use our site without undermining our ethos

- *checking any new ideas against our core purpose, values and charitable objects,*

### Lack of funding

- *prioritise and invest in income generation; tight budgeting processes, cost effective operations*

### Inadequate project appraisal and delivery

- *SMART business cases and metrics used to assess for investment value and priority*

### Project underperformance

- *adopt solid project management methods, including lessons learnt and metrics*

### Detrimental external changes

- *regularly monitor and take remedial action*

### Strategy goes “off-track”

- *annual monitoring and review by dedicated trustee committee*

## APPENDIX 1. Key achievements against last year’s Plan

### Companion Experience

- Significant progress in implementing our plan to improve the Companion Experience and Offer, as recommended by our consultant’s Emmaus UK.
- Moving towards ‘Co-production’ so that Companions are as involved as possible in the decisions on running our operations

### Business Growth

- Our social enterprises have adapted to the ‘post lockdown’ world and have recovered
- We have a particularly successful vintage clothes enterprise at our main site
- We are planning for the future and expanding into new ways of operating
- Our volunteer base has grown to boost the workforce and allow companions to spend more time on development and growth

### Financial Resilience

- Inflation has affected key areas of our expenditure; e.g. utilities, food, maintenance, transport. Rigorous financial management has ensured we are solvent and have adequate reserves

### Infrastructure Management

- We have funded and completed major electrical works
- The 5 year maintenance plan for our listed site is well under way, to enable us to ensure our assets are up to good standards and prevent any further deterioration

**Effective External Relationships**

- Our staff, companions and volunteers, including trustees, have made efforts to re-establish and expand relationships with external partners and customers after lockdown and covid limitations
- We have been able to restart our Solidarity activities, led by our Companions

**Environmental Impact**

- Emmaus continues to make a significant contribution to a 'greener' environment by facilitating reuse rather than disposal of waste in landfill
- An 'audit' of our site and operations is funded and planned for 2023-4