

Jobs Club

What we discovered – Grace Church Salisbury tell their story



How did we start?

Our story began as we were provoked and encouraged by one of our members, who was in the process of setting up a nationwide network of Job Clubs (which went on to become part of the CAP Job Clubs) at our church. A small group of us felt stirred and began to pray. It probably took well over a year before both we and the Leadership Team felt that the timing was right.

We applied for start-up funding from the Cinnamon Network and as soon as it was received, felt that this was the confirmation we needed and jumped in, feet first.

To be honest, we didn't really know quite what we were doing – but decided to start anyway and learn along the way. We booked a venue in the centre of town, and started meeting up on a Monday morning.

Later, to raise awareness, we had a big launch with the local press present.

What happens?

The rough format of a morning is:-

10am – arrive & grab a drink & biscuit

10.10am – go round the room, introducing each other and sharing latest updates on job-seeking, including being honest about current struggles

10.25 – a one hour session on developing job-related skills led by the team, with plenty of interaction from clients

11.30 – finish – or an opportunity for a one-to-one with one of the team (e.g. working on CV's)



Lessons learned along the way:

1. Wait for the right timing – if God’s in it, the right time will come.
2. Other organisations may offer training, but few offering caring support. Feedback from our clients is that they feel respected and cared for.
3. What we offer is both social connection with other job-seekers and support. We also training although the relational connection is as important as this. As we are in a city with low unemployment, most job-seekers are unlikely to know anyone else in their situation, so clients appreciate the sense of community, and the fact they’re not alone in their struggles and frustrations.
4. Ignition training from Peter Aleksin at www.pecan.org.uk has been really helpful – not only because of the easy-to-use material, but also the training and confidence building to lead a small group.
5. This was the first initiative that we, as a church, felt that we had city-wide support for – it was easy to connect with local businesses and organisations, as the ‘Job Club’.
6. Within our teams we have people who are great with people, big on compassion, as well as those who have the experience or ability to teach useful job-seeking skills.
7. Funding was found through both the Cinnamon Network and our local area board, together with a small ‘seed’ fund from the church.
8. The Job Club has developed and changed according to the needs – clients come and go, so we have adapted and responded depending on their current needs. For example, if a client comes and has an interview the following week, we may choose to spend a lot of the morning focusing on interview skills.
9. We’ve used Facebook and email to keep in touch and let clients know what’s happening and where.
10. Don’t think about numbers, think about lives changed – we’ve helped 114 job-seekers (Nov 12 to March 16), but for each of them, we’ve been able to make a small, but significant impact.

Useful Resources

Ignition training - <http://www.pecan.org.uk/what-we-do/employment-support/ignition-programme>, speak to Peter Aleksin, 020 7732 0007

Cinnamon Network micro-grants – for either CAP Job Club, Resurgo Spear (young people age 16-24) or Ignition course - <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/projects/>

Salisbury City Job Club - <https://www.facebook.com/SalisburyJobClub/>

