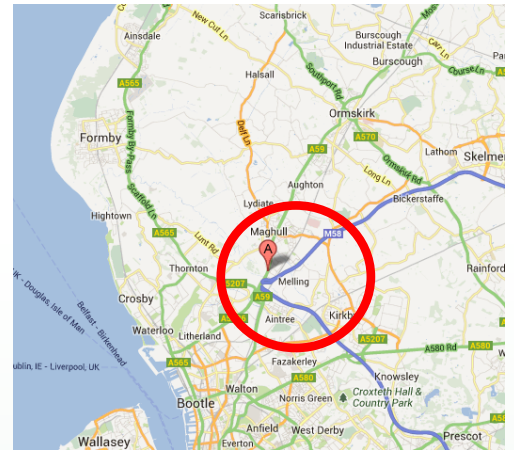


## Melling Baptist Community Project

Melling is located between Maghull and Kirkby in Merseyside, and is home to a new build estate where Jo Hassoun and her family moved over to six years ago to initiate a community ministry, and to bring a 'Christian presence' in a commuter settlement without much centre. The Melling Baptist Community Project can be described as "a church without walls", or "24/7 church", and has gone through both good and bad times. Despite difficulties and great challenges, anyone involved with helping run the project can't deny that God continues to bless it. Jo shares the story of some of the work the project has been involved in, saying, 'when we are willing to be used by Him he can do great and unexpected things...'



"The Melling Community Gospel Choir is doing really well. For the last two years we have met in the local pub every Monday evening to practice. We have grown in number, made great friendships, laughed together, cried together, disagreed with one another, (yes we have argued, we are human after all!!) and then made friends again. And in addition to this, every week we make a joyful noise as we all sing out gospel truths about Jesus, in a pub. This is wonderful,

but there's more to it...as a result of all this, we have choir members' friends and family coming along joining in with the different activities we do and sometimes offering their time, energy and skills to the Melling Baptist Community Project, of which the choir is just one part.

Enter Peter! He is the husband of a wonderful choir member. He is also a gardener. After coming along to one of our celebrations that the choir was taking part in, he came to me and offered to make planters for us to deliver to the elderly and sick in Melling. That was 18 months ago. Since then we have delivered planters on three occasions. Each occasion seeing an increase in the number of planters freely given by Peter. Last Christmas he and I took 21 beautiful planters, in his van, off around Melling. I am not sure who was blessed the most, me, Peter or the individuals whose doors we knocked on. Some people got excited, some cried and some just talked and talked and talked....each with their own struggles, illnesses, griefs and loneliness. The Melling Baptist Community Project's 'Flower Power', as it is now known, has become a very important and powerful part of the project. And as for that sunny day last December when Peter and I set out, one thing is certain, because of the generosity and compassion of just one man wanting to help us make a difference, many people were blessed by God.

Beyond the Community Choir and the 'flower power', the ministry engages with the community in a variety of ways; Wednesday morning is The Hub Coffee morning, with bacon butties and good coffee, growing friendships with local residents. While this is going on, there's always someone at the local primary school taking an assembly, Pops Toddler Group on a Thursday, prayer meetings and Church in the Pub once a month. God is blessing this project greatly despite much human weakness and many mistakes!! Prayer is at the very centre of all we do, without which this project would simply not exist! God is at work in Melling, building His church!

***"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'***  
***Matthew 28: 18-20***

### For your thoughts and prayers:

- Is God prompting your church to reach into new areas and communities?
- Do you have a heart for church planting or new expressions of church life - what could this look like for you?

