



**FUTUREhope**  
Hertford&Ware

# WINTER UPDATE

## New look update!

Thanks for picking up, either physically or digitally, our latest update! The start to this Winter term has been a busy one, mainly as we have successfully launched our new vehicle! We decided that this update should be solely about that as we can't wait to share it with you.

## The new vehicle

We have had the vision of a smaller, more versatile, vehicle for quite a few years, requiring smaller team to operate and multiple options to 'open', both in and after schools. The core team and the trustees met and decided that the mobile library had served us well but it was starting to show its age and now was the time to step out and change the vehicle.

The core team spent lots of time researching different vehicles, from catering trucks to ice cream vans, and we decided that a minibus or van would be most ideal. This would give two main ways to open: firstly slide open the side door and offer a corner bench for young people to sit on with a bar for drinks, and secondly open up the back doors with a bar that we could serve drinks from at the rear. This means that even with just two team members, we can still have presence and operate safely.

## The stats:

**20 young people in mentoring programme**

**7 parent sessions delivered**

**6 schools sessions delivered**

**4 bus sessions (with many more to come!)**

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We launched an appeal to fundraise for the new vehicle and are truly grateful for all the donations we received as a result. Because of the donations, including a significant one from long-time supporters 'Grumpy Givers', we were able to achieve a position from which we could access grants. We were successful in winning an 'Awards For All' grant from the National Lottery for £10,000. Most of this went to meet our target for the appeal and the rest went towards running costs.

Once we raised the money, we began our hunt for a vehicle. We spent lots of time searching but found that vans were selling pretty fast! Then, our friends at Young Life got in touch saying they were looking to sell their minibus. This seemed too good an opportunity to pass on so we went to have a look and found it fitted our criteria. So we got it!

From the start, we decided that we would project manage the conversion ourselves to make best use of money. So, the first task was getting rid of the chairs! This was slightly easier said than done but with the help of our treasurer Chris Errington, who has gone above and beyond throughout this project, we managed it! This then gave us a blank canvas to apply our design ideas too.

Whilst we were focussing on the new vehicle, the time came to say goodbye to old mobile library! We managed to salvage all that we could use on the new vehicle and waved it goodbye. We have great memories of young people on both the vehicles we have used, and through this, we were really confident that the design of the new vehicle would be perfect.

We taped out a full scale floor plan of the minibus on to our office floor (which remained until the completion of the bus). After that, we got some designs drawn up for the outside, with the main emphasis being to make it clear who we were whilst keeping it modern and simple.





I love the look and feel of the new vehicle. It creates a really welcoming space for the young people. I am excited for the future.

## Volunteer

We handed digital plans over to Ashley Townsend, a carpenter who has volunteered on the bus with us in the past. He did an excellent job working with our design, whilst having creative freedom and we are so pleased with the result. He used the best materials he could to ensure that the vehicle will stand a lot of use.

When Ashley was finished, we took it to get the outside painted in our blue, and the logo was put on the side. This stage took a bit longer than planned due to workers getting 'pinged' but the final result was amazing!

The last step was to paint the inside and wire up two screens for slideshows, promoting what we are doing, helpful information and ice breaker questions. A third screen is attached to a games console. We have some under bench lighting with the addition of ambient lighting attached to the ceiling. We are extremely grateful to Sarah Davies, Tim's Mother-in-law, who made bench cushions.



The first official outing for the bus was the Ware Police Community Day, and we have been out on Friday nights since as well as the Wednesday of half term.

Over the next few months, we plan to take it into all the local schools for their lunch times – to show young people the new bus and that we are out and about with it! We will plan some after school sessions and potentially try different locations for Friday nights so we can reach young people where they are at.

We can't wait to show it to you in person; we will be in touch about an open evening soon, but if you can't wait please do get in touch and we can see if we can sort something out!

PHOTOS!







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