
STORIES OF CHURCH LIFE DONE DIFFERENTLY

Building community with sunflowers

Second Dromara

Second Dromara congregation were thinking creatively about how to bless and connect with the local community during restrictions last summer. They decided to distribute sunflower seeds in a pack along with a note from the church giving contact details offering support over lockdown, and some Christian literature. These gifts were distributed to homes around the village and were very well received. As the bright sunflowers began to pop-up around the village it became a talking point that brought the community together through a difficult time.

Andrew Dawson, Community Outreach Worker in Second Dromara shares his thoughts of the impact of this simple practical witness in the local community:

By May/June a weariness had descended upon people, we felt it ourselves. The virtual world, while useful, couldn't sustain us. The Sunflower Project (the best ideas are stolen) was an antidote to the sense of hopelessness around us. Those who volunteered from the church to put the packs together jumped at the chance to show practical love to others. For those who carefully put them at the door, knocked and stepped back, it was an opportunity to see and bless our community. We wanted them to know we were there for them, that there was hope, and that hope was found in Jesus. The sunflowers seeds spoke of that hope. A real concrete hope, not distant images on a screen but real living plants in your hands. People we had never met before reached out through Facebook to say thanks. One wrote, "On the note with them, it advised they were being given out to provide a little light and hope during this tough time of the Covid crisis and that is exactly what they did. I was so moved by the symbolism of the sunflowers..."

Months later the photos came with sunflowers fully grown and glorious. One man was adamant I saw his sunflowers every time I visited. Did this bring anyone nearer to Christ? I don't know. But I do know it created goodwill, built new connections, brought hope and was a piece of positive news when there was very little to find. At a time when it felt most hopeless Jesus' hope grew.