



## A VERY WARM WELCOME FROM VILLAGE CHURCH

**NEW residents moving into Scaynes Hill are receiving a particularly warm welcome from the village church.**

St Augustine's hands out special bags packed with useful items - including teabags and biscuits - aimed at helping people to settle in.

The gesture follows a community audit the church carried out in 2019 to better understand the needs of the community it serves. This coincided with

the construction of a new development of about 50 houses in Scaynes Hill.

One outcome was the creation and distribution of welcome packs for the new houses, aiming to extend a warm welcome to new residents.

Initially, the bags were delivered to those in the new development but the project was later expanded to include all new residents moving into Scaynes Hill.

The church received assistance from a Mission Project Team from St Augustine's College of Theology to produce the packs which are delivered in canvas shopping bags printed with the church logo.

The initial 60 bags were sponsored by a local preparatory school and contained the school's prospectus. Subsequent bags have been funded by a member of the congregation. Each bag, including printing costs, cost

£4.50 at that time. They are high quality and were printed locally by the Incredible Design Company (formerly CHEC), a social enterprise company.

The cotton tote bags bear the church logo and have a welcome tag attached to the handle. They contain:

St Augustine's folder including:

- Welcome leaflet with church and village information
- Enquiry card with contact details
- Map of the parish
- Children's work programme
- Youth work programme
- Flyers of current church events

Scaynes Hill Parish Magazine

St Augustine's Church keyring

Box of teabags

Packet of biscuits

Hope magazine from Good News for Everyone (formerly Gideons UK)

Map of local woodland Vouchers for:

- Anchor Coffee Shop (run by the church)
- The village pub
- Garden Centre



During construction of the new houses the church collaborated with the developer to identify when properties became occupied. Now it keeps track of property sales in the village, often aided by residents informing it about new arrivals.

The church team aims to visit new residents as soon as possible to extend a welcome. Typically, the vicar Reverend Beverley Miles and the community outreach team co-ordinator Jenny Walker visit together but several others are involved in the project.

They have consistently received positive responses and people are usually surprised and delighted to receive the welcome pack.

One resident, Maureen, later mentioned at the church coffee shop that receiving the welcome pack made her feel optimistic about living in the area.

Amy, another new resident, said: "Receiving a welcome pack from Jenny and all at SASH (St Augustine's Scaynes Hill) was a wonderful surprise and made us feel very welcome in our new community.

"It was lovely to meet and chat with Jenny to establish our initial link with SASH. As a family, we have continued to enjoy the ministry and events at the church, including Sunday Monday and Christmas services. The welcome pack was just the start of the wonderful hospitality and warm welcome we have received from SASH."

Welcoming newcomers with the packs has become a significant aspect of the church's engagement with the community and the project will continue as part of the church's mission and ministry.