

# **SVP National Meeting 2024**



St Vincent  
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

## **Staying Relevant and Taking the Society Forward (Or, A Journey of Fidelity and Adaptation!)**

**Steve Gill (National Vice President ) and Elizabeth Palmer, CEO**

# St Vincent de Paul

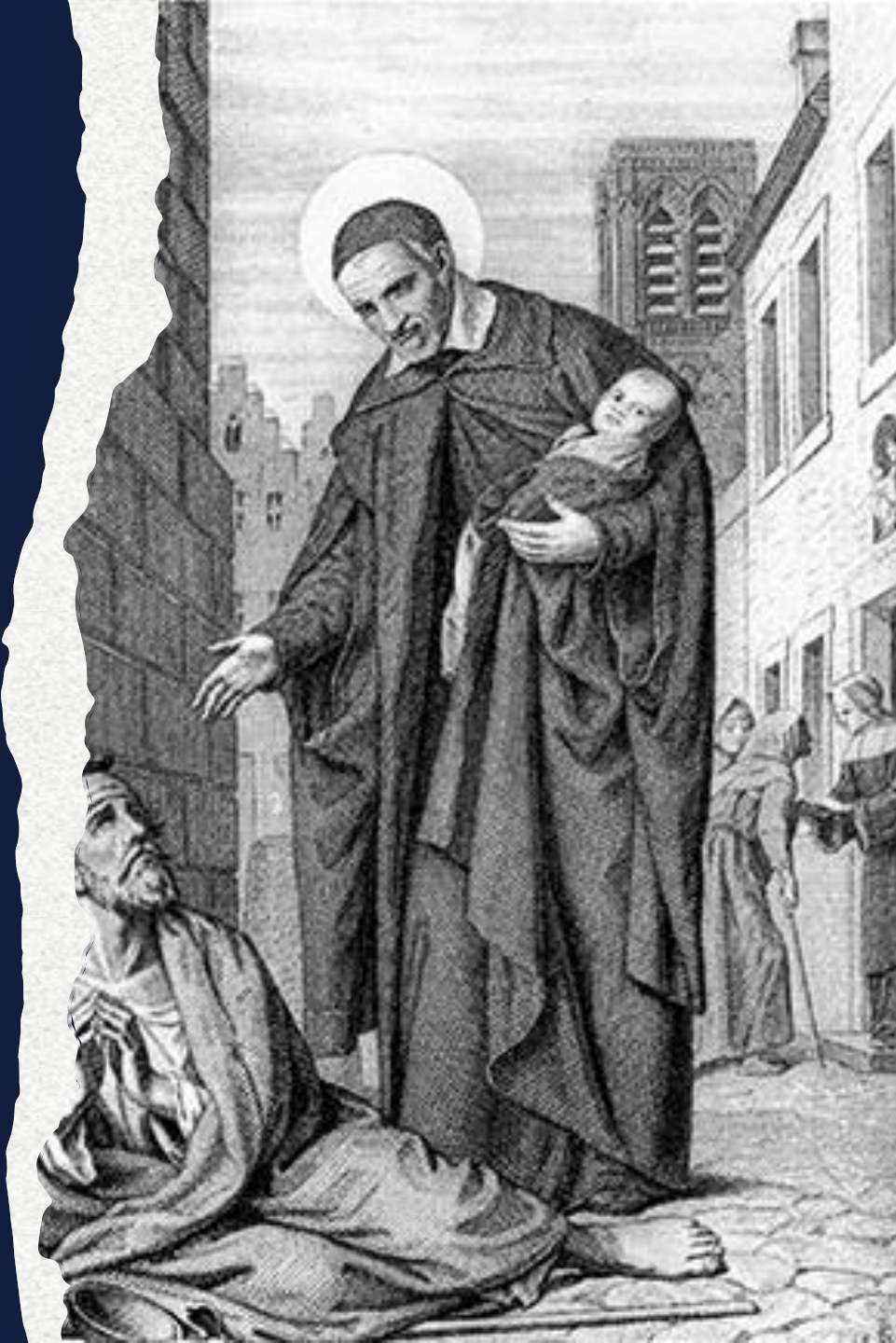
"it is doubtless the eyes which are most impressive.. Noticeable in them is a great quality of attention, of observation; one also discovers a suggestion of Gascon mischievousness; above all one finds there a great goodness"

Fr Jean Morin CM



# The Foundation of our Charism – 1617

- Folleville and the discovery of spiritual misery
- Châtillon and the discovery of material misery





# See – Judge – Act

“Saint Vincent was always attentive to the signs from God who ceaselessly speaks anew through events. The encounter with new forms of poverty would be for him pressing calls to take up the challenge by seeking to provide solutions”

“Saint Vincent didn’t begin by reading learned reports, of which however he knew the usefulness as well as the limits, as we see in his already quoted letter to Pope Innocent X: *It is a small thing to hear or read these things; they must be seen and ascertained with one’s own eyes*”

Celestino Fernandez CM





# St Vincent's Methodology



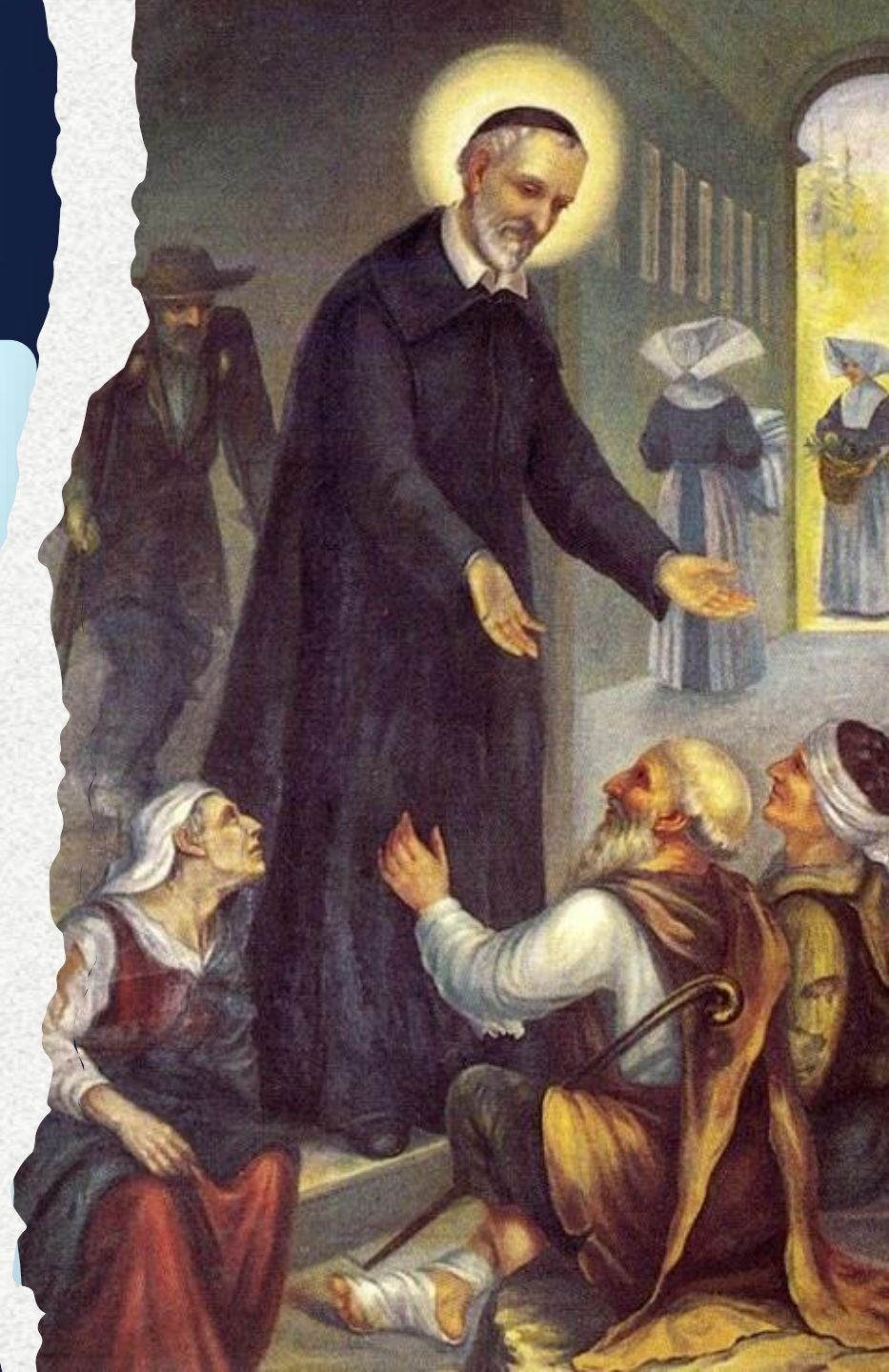
Viewing reality with the eyes of an apostle and discerning the true needs of those who were poorest and most abandoned



Confronting this and seeking responses with inventiveness, courage and confidence in God



Diversifying, ceaselessly adapting and seeking numerous collaborations to best serve the poor: priests, consecrated women, and laity



# Vincent Did Not Discriminate; He Only Saw Need

“First, they were poor peasants, a little later the galley slaves. But with the passing of the years... all kinds of poor people were included: the mentally ill, sick people in public hospitals, abandoned children, slaves, immigrants from inside and outside the country, mercenaries, aging craftsmen and laborers without work or pensions, beggars, refugees and victims of wars....”

Celestino Fernandez CM





# St Vincent's Charism

## On the personal level

- abandonment of a self-centered vision of faith and life;
- dedication to the poor and marginalized
- working for the poor in organized groups
- motivated to imitate the earthly life of Jesus Christ.”

## On the theological level

- abandonment of a theo-centric vision in favour of a Christo-centric vision
- the centrality of the incarnation

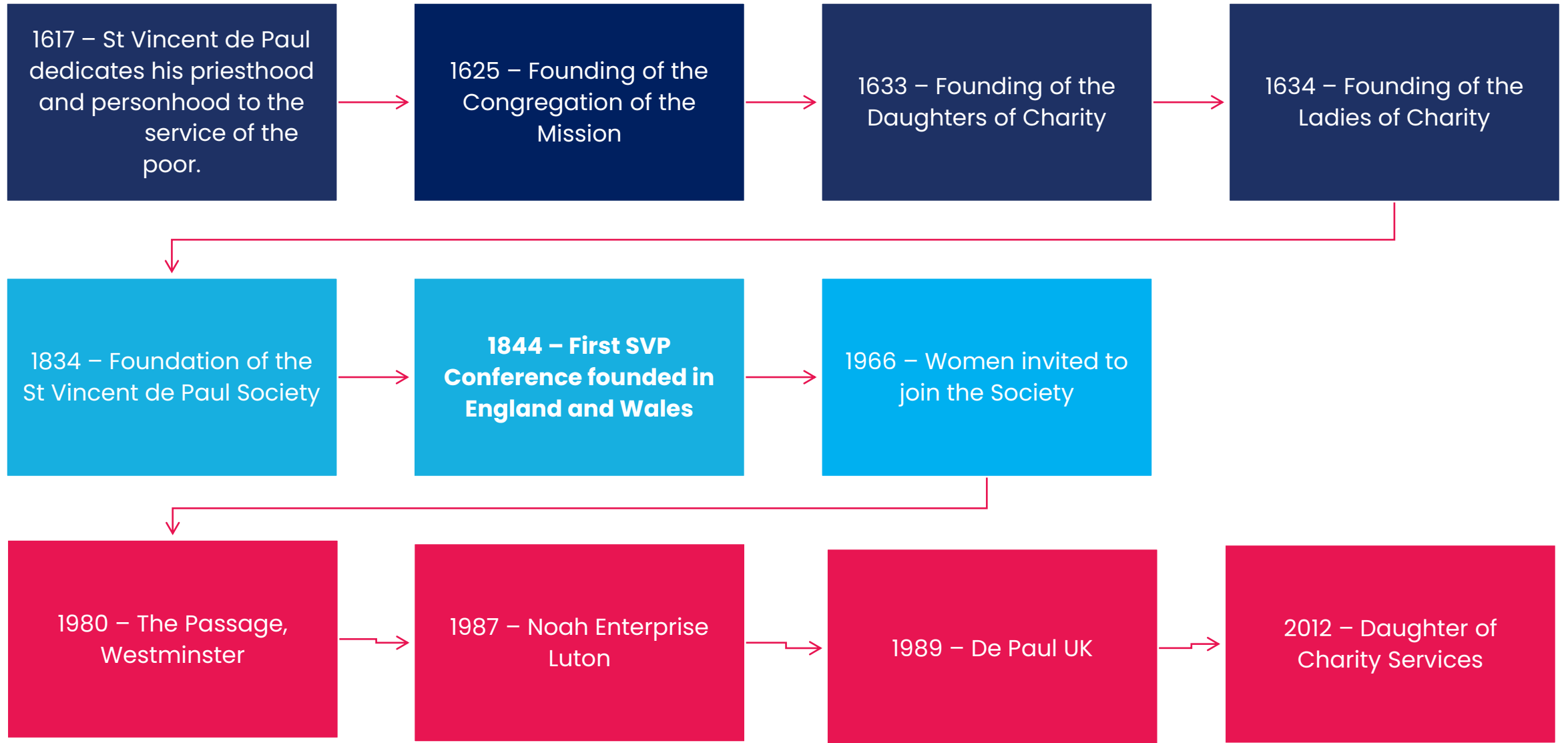
## On the ecclesiological level

- from a vision of the Church more or less subsisting in itself, to a vision of the Church as open to the world;
- from a Church in which the clerical-religious element dominates to a Church with a more secular and lay character;
- from a Church allied with the political and financial powers of this world to a Church fully turned toward the poor.





# The Vincentian Charism Evolves



## Frederic Ozanam Embraces the Charism

---

“the poor we see with the eyes of flesh;  
they are there and we can put finger  
and hand in their wounds and the  
scars of the crown of thorns are visible  
on their foreheads; and at this point  
incredulity no longer has a place and  
we should fall at their feet and say  
...You are my Lord and my God! ”

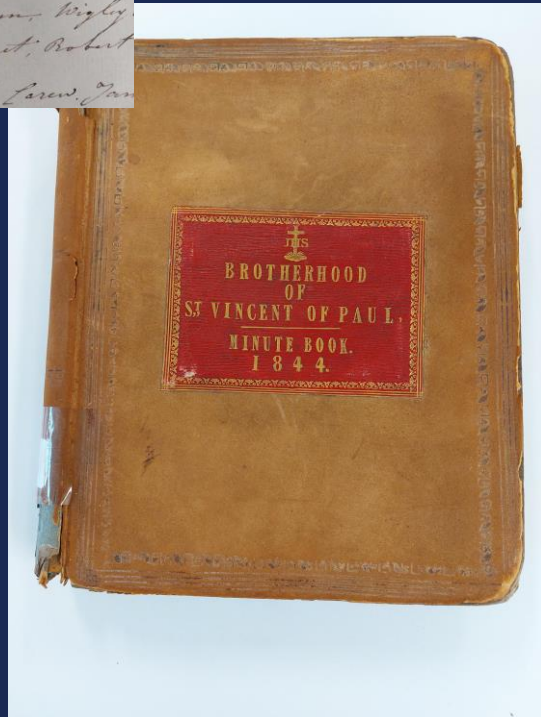
Frederic Ozanam



# The Charism Reaches England

*Minutes of the Meetings  
of  
The Brotherhood  
of  
St Vincent of Paul.*

*A meeting of Gentlemen was held at the Albemarle  
Hotel Leicester Square on Monday the 29<sup>th</sup> of Janry 1844  
to take into consideration the necessity of establishing in  
London a society similar to the one existing in France  
called the Society of St Vincent of Paul; at which meeting  
were present Messrs Pagliaro, Lucas, Anderson, Wigley,  
William Ambrose, George Blount, Bosanquet, Robert  
Boswell, Richard Thompson, Wright, Lazenby, Jan*

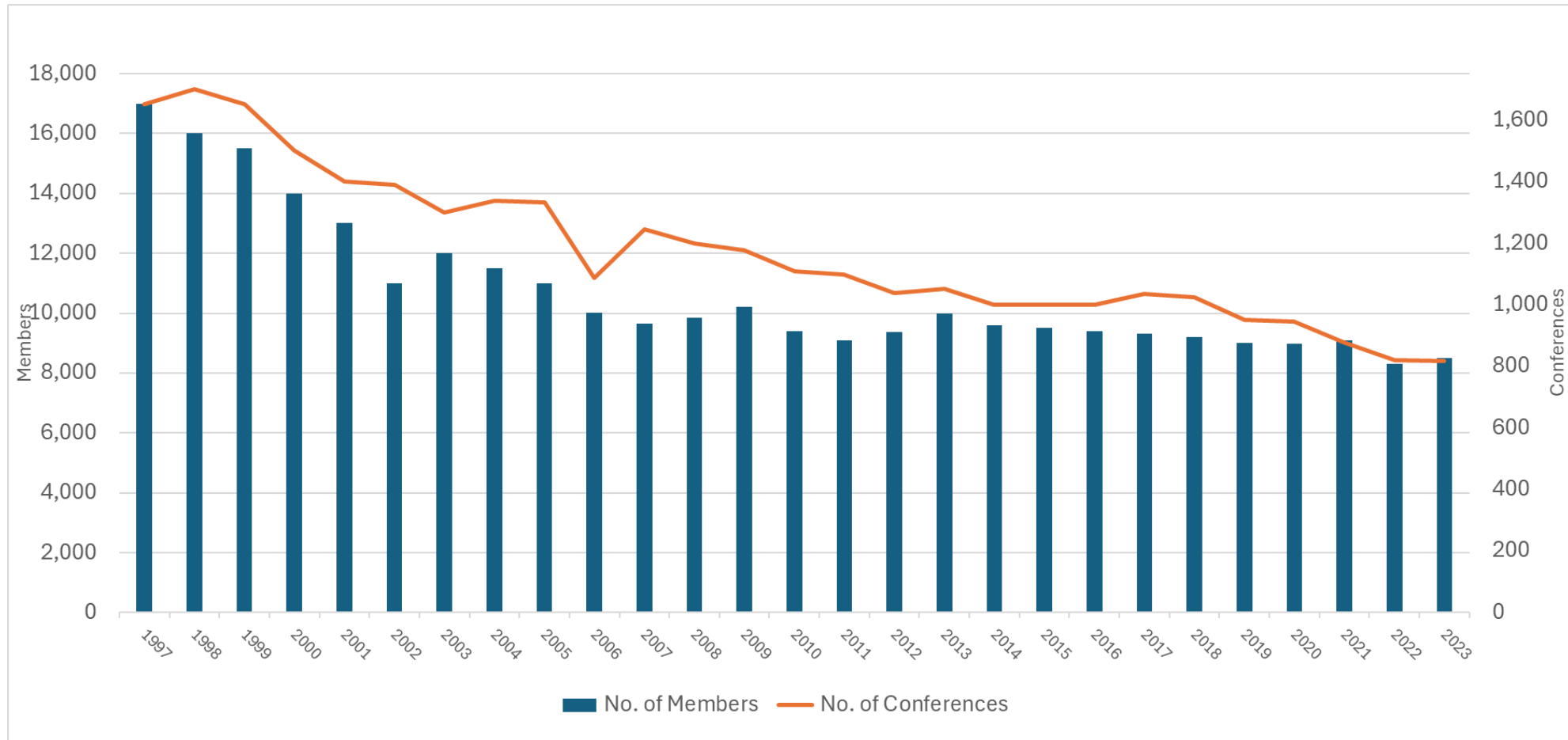




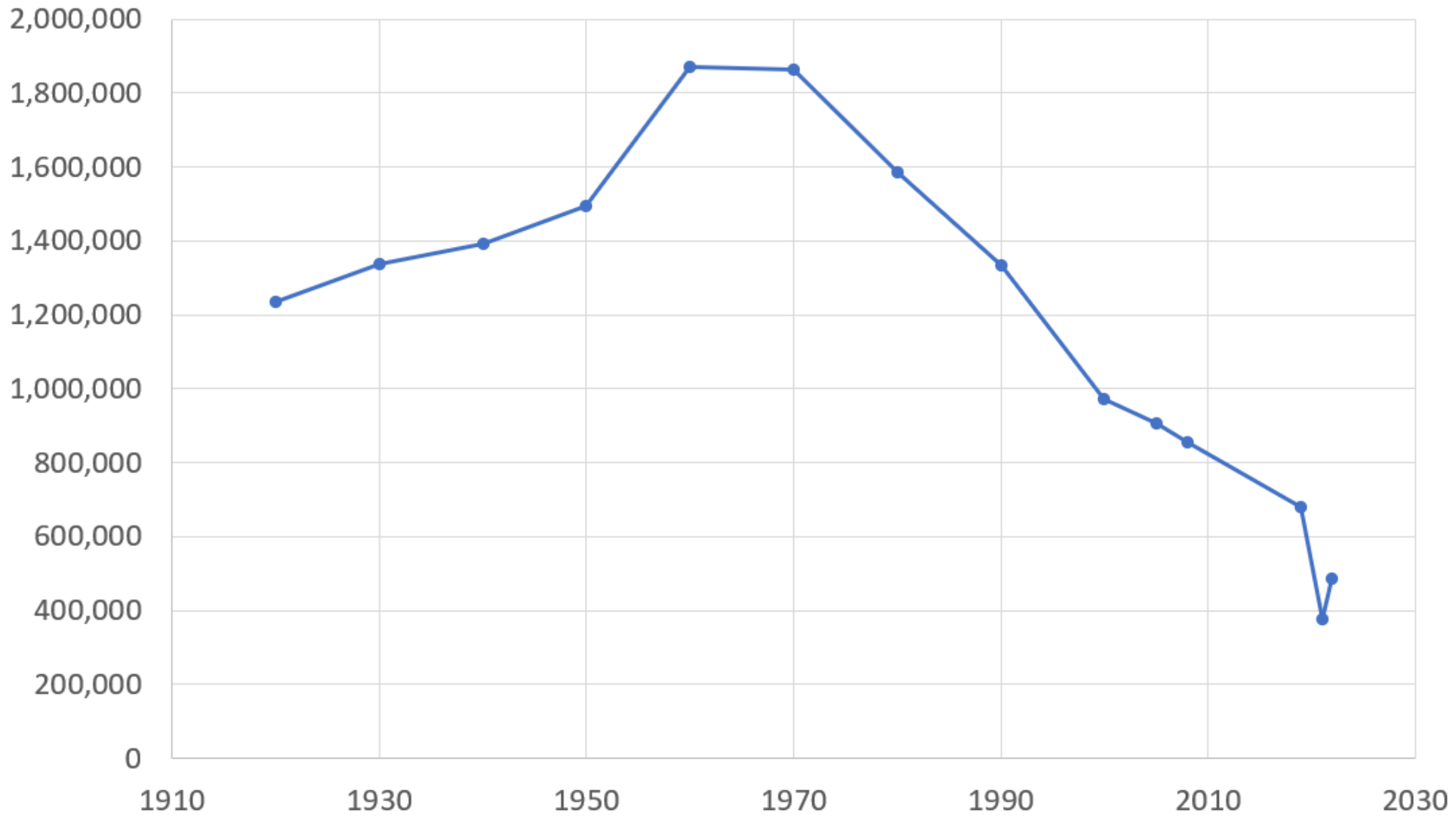
# **The SVP: A Dynamic Organisation Responding to Need**

- 1844 – Our foundation in England and Wales
- 1950s – Tyne Deaf Centre
- 1954 – Holy Island Camp
- 1980s – Tyne Support Centre and Hostels
- 1987 – Sheffield Furniture Store
- 1996 – Leeds Support Centre
- 2010 – First Mini Vinnie group
- 2012 – Bradford Support Centre
- 2018 – Brighton Support Centre
- 2019 – First East Anglia CC House Purchased
- 2020 – SVP Chorely Buddies and Southend Support Centre
- 2021 – Wirral and Ely Bridge Support Centres
- 2022 – Brixton and Birmingham Support Centre
- 2024 – Vinnie Bus

# Member and Conference Numbers 1997 to 2023



# Catholic Mass Attendance in England 1910 - 2023



Source: Catholic Record Society *Religious Trends* no. 2 (1920-90), UK Church Statistics no. 4 (2000-5), Catholic Directory (2008), Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (2019-22)



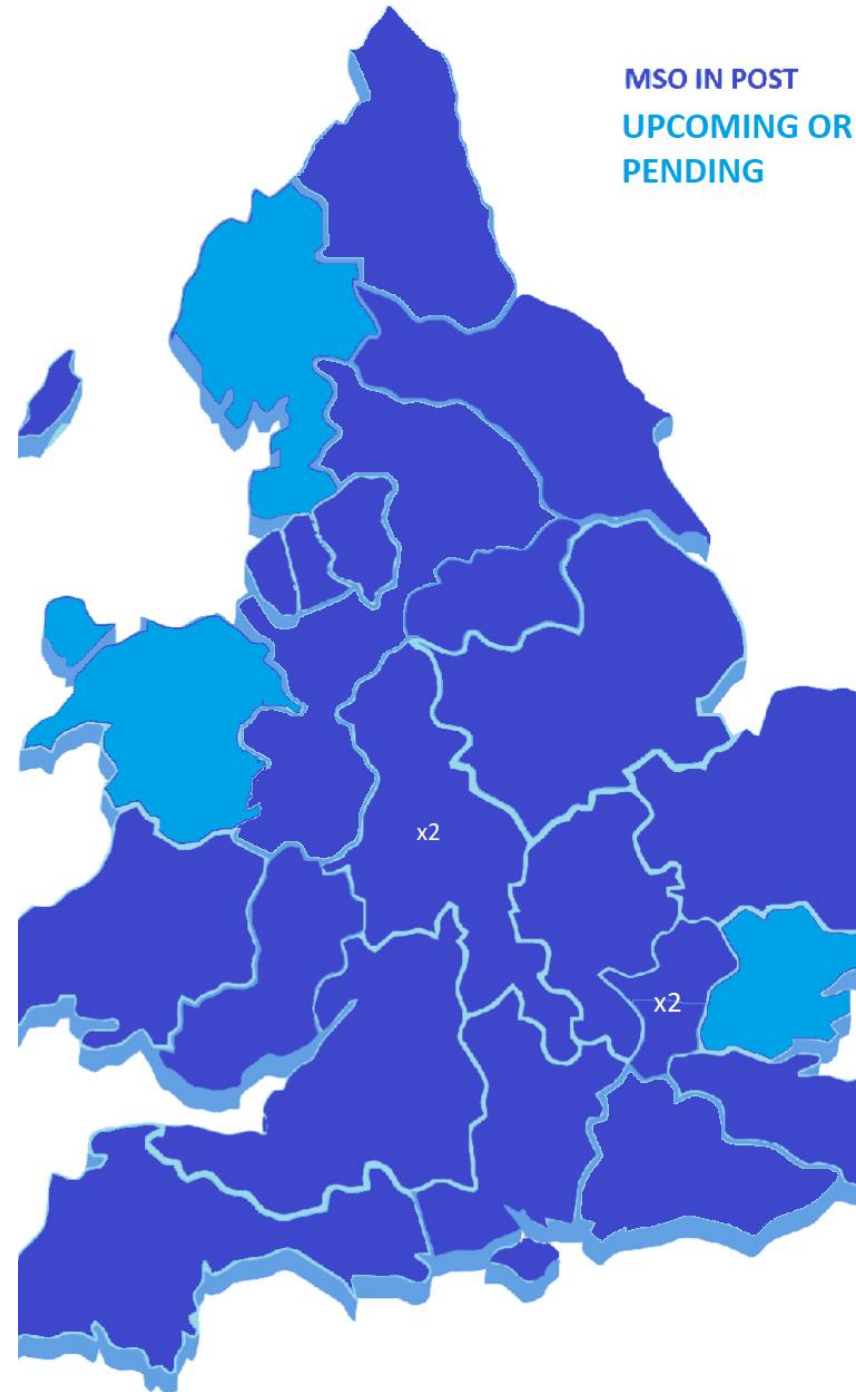
# An Opportunity For Growth

- “Providence does not destroy except in order to build up, and the more it renews the earth, the more we ought to think of the foundations deepening for a new order.

BL. Frederic Ozanam



# MSOs





# SVP 1833

# YOUNG VINCENTIANS

The Young Vincentian programme was launched in Shrewsbury with the introduction of the Mini Vinnies in 2009. Since then, it's gone through various stages, and now Young Vincentians incorporates Mini Vinnies at primary, Youth SVP at secondary and 6th form and SVP1833 for our young adults.



By 2033, we hope to have an expression of Vincentianism in all of the Catholic schools in England and Wales.

Face to face engagement this academic year

4,290 Primary  
2,837 Secondary



In England and Wales there are

1761 Primary schools

409 Secondary schools and colleges



To date we are in

27% of primary schools

26.4% of secondary schools



Our Parish groups are growing

16 parish groups

2 Homeschool groups

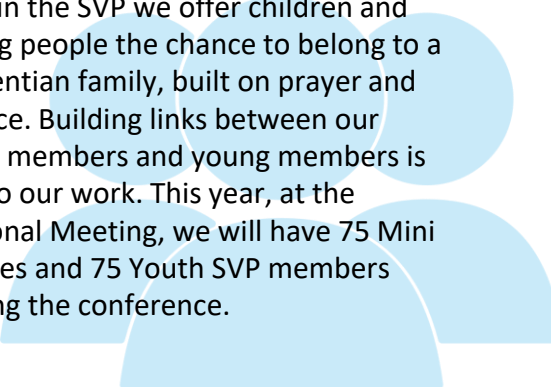
In collaboration...

with other organisations, we support events and resources like Flame, National Youth Sunday, Faith in Action, Refugee Week and a residential work experience for 20 young adults. We try to offer children and young people the opportunity to take the lead and be agents of change in their community.



We are family

Within the SVP we offer children and young people the chance to belong to a Vincentian family, built on prayer and service. Building links between our adult members and young members is key to our work. This year, at the National Meeting, we will have 75 Mini Vinnies and 75 Youth SVP members joining the conference.



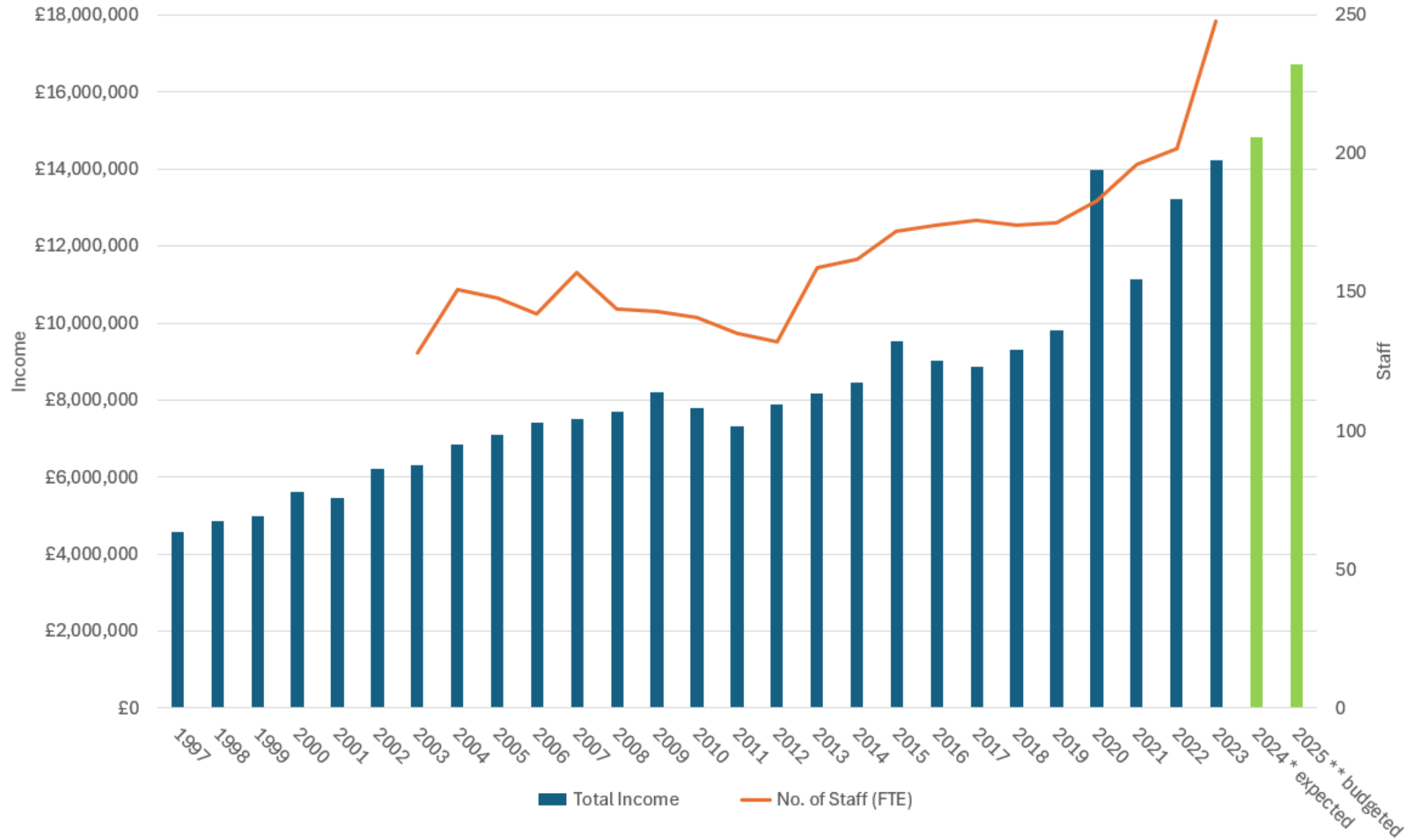
SVP1833

In 2023 we took a group of 25 young adults to an international Vincentian conference and World Youth Day. This group have worked as ambassadors this year. There are now 15 active SVP1833 groups and a number of individual young adults who meet regularly to pray, connect and plan regional acts of service.

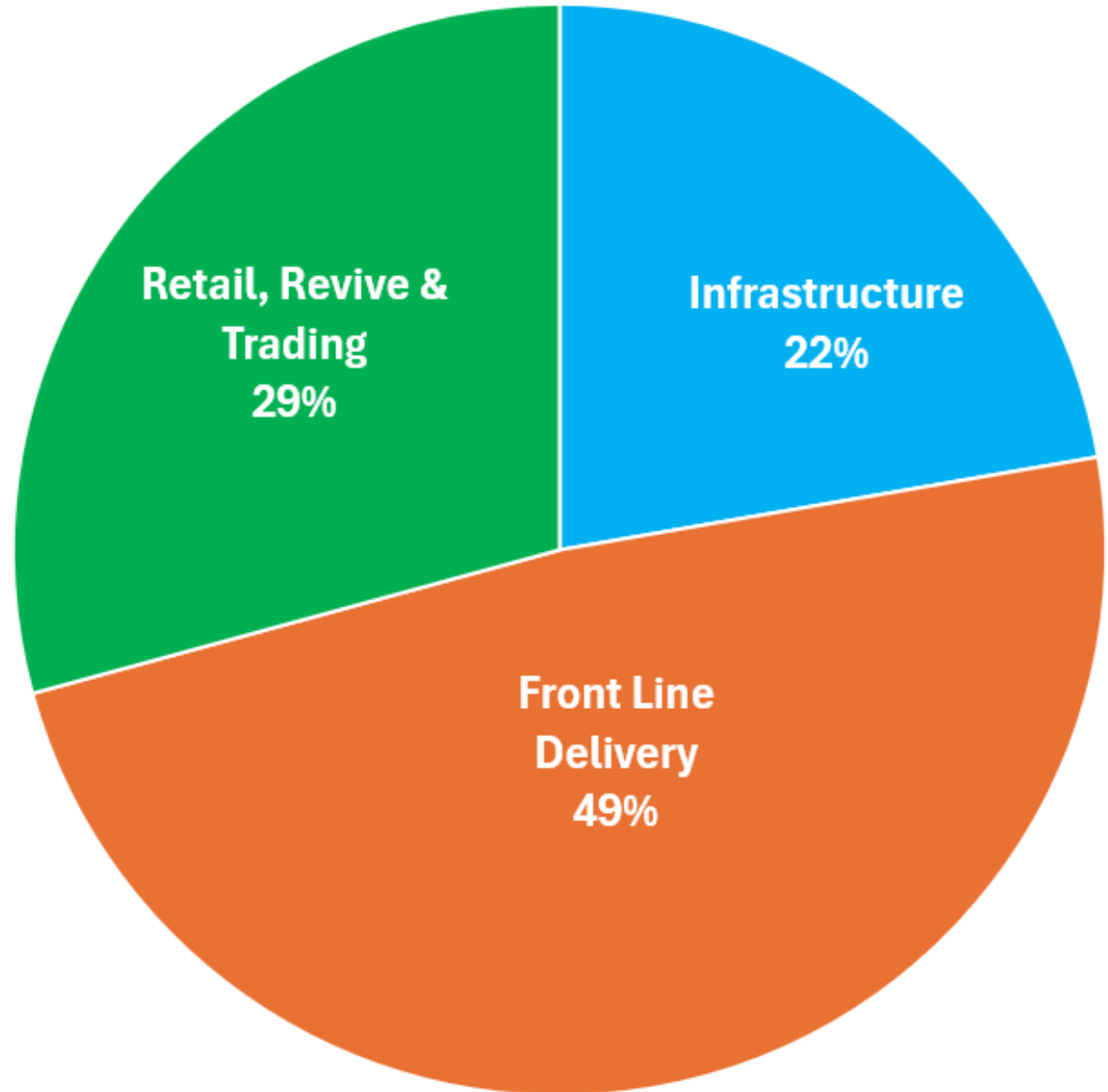




# Total Income & Staff Numbers 2003 to 2025



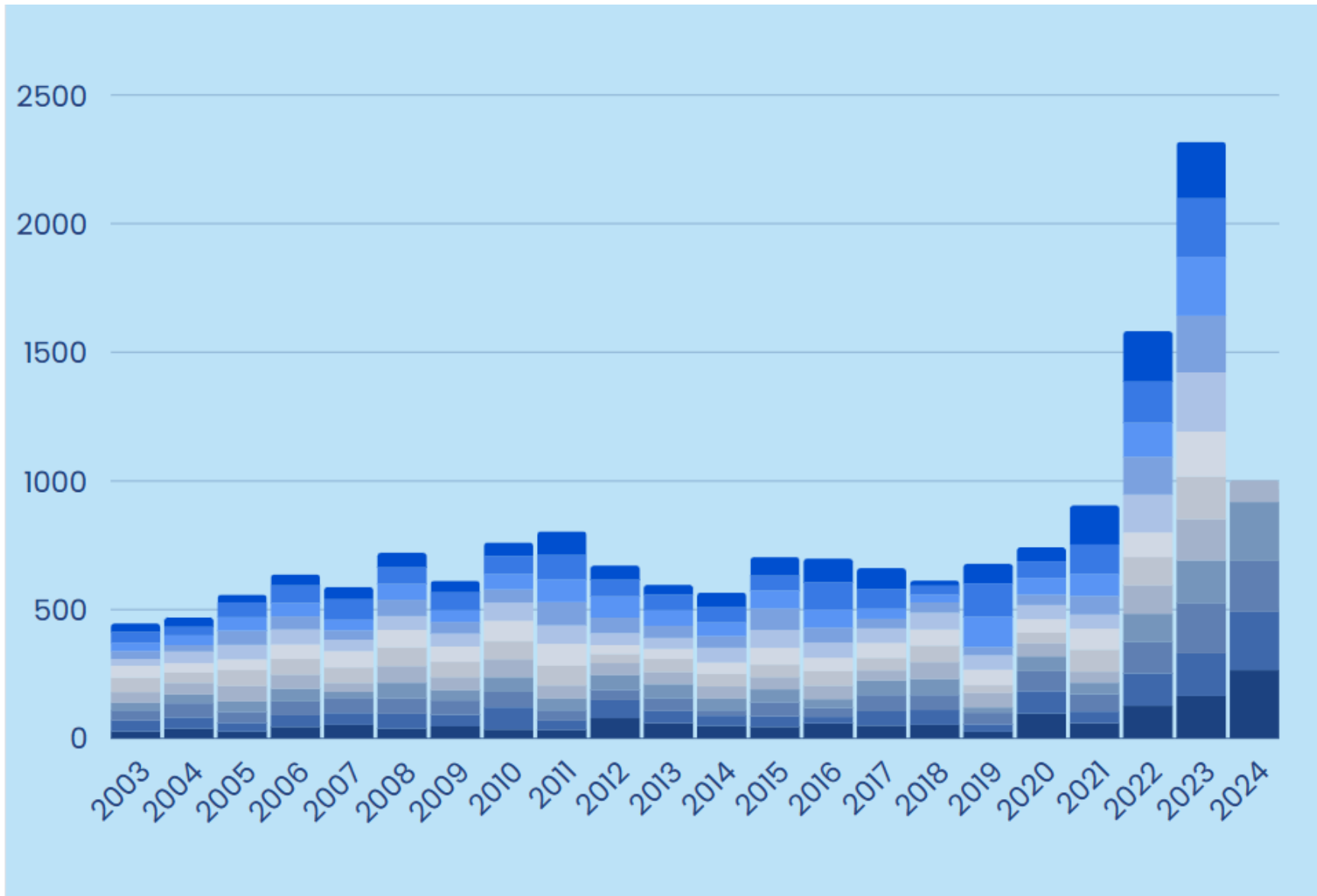
# SVP Staff



# Reading the Signs of the Times



# Requests For Help (to 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 – National Office only)





# Support Centres

St Vincent's Bradford



St Vincent's Brixton



St Vincent's Newcastle



Deaf Centre Newcastle



St Vincent's Wirral



St Vincent's Ely Bridge Cardiff



St Vincent's Southsea



Sheffield Furniture Depot



St Vincent's Leeds



Vinnie Bus



St Vincent's Brighton





# SVP Housing



Liverpool



St Vincent's House, Sheringham

North Shields



Amélie House,  
Cromer



Bl Rosalie Rendu House,  
Cromer





# Camps for 2024



- Camps will be running this Summer in Brentwood, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Stockport & Wirral.



- Mablethorpe intend to run 2 weeks of camp and Holy Island will run 5 weeks of camp.
- **Middlesbrough will also have a camp in Summer 2024 for the first time, and a camp will be started in Summer 2025 in Menevia.**



# Working With Prisons

- Prison Visiting
- Contact in over 40 prisons (20 regular)
- Creating a Network
- Information Sharing
- Cards and Gifts
- Contact in over 40 prisons (20 regular)
- Training and Resources



# Vinnie Rabbit & Vinnie Dog





# Vinnie Van!!



## A Vincentian Welcome on the High Street





# St Vincent's Shop Locations



# A Voice for the Voiceless

“The poor person is a unique person of God’s Fashioning with an inalienable right to respect. You must not be content with tiding the poor over their poverty crisis; you must study their condition and the injustices which brought about such poverty, with the aim of long term improvement.”

Frederic Ozanam





# SVP at Party Conferences 2023

## Faith Network reception







# Events





# Research and Publications

- Stories from the frontline
- Regional inequalities report
- Policy briefings
- Social Justice information booklet
- Expert briefings for Ministers
- Afghan resettlement report



## Stories from the frontline

the real price of the  
cost of living crisis



St Vincent  
de Paul  
England and Wales  
Turning Concern

JANUARY 2024

## FROM THE FRONTLINE – TACKLING REGIONAL INEQUALITIES FROM THE GROUND UP



# Media

ISSN 2755-3973

Friday 28th April 2023

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**£20**  
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Holocaust survivor's plea on migrants  
pg 21

## Million reasons to act as SVP warns of rise in food bank use

Trussell Trust report lays bare scale of problem as food banks forced to extend opening hours to accommodate working parents in desperate need

**Andy Drendak**  
Catholic social charity St Vincent de Paul (SVP) has joined the Trussell Trust in sharing deep concerns that record numbers of emergency food parcels are being handed out amid a sharp increase in food bank users.

A recent survey found three million emergency food parcels were handed out at food banks from April 2022 to March this year, with the number projected for children topping a million for the first time.

Trussell Trust says this is a 37% increase compared to the previous year, and that many of the latest recipients of help are working parents, who simply "cannot make ends meet."

SVP CEO Elizabeth Palmer said the Trust's figures reflected the experiences of SVP workers around the country. "Our Conferences and frontline projects have



**www.northerncross.org.uk**

Northern Cross NEWS 5

April 2023

### Lift the Ban and make a real difference to people's lives

by Hollie Scorer

INSPIRED by two dedicated volunteers at St Vincent's Newcastle, local business owner Joe Davison joined thousands calling on the government to lift the ban on asylum seekers' right to work in the UK.

Made up of over 250 businesses, trade unions, charities, think tanks and faith groups, the Lift the Ban coalition challenges the government's exclusionary permission to work policy. It argues that the government must support refugees who have fled violence and persecution, give them agency over their own lives and create a more diverse workforce which is more beneficial to communities throughout the country.

According to current statistics from Refugee Action, the ban has meant that vulnerable individuals and families are left to struggle on as little as £5.85 per day while waiting months, sometimes even years, to hear back from the Home Office on their cases.

In a bid to eventually secure full-time employment for St Vincent's Newcastle volunteer Mohammed and Nawaf at his own cafe, One Kitchen and Social, Jez has been working closely with national charity Asylum Matters to support Lift the Ban and ensure the best possible outcome for both volunteers.

Jez, who provides soup to St Vincent's on a weekly basis as one of its kind donors, said "Over the year I've known Mohammed and Nawaf I have been in a position, on several occasions, where I could have happily offered them paid

dignity. The kindness and determination of the centre's staff and volunteers is what inspired Nawaf and Mohammed to join the team and give back to their community.

Although both have been faced with extensive waiting times and uncertainty as the Home Office considers their status, they remain determined to share the kindness they have received from the St Vincent's team with others in desperate need of support.

Mohammed and his family were forced to flee President Assad's horrific war in Syria, experiencing the devastating loss of loved ones and the breakdown of their society.

Mohammed has a strong desire to work full-time and be the best possible role model to his children.

Volunteering at St Vincent's and speaking with Jez has given him much-needed hope and has helped to pave the way to a brighter future in the UK.

Mohammed says, "I am over the moon to be a part of St Vincent's as a volunteer and to stay busy instead of sitting home and feeling nervous and depressed as the Home Office takes such a long time to consider cases such as mine."

"I feel confident when I help other people as part of St Vincent's and love supporting this community."

Before starting a new life in the UK over a year ago, Nawaf was an undocumented migrant from Iraq in Kuwait and suffered inhuman treatment, including false imprisonment.

"I feel very sad that I am yet to hear from the Home Office regarding my

ment for the volunteers, says: "We have seen the amazing energy, commitment and kindness of volunteers who have come to the UK seeking sanctuary, and we have benefited hugely from folks like Nawaf and Mohammed who are so keen to contribute to our community."

"If we look at lifting the ban on those seeking asylum being able to work in purely economic terms, these people have a myriad of skills, knowledge and experience which they want to use, and businesses across the UK are struggling to recruit into so many roles, particularly health, social care and hospitality. We know that work gives a sense of value to the individual, as well as contributing to social cohesion, which benefits us all."

Jez continues to collaborate with Asylum Matters to support the Lift the Ban campaign and Mohammed and Nawaf in the hope that he can make a real difference.

"The recruitment market in hospitality is the toughest I've known in 20 years and I believe that allowing skilled refugees to work legally would help them and this country in equal measures," he concludes.

Q Mohammed and Nawaf, left, both volunteer at St Vincent's Newcastle but would love to work full-time to support their families. Below is Mohammed in the kitchen with Jez Davison, a local cafe and restaurant owner who supports the Lift the Ban campaign.





# A Year of Encounter

**USING OUR  
CATHOLIC VOICE  
IN THE GENERAL  
ELECTION**



St Vincent  
de Paul Society  
England and Wales  
Turning Concern into Action

**CAFOD** Catholic Agency for  
Overseas Development



# Staying Relevant

- Stay true to the charism (fidelity)
- Invest in membership support
- Building the infrastructure
- Staffing for success
- Focus on income generation and diversity of income streams



# **“Love is Inventive to Infinity”**

**St Vincent de Paul**

- Creativity
- Innovation
- Change
- Seizing Opportunities
- Enthusiasing Others to  
do Likewise





# Adaptation

- Change is Constant
- Plan for growth and change
- Flexibility
- Seize unexpected opportunities
- The charism manifests in different forms







# **Stay True to the Founding Charism**

- **Relational**
- **Alleviation of poverty**
- **Servant leadership**
- **Turning Concern into Action**
- **Voice for the Voiceless**



# Turning Concern Into Action



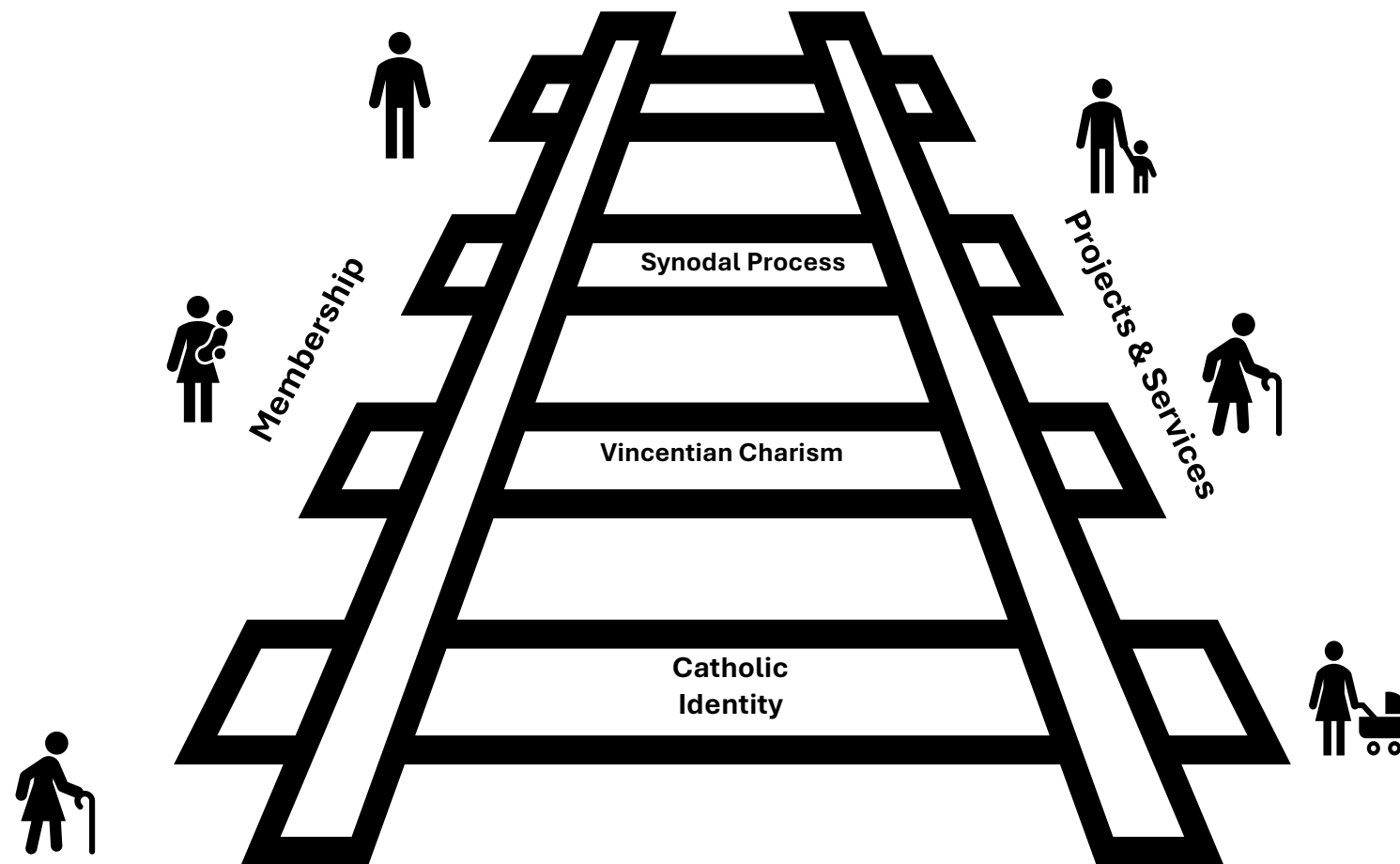
Befriending

Practical  
Support

Campaigning

Systemic  
Change

# Strategy in Motion.....





# Strategic Objectives 2022-27

- To put our faith and values at the heart of all we do
- To reach out to and welcome those on the peripheries who need our help
- To expand our capacity for service
- To campaign for social justice in order to effect change for those we serve
- To achieve financial sustainability
- To build an Identity within and beyond the Catholic Church



Enlarging  
Our Tent





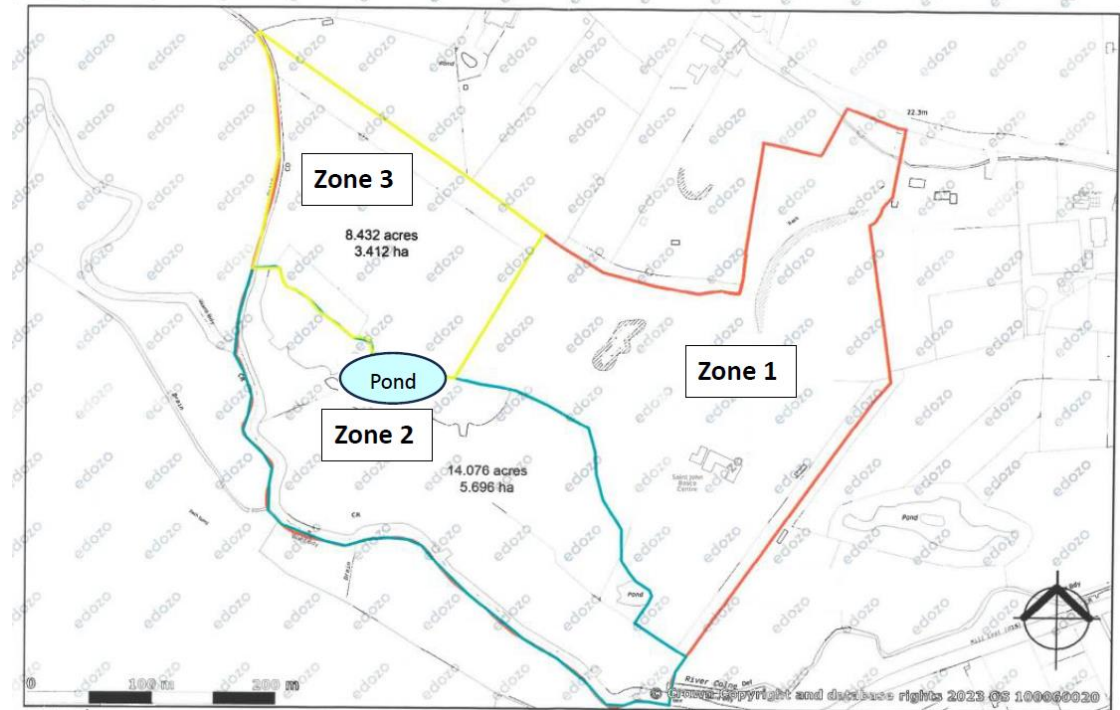
# What's Around the Corner?

## SVP and Laudato Si

The Brentwood site covers 39 acres of land in a rural setting. It is parkland with open managed pasture bordered by mixed hedgerows and woodland, including a wet woodland pond and flood pasture at the lower end.

### The proposal is for 3 Zones:

- 1 - Laudato Si' Centre.
- 2 - Planting and regeneration woodland.
- 3 - Solar battery farm and grazing or other options to be considered.



# Brentwood Site: Proposal

Overhead view of the  
woodland planting &  
regeneration area.







**“Charity should never look behind but always in front, because the number of good deeds which we have done in the past is always very small, while the present needs and future needs, which must be relieved, are always endless”**

**– *Blessed Frederic Ozanam.***

*Christians have to live a mysticism of open eyes.*

Johannes B. Metz

An “experience of God has to be inspired not by a mysticism of closed eyes in which one contemplates one’s own state of being but rather a mysticism of open eyes which enables one to enter into solidarity with those who suffer.”



- “We spend our life seeking for the will of God and we forget that we have it right before our eyes... the situation in which the poor find themselves and the anguished cries of those men and women who are poor ... those realities reveal to us about that which God is asking and demanding of us.”

Celestino Fernandez CM



St Vincent  
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

**What if God was  
one of us?**











A close-up photograph of a young child with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue jacket, holding a sandwich with both hands and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

**3.1 million emergency  
food parcels issued in  
2023/24**

*\*The Trussell Trust (April 2024)*























**128,786 people  
awaiting decision  
on asylum status**

*\*Refugee Council (December 2023)*





Westminster  
Pier

**SVP**

St Vincent  
de Paul Society

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St Vincent  
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

Love is inventive  
to infinity.

Charity is the  
element which binds  
communities to God  
and persons to one  
another

Go to  
you v



To find out more, go to:

[svp.org.uk/support-centre](https://svp.org.uk/support-centre)











**4.3 million children  
in the UK are living  
in poverty**

***\*End Child Poverty (March 2024)***







A photograph of a man lying in a tent at night, wrapped in a grey blanket. He is looking directly at the camera with a somber expression. The tent is made of blue and green fabric, and the background is dark. The text 'At least 309,000 people in England homeless' is overlaid in large white font on the right side of the image.

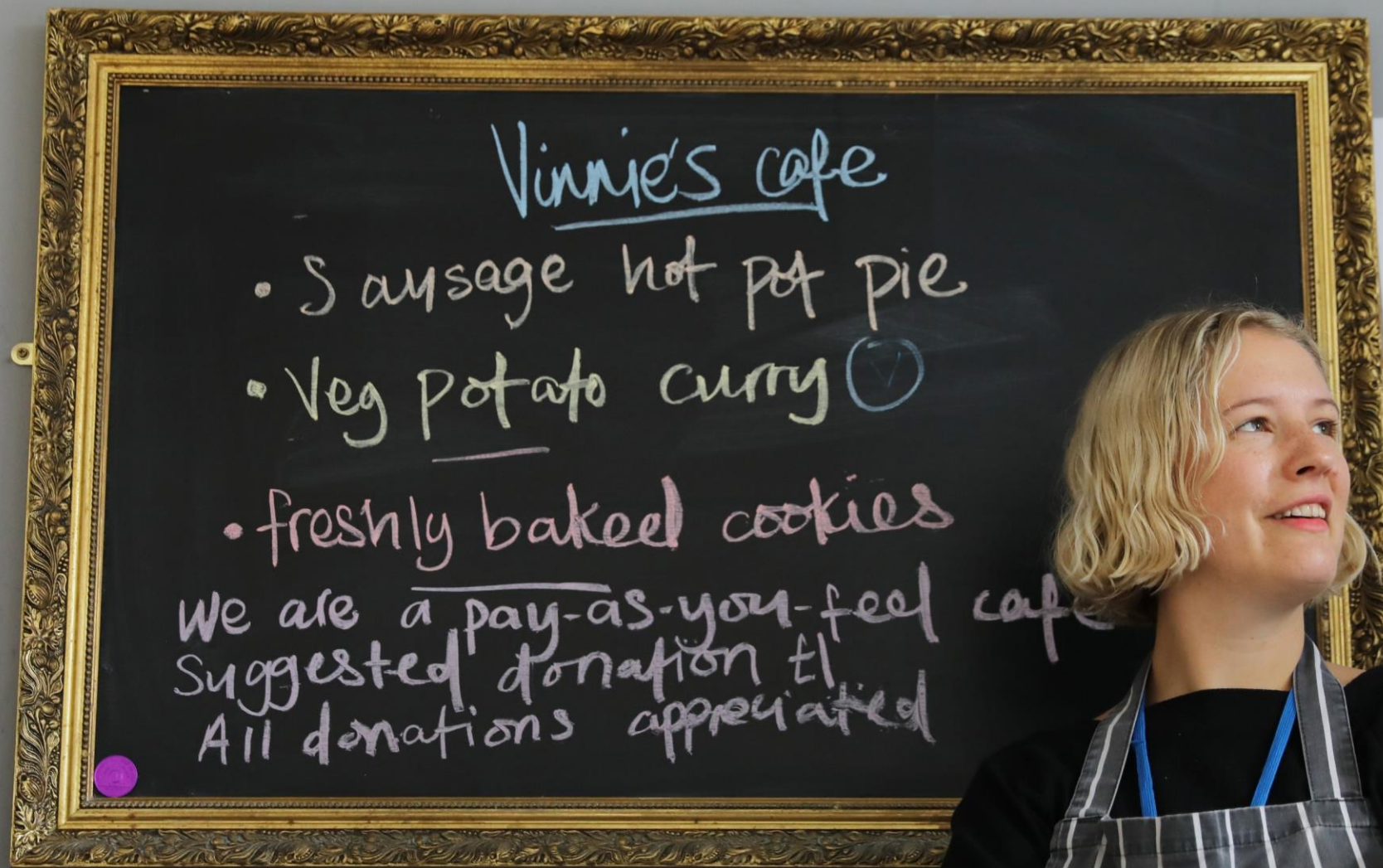
# At least 309,000 people in England homeless

*\*Shelter UK (December 2023)*









## Vinnie's cafe

- Sausage hot pot pie
- Veg potato curry (V)
- freshly baked cookies

We are a pay-as-you-feel cafe  
Suggested donation £1  
All donations appreciated

### FOOD ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

PLEASE SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF OUR TEAM  
ABOUT THE INGREDIENTS IN YOUR MEAL,  
WHEN MAKING YOUR ORDER  
THANK YOU

#### VINNIE'S COMMUNITY CAFE

Please note that our only free meal service is on a  
Tuesday in the main hall from 11 – 1:30.  
We respectfully request that when you are using  
our upstairs café, you pay what you can towards the  
cost of your meal by putting a donation in the box.  
Your donations assist us to continue to feed people  
in need.  
We regret that we can only provide one meal per  
customer. Thank you!

#### VINNIE'S COMMUNITY CAFE

(Upstairs)

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Served from 10:30 – 11:30

Meals from 11:30 – 1:30

Pay as you Please

Put a donation towards your meal.

We feed other people who can't

afford it!

Drop in Meal Service

(Main Hall)

Tuesday

Welcome!

11:00 – 1:30





A photograph of a prison corridor. In the foreground, the backs of four men are visible as they stand in a line. They are wearing light blue, grey, orange, and maroon shirts. The corridor is long and brightly lit with overhead fluorescent lights. The ceiling has a complex metal structure with pipes and lights. In the distance, other inmates and staff can be seen. The overall atmosphere is institutional and stark.

**88,220 inmates  
currently in prisons in  
England and Wales**

*\*Ministry of Justice (March 2024)*





St Vincent  
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

**son & Probation**

**e**

**Community Peer Mentor**  
**cent's Ely**

**Community Peer Ment**  
**cent's Ely**









