



# WEST CAMBRIDGE **CHRISTIAN** YOUTH MINISTRIES



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## ANNUAL REPORT

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Sept '22 to  
Aug '23



# WELCOME

**WCCYM** is a partnership of churches in villages to the west of Cambridge, working together for young people in a manner that they could not do individually.

**WCCYM**'s key values are:

To work in **partnership**

Build **trust**

Show **respect**

Bring **hope**

To be **Christ-centred**.

## WELCOME

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Thank you for picking up this comprehensive and action-packed report and for your interest in the work of WCCYM.

The 2022-23 year saw further development of our outreach and discipleship activities, with evidence of young people exploring and growing in faith through discipleship groups, the weekend residential and the summer camping trip to the Satellites Christian festival. Increasing numbers have been attending the monthly WCCYM Thirst services, with young people playing an increasing leadership role.

We are grateful to our expanding team of volunteers for the ability to run these events along with many social activities, as young people develop confidence and friendships as well as a growing understanding of their faith.

Many people with past and present links to WCCYM came together for our 30th birthday celebrations in July 2023, which was a great encouragement.

We remain deeply grateful for the support we receive from churches, schools and individuals. Your practical, prayerful and/or financial support are critical as we look forward with confidence to the coming year.

Please read on, give thanks, be encouraged and consider how you could be involved.

**Nigel Taylor**

On behalf of the WCCYM Management Team

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# A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

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Welcome to the 2022-2023 WCCYM Annual Report. As you'll see, we have had a variety of opportunities to work with young people throughout the year. Some of these have been in the school setting, and we have been developing our Chaplaincy work. We have also provided many activities for young people out of school, and continue to use Scripture Union's 'Revealing Jesus' framework (Connect; Explore; Respond; Grow) for this ministry across the churches. As we have come to the end of our 30th year, we have been able to reflect on God's faithfulness since WCCYM was set up, and look forward to where He will take us as we move forward.

**Susie Thomson**

On behalf of the WCCYM Team

## CONNECT

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### **to feel connected to a supportive community**

Social activities are an effective way to build community with the young people we work with. Friendships across different churches and schools are strengthened, and it is brilliant way to enjoy time together and have fun.

We plan for one activity each term, and last year this included a Sports and Games night in September (held at Hardwick Primary School), a bowling trip to St Neots Eat n Bowl in February, and the Punting and BBQ trip in June (which was by far the most popular again!). Inviting the new Yr 6s to the final one was a great opportunity to meet some new people and begin to get to know them.

Nick has been running a table-top roleplay game (TTRPG) with a small group of young people who were, initially, on the edge of our connections. As the year went on and more of these sessions occurred, the young people began to attend other WCCYM and church activities giving us, and the churches, a greater chance to support them.

We have also continued to push our social media presence in different ways. Verse of the Week posts went up at the beginning of each week and saw a great involvement from volunteers and we also saw an increase of followers and engagement across all platforms. We are unable to gauge the full extent of who we are connecting with on social media, but young people are sharing stories of their friends seeing our posts, helping them to share a little about us, or Jesus, in those moments.





# EXPLORE

**to explore the Christian faith and learn about Jesus**

## **Christmas Party**

We had a brilliant time at our Christmas Party, which we held at Cambourne Church. We had a variety of activities to choose from, including Christmas craft, games (giant Hungry Hippos was a popular choice), Pigs in Blankets and chip-shop chips, a couple of carols, and a Christmas message shared by Hannah Overton. It was great to bring together young people from different WCCYM activities, and we even had real snow as we were leaving at the end of the evening.



## **Easter Games and Challenges Event**

We followed a similar format for our Easter Event, this time meeting at the Cabin at St Mary's Church, Hardwick. We had a variety of activities for young people to participate in, including quiz rounds and different types of challenges; some more practical (e.g. using ping pong balls, jam and bread!) and some more intellectual and solving problems. We had toasties and ice cream, and Adrian Semerene shared an Easter message with us.



## **Summer Party**

We had a great time at our Summer Party held at Mill Farm in Gamlingay. This was a brilliant location for our outdoor event, where we had team games, a BBQ, Zorb Ball games (thanks to Cambourne Soul and Romsey Mill for the Zorb balls!), a Gladiator inflatable, circus skills equipment, craft and candy floss! Clare Cronin (who had recently started working at Cambourne Church as their ministry team leader for Children and Young People) and Esther Moore (previous WCCYM young person now at Uni) made a great double act for a short talk while the young people ate ice lollies.

# RESPOND

## opportunities to respond to the Good News of Jesus

Throughout the year, we tried to provide a number of opportunities for young people to respond to the good news of Jesus. At times, this was at a particular event, but throughout our activities across the churches, we want to encourage the young people to have an active faith in God.



We were privileged to help four young people prepare for baptism / confirmation in a group together, with three sessions looking at different aspects of their journey with God and the point that they had reached to make a public declaration.

# GROW

## to grow as a disciple who disciples others

### Thirst

Thirst continued to go well, with an increase in numbers during the year. We moved to Cambourne Church annexe, and encouraged more involvement from young people in hosting the evenings and being part of the band. We had a variety of speakers; Bethan Ryder, Nick Slater, Susie Thomson, David Newton, Matt Farley, Robbie Thomson, Ben Ince and Bryony Green-Wood. We are very appreciative of our local partner churches for providing brilliant meals each month.

### In the words of a young person...

Thirst has been such a blessing for me as a young person. The opportunity to meet and reconnect with my Christian friends each month to eat, worship and pray together is one I love and am so grateful for. Listening to the talks from visiting speakers and chatting about it with peers and leaders has been so helpful in my faith journey.



## Deeper - Discipleship for Sixth Formers - in the words of a Young Person

The best thing about Deeper was being with people specifically my age and going through the same life changes and stages that I was; it helped strengthen the knowledge that I wasn't alone in my faith. I enjoyed the sense of community it gave. We ate together, laughed together and prayed together. At times it felt like a family. It helped me to deepen my relationship with God as I was around people of a similar, more mature age. It was helpful and encouraging to be around others who share my faith and my struggles and grow in faith with them.



## Discipleship Group

An exciting development last year was the start of our fortnightly WCCYM Discipleship group sessions on a Friday evening. We found that the small groups from the previous year would have quite a lot of overlap of the young people who came, and we wanted to provide the opportunity for more regular Bible study. Every week we started with dessert and the opportunity to play games at tables, followed by a challenge or game, some input from the front, and time in groups to discuss (splitting into three different age groups). We did a series on the 'I am' statements from John's gospel, special sessions on Christmas and Easter, and a focus on Sex and Relationships for a few sessions.

## WCCYM Weekend - in the words of a Young Person

We had a great weekend away at Burwell House in March, with 35 young people attending. Mark Watson from Cambridge & District Youth For Christ was our speaker and helped us consider the theme influencers.



WCCYM weekend away is a great place to connect with God in a small group or on your own. It is also a great place to make new friends and connect with older friends that you haven't seen in a long time. There is a lot of fun messy games that are great fun (eg. using baked beans and cream.)





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## Satellites - in the words of a Young Person

To finish off the year, we took a group of 19 young people to Satellites, the Christian Youth Festival run by Youthscape.

The best things about Satellites were the worship and the atmosphere that was created while we were worshipping. My favourite worship song of the week was 'Jesus at the centre of it all'. Another good thing about Satellites was being surrounded by thousands of Christians, and being with my WCCYM friends.

Something that I enjoyed was playing games in the WCCYM tent (including the signs game and the chair game). Something else that I enjoyed was eating all the delicious food that the amazing cooks cooked for us. An interesting thing that happened was the WCCYM tent blowing away. Another thing that I enjoyed was doing the washing up and singing songs out of tune with Clare and other young people from WCCYM.

My relationship with God grew over the week at Satellites; this is mainly because of the focus I had towards God. Being away with WCCYM meant I didn't have other distractions (school, homework, YouTube, chores) I had more time to focus on God and building my relationship with God. Spending time with other Christians helped me strengthen my relationship with God; this is because of the support I got from the other young people at WCCYM. The songs that were sung helped me connect to God for example 'Jesus at the centre' and in more detail the lyrics 'from my heart to the heavens, Jesus be the centre it's all about you'. These lyrics remind me that the world doesn't revolve around me and my life but around Jesus.







# WCCYM IN SCHOOLS

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A large amount of our work continues to be in schools, where we work in a holistic way through the provision of pastoral and spiritual support. Our work is mainly in Comberton Village College, Cambourne Village College and Comberton Sixth Form, with a small input in the local primary schools for students at the end of Yr 6.

## PASTORAL SUPPORT

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**encourage to flourish**

### **One-to-one**

Cherie and Susie worked with over 70 young people in an individual capacity throughout the year, providing a listening ear and a safe space for them to be able to share challenges they are experiencing. For some, there are a series of 4-6 sessions to talk through different issues, and for others it may be longer term support. We have a service level agreement with Comberton Village College and Sixth Form for 8 hours a week of student support, which was increased to 12 hours a week from February 2022, after a request from the school to increase the work we did. Susie also worked with a few students at Cambourne Village College in this way too.

### **Groups**

Group work is also part of what we offer to schools, with the aim of looking at particular issues (eg resilience, friendship, etc) with a small group of students from the same year group. This, as well as the one-to-one support, is arranged through the relevant pastoral teams using the referral processes in the schools.

### **Sixth Form Hot Chocolates**

Fridays continued to be popular in the Sixth Form, as members of the WCCYM Team gave out free hot chocolates to students (and a few staff) at lunchtimes. This provides a good opportunity to touch base with the students and hear how they're getting on.





**Fun fact:** Bourbons are the most popular biscuit on Fridays when we hand out Hot Chocolates in Comberton Sixth Form.



### **PSHE & PD Delivery**

Last year we delivered our usual Yr 12 Personal Development sessions on Healthy Relationships and E-Safety, and also took a Yr 8 Personal Social Health Education lesson on Vaping and Peer Pressure, repeated to all 10 classes.

### **Yr 6/7 transitions**

In a similar way to previous years, we helped the local churches deliver lessons or assemblies for Yr 6 classes in the local primary schools. WCCYM was involved in supporting lessons in 14 different schools! We also worked with a small group of Yr 6s at Gamlingay Village Primary, to help with their transition to Comberton Village College.

### **Beaumanor Year 7 residential**

Susie went along to the Year 7 residential with students from Comberton Village College, from the Tuesday to Thursday, and enjoyed getting to know student and staff, helping out where she could.



# SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

## explore spiritual development

### Christian Union groups

We have really enjoyed getting to know new students in the Christian Union groups at Comberton and Cambourne Village Colleges, and Comberton Sixth Form. We had a renewed burst of energy and enthusiasm with keen Yr 7s at both Village Colleges, which has been brilliant and an encouragement to us all! We are grateful to the staff members at the schools for giving up their lunchtimes to support the groups.

### Sixth Form CU - from a young person

**Best thing about CU:** having a space to chat and relax.

**Something I enjoyed:** getting to know people outside of my social circle.

**How it impacted my faith:** I started to realise how important faith is.

### Cambourne CU - from a young person

Christian Union at CVC has been so beneficial for me in a lot of different ways. It has helped me incorporate my faith into my daily life but has also created a safe place to talk to people. It has also been so helpful in getting through difficult days at school (e.g. most Mondays).

### Comberton CU and Exploring the Bible group

We had a great year at Comberton Village College with the lunchtime groups, with CU on a Friday, and helping one of the staff members to run an additional group on a Tuesday lunchtime, called Exploring the Bible. Both groups involved great discussion, with some young people from church backgrounds, but also some friends who had been invited too.

### Assemblies

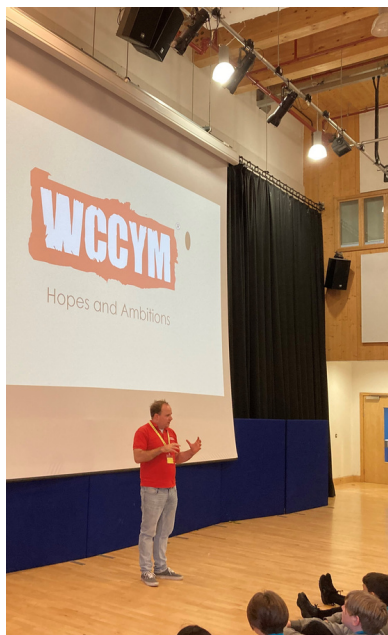
Our assemblies this year included ones on Hopes and Ambitions, Christmas and the Power of Words.

### RPE days

This last year, we delivered lessons for five separate Religion, Philosophy and Ethics days across both Village Colleges. These lessons were on Sexual Relationships, the Environment, War and Peace, Medical Ethics, and Human Rights and Social Justice, with some themes being for Yr 10 and some for Yr 11. We are grateful to the local church ministers who joined us for these.

### Christian Staff Gatherings

In both Comberton and Cambourne Village Colleges, we met together a number of times throughout the year to pray together and encourage one another, and enjoy good cake!



# CHAPLAINCY

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## **additional support offered to all**

WCCYM's Chaplaincy work at Comberton Village College has developed well through the year. We have used the term 'Chaplaincy' to include the schools work already described previously in this report, and also some additional aspects of student and staff support.

### **Staff Support**

We have continued to have a service level agreement with the college to provide four hours a week of staff support. This has involved one-to-one support sessions mostly with Cherie. We also led a workshop for a group of staff on Anxiety, looking at understanding strategies to help. We were also very fortunate to have a local florist come and run a Christmas Wreath workshop, and an Easter table decoration workshop, which were fantastic! We continued to provide teas and coffees for 'Cake Friday' for staff, providing the opportunity to chat to staff in an informal setting, sometimes having written reflections available on tables. Twice during the year we distributed flowers or chocolates throughout the various departments in the college, to encourage staff.

### **Drop-in**

As part of our time given to the school, we ran a weekly Drop-in for students, providing the chance for students to come along and discuss any challenges they are facing. Sometimes this was a one-off chat, and at other times it led to some organised support sessions as a follow-up.

### **Mental Health Awareness Week**

For the second year running, Nick created a video in partnership with students at the college, this time in the Sixth Form, to raise awareness for Mental Health Awareness Week. The focus this time was on different strategies to help with mental health challenges.

### **Being a Presence in school and responding to circumstances**

One of the focusses of Chaplaincy is to be a presence in the school community, available for both students and staff alike. Being around in college regularly means that we are able to respond to circumstances. Last year there were a couple of particular times when students and staff were struggling more, due to circumstances affecting the whole school community, and we were able to offer additional support at this time. This is just one way we are able to serve the school community in a unique way.



# CHURCHES & VOLUNTEERS

**Working in partnership with local churches**

## **Local Churches**

We have four Key Partner Churches (or groups of Churches) and we are very grateful for their support. We have some brilliant volunteers who give their time sacrificially. As part of recognising our 30th Birthday, we visited some of the churches to give an update and share some encouragements. It was brilliant to spend time with people and worship together in different church traditions. Susie went to Deanery Synod twice during the year, giving updates on WCCYM's work.

## **Training and Support for Youth Workers and Volunteers**

We have had a variety of training opportunities for youth workers and those who volunteer with young people. The core WCCYM Team met fortnightly to encourage and support one another, as well as plan together. The three WCCYM employees completed a 2-day Youth Mental Health First Aid course in January, and we were joined by a few of the volunteers at the National Youth Ministry Weekend run by Youthscape. We continued to lead some training sessions for volunteers under the 'Neos' banner with Daniel Beckett and Clare Cronin, with a session on the World of a Young Person, one on faith development and learning styles, and an informal Q&A session with all attending sharing their experiences and expertise.



## **Church Partners and a new Associate Church**

As WCCYM is run as a partnership of churches we have four Key Partner churches: Cambourne Church, Comberton Baptist Church, Hardwick Evangelical Church and the Lordsbridge Team of Churches. We are delighted to have our first Associate Partner church. Gamlingay Baptist Church - officially joining us in this last year. We already had strong relationships with people in the church; young people are actively involved, we have some great volunteers from the church, and lead pastor Adrian Semerene previously was part of the WCCYM Team! It has been great to make a more formal link between WCCYM and the church, and we look forward to continuing to work together. To find out more about what it means to be a Key or Associate Partner Church please get in touch.

# DARE TO HOPE

**30 years of WCCYM**

2022 saw WCCYM reach its 30th birthday year. We celebrated in a few different ways. Firstly, we decided to create a line of merchandise that had a tagline/phrase on it that spelt out the past, present and future of WCCYM, that would encourage young people to declare the name of Jesus, and that was Biblical. 'Dare to Hope' was born. Taken from Lamentations 3:21 in the New Living Translation, we felt that 'Dare to Hope' encapsulated all of this. The founders of WCCYM dared to hope that young people would come to know Jesus, young people should be daring with their hope in Jesus and WCCYM dares to hope that we can reach even more young people for Jesus.



## **30th Birthday Service and Celebration**

On Saturday 1st July, we held a 30th Birthday Celebration for WCCYM inviting many guests from across the decades of our history. We were able to praise God together for all the goodness and blessings he has given to WCCYM. We were also able to share a little of the work we do to support young people and Cherie gave us an update on our chaplaincy work. We were also able to hear from some of the organisations that we work with and the impact we have had on them. Those that weren't able to be there on the day had sent in video messages to share how WCCYM had impacted them over the years. Some quotes from these videos are here:

“ It was such a great time being part of [WCCYM] for a year. I was able to learn from others within the team, I felt valued within the team. I think for the young people it's just such a great place where they can explore their faith and grow in their relationship to God. All these experiences and memories still have an impact on me and also help me to get new ideas and resources for youthwork back here [Austria] so the impact WCCYM has goes beyond the borders of the UK I'd say. ”

**Miriam - Gap Year Youth Worker 2021-22**



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“ Has it really been 30 years?... It's amazing it's still going. That's an absolute testament to the guys that started it way back when. Thank you for giving me my first proper youthwork job... God Bless, all the best and keep the good work going. ”

**John - the First WCCYM Youth Worker**

“ The first time I really got to know other Christians my age was in Sixth Form and that was mostly down to WCCYM running things like CU in my school and other youth groups. I was so grateful for all of the time they put in to get to know me especially during lockdown when they still ran things online. I think the biggest impact that WCCYM had for me was when I came back from Uni a year later and I helped on Satellites, the youth festival they take some young people to. And it just made me realise how much I love, and how important it is to me to see, young people experiencing Jesus for themselves and the impact that WCCYM had there is just incredible. ”

**Bethan - Previous WCCYM Young Person**

“ It has been great to be able to work in partnership with WCCYM for many years. From the perspective of local schools, the really great thing about WCCYM is how they have truly become part of the wider school community. All those working for WCCYM seek to serve that community and help to make it a better place. This genuinely helps the schools to do even better with the young people in their charge. It also means that WCCYM earns the right to do its work in the school community because it so effectively provides service in an ongoing way. This applies to staff as well as well as to pupils. It means that all those involved provide a very positive witness to the whole broader community. ”

**Stephen Munday - Chief Executive of the  
CAM Academy Trust**

Sent to us by Stephen after he shared at the Birthday Celebration



# MANAGEMENT

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WCCYM has a management committee that meets 4 times a year to oversee the work of WCCYM. It is made up of representatives from Cambourne Church, Comberton Baptist Church, Hardwick Evangelical Church, and the Lordsbridge team of Anglican Churches. Susie Thomson reports to the management committee, on behalf of the WCCYM team of youth workers. We are incredibly grateful to the committee members for giving their time, experience and expertise. For the academic year 2022/23, the management team has included:

**Nigel Taylor** - Cambourne Church (T) – chair

**Bill Miller** - Cambourne Church (T)

**Kate Gaze** - Hardwick Evangelical Church (T)

**Keith Tarring** - Comberton Baptist Church (T)

**Sarah Rittman** - Lordsbridge Team

**Sue Chase** - Treasurer

**Ruth Gildersleve** - Secretary to the Management Team

**Susie Thomson** - WCCYM Team Leader

T signifies Trustees of WCCYM

# GIVING TO WCCYM

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Last year we enjoyed an entertaining quiz in January, held at Cambourne Church, with over 80 people in attendance! We were also very fortunate to have Lynda Elwell raise over £400 for WCCYM by completing the West Highland Way in Scotland. We are extremely grateful to those of you who responded to our '30 for 30' Dare to Hope campaign to raise funds as part of our 30th Birthday year. We were blessed to receive some one-off donations, and also some new monthly financial supporters starting their financial support for WCCYM.

If you would like to give towards the work of WCCYM, please go to **[www.give.net/20029793](http://www.give.net/20029793)** or contact: **Sue Chase (WCCYM Treasurer), c/o Manor Farm, 14 Alms Hill, Bourn, CB23 2SH**. Please email **[info@wccym.org](mailto:info@wccym.org)** to find out more.

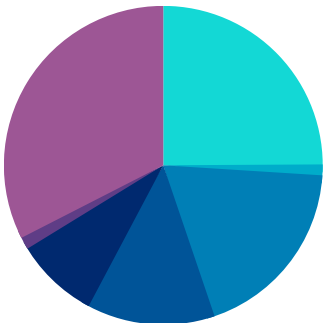


# THE FIGURES

WCCYM continues to be funded by local churches who support and encourage our work and by individuals in the west Cambridge area who share our values.

Our team of three staff/youth workers has remained intact this year thanks to the second part of a Grant from the Henry Smith Charity and our events and activities have proved more popular than ever.

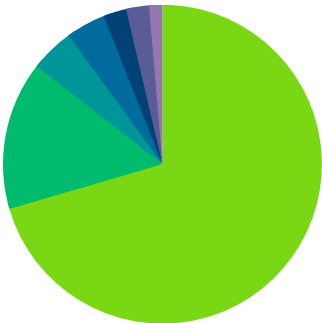
We continue to work with Comberton Village College, both with individuals and groups, and also, this year, with staff, and they continue to contribute towards the cost of the services we provide.



Income	
Churches	£15473
Gifts & Donations	£12679
Pastoral Support	£11665
Other Income	£8055
Events & Activities	£5269
Fundraising	£769
Grant Funding	£20200
Total	£74110

We send our gratitude to all those churches and individuals who are currently giving or who have promised to give, in order to finance WCCYM in the coming year and enable us to continue the valuable work that we do. We are grateful that extra fundraising in 2022-23 has enabled us to set aside reserves to maintain our current staffing in 2023-24, when our Henry Smith Charity grant is reduced in its final year.

Expenditure	
Staff/Workers	£41417
Events & Activities	£8860
Overheads	£2607
Staff Training & Resources	£2356
Bookkeeping	£1373
Travel	£1371
Safeguarding & Insurance	£789
Total	£58773



# TEAM

## the faces of WCCYM



**Susie Thomson** is WCCYM's Team Leader, and is employed for 21 hours per week. She links with the local churches, youth workers and volunteers. She is involved in most of WCCYM's work, including the various aspects of the schools work, as well as many of the activities outside of school. She also meets regularly with the management team.



**Cherie Williamson** works for WCCYM for 21 hours a week. She currently heads up our Chaplaincy Team work at Comberton Village College, supporting both students and staff pastorally and spiritually. She takes the lead on liaising with school staff around topics we are invited to share on and prepares the lesson plans for the rest of the team.



**Nick Slater** works 20 hours a week, with a focus on discipleship, outreach and digital communication, including WCCYM's social media presence. Nick is at most WCCYM events run outside of the schools, from socials to WCCYM Discipleship and heads up some of our other small groups, like Deeper and the on-going TTRPG group (see Connect).



**Clare Cronin** started working for Cambourne Church in June 2023 as the full-time Ministry team Leader for Children and Young People. She was previously part of the WCCYM Team when she worked in the area 5 years ago, and we are delighted that she is able to get involved again now through her current role.



**Adam Went** is one of the people who you will see more of in 2023/2024. He has previously been involved in WCCYM as a young person, and as a young leader. In 2023/2024, Adam will be spending the year with Youth For Christ on their Year Out, with a joint placement with Comberton Baptist Church and WCCYM, which we are really pleased about.





**WEST CAMBRIDGE CHRISTIAN YOUTH MINISTRIES**



@wccym