

Together

No 79 Winter 2012

in Sussex

UCKFIELD PREPARES FOR WINTER

Residents and businesses in Uckfield are being invited to work with council staff and gritters to help keep their town moving if there is a repeat of last winter's snowy conditions.

The Local Authority can cope with the main roads, parks and public areas but local shops and residents are being encouraged to clear their own frontage and pavements but it is looking for volunteers to be on hand for those who can't. It is a pilot scheme and it is hoped that its success will encourage other towns and villages to follow suite.

Never behind the door with long-term planning, Green DIY, a member of the town's chamber of commerce, was offering cut-price supplies to High Street traders as early as October — snow shovels for £8.50, bags of salt for £6.50, gloves for £3 a pair or £17 for the whole pack. Volunteers should contact Uckfield Town Council (Tel 01825- 762774).

Further information from Jim van den Bos, Communications Officer, Wealden District Council. Tel: 01892 602745. Email: jim.vandenbos@wealden.gov.uk. See also www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/maintenance/saltingandgritting/informationpack.htm and www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/severeweatherguidance.

See Agenda for Snow Shifting, page 6 >



Ian Chishall and David Bowler of Uckfield Churches share a shovel alongside Cllr John Carvey, Mayor of Uckfield, with Mark Arno, Peter Gale and Mike Skinner, representatives of Uckfield Chamber of Commerce.

DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

At the time of the August riots Dan Thompson, a Worthing artist and no activist, had the surprise of his life when in a moment of helplessness he (somewhat naively perhaps) tweeted that instead of fulminating against causes, rights and wrongs, with charges and counter charges, perhaps one of the most useful things in the communities concerned would be for the locals to come out with their own determination, skills and tools, get together and clean up the mess.

Another day he would have had his ears chopped off, but this day was different. Positive and supporting tweets poured in by the hundred. By 3 o'clock in the morning there were thousands. By dawn the phone was ringing with radio and television stations, local and national, hundreds of people began waving brooms in the air, Boris Johnson turned up and Government ministers phoned to see how they could help. He had touched a nerve.



The net result was much more than a Riot Clean-up. 'Attitudes have changed', says Dan. 'People who woke up with fear suddenly began to find hope and optimism as violence gave way to talk of reclaiming the streets just by being'.

And all at a time when many people were calling for the closure of Twitter and other social networks, allegedly responsible for organising the riots in the first place; perhaps never a better example of shooting the messenger instead of listening to the message and using the one and same messenger in a different way.

Of course Twitter has all kinds of questionable possibilities. It also has an enormous potential for good but are the churches alive to the possibilities and ready to take advantage of them?

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Ian says . . .

I am delighted to introduce this edition of Together to you, bringing news of some of the ways in which churches in Sussex are responding to the challenge in Matthew 5 to be salt and light in our communities. The impact that each one of us can have in our locality may be modest, but together we really do make a huge difference for many of the people who live in and visit Sussex. For example our various Street Pastor and Street Angel schemes meet thousands of people each year who otherwise would not have any regular contact with a church, but each person who is helped is impacted by the work of Jesus just as clearly.

At the same time the variety of stories and suggestions in this edition can reflect areas of difference between us. Most of us recognise that the gospel demands that both our actions and our words need to be consistent in demonstrating the transformational impact of Jesus to the society around us. Some however feel that words must be our priority and others that actions are more important. Some of us favour initiatives organised by local churches and others believe we should participate in services organised by other agencies. Some of us feel that being part of an identifiable initiative is best while others feel that quietly working under our own steam is most appropriate. We are all at different places on our journey together and none of these positions is exclusive or best for everyone.

From where I stand, however, I am well aware that some churches and groups of churches feel in need of help to engage with the communities around them or to find out which services would welcome their support, while 'secular' agencies such as

local government, the voluntary sector, police, health, fire and rescue services are more prepared than ever to find ways for local churches to engage with them. Inevitably personalities as well as policies affect responses, but if you need help knowing who to contact don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

As we move into 2012 some of us will be focused on the Olympics and the missional opportunities they will provide, others on the Queens Jubilee, and I am sure you will have many others on your calendar. Please let us know what you are planning.

In terms of organisational matters 2012 will see the retirement of both John Hind and Wallace Benn as Bishops in Chichester Diocese respectively so change in Sussex is inevitable. I too am considering a possible change of role which I hope to share with you in the next edition of Together when I will need your help to achieve the goal but please get in touch if you wish to know more before then.

Finally, the running heads to pages 3-5 in this issue relate to Bonhoeffer's challenging poem, 'Stations on the The Road to Freedom' (Letters and Papers from Prison, Collins Fontana, 1959, p 161) featured in the Lenten course, 'The Way to Freedom,' available from Churches Together in Britain (www.ctbi.org.uk).

Ian Chisnall
Mission and Unity Co-ordinator

Wondering How to Celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee? Here are a few Suggestions

The Queen came to the throne in February 1952 so 2012 is the year of Jubilee. The Coronation was June 2, 1953, so the weekend of June 2-5 is the appropriate time for Celebration with a Big Jubilee Lunch on the Sunday and a special Bank Holiday to boot on the Tuesday, and Churches are already beginning to think about their plans.

Central for the churches is the Big Lunch and it is not too soon to address the question: does a church provide a Big Lunch in the locality and open it to whoever wishes to come or simply encourage members to join in a Big Lunch in their street as an opportunity to relate to their neighbours, possibly for the first time?

A specifically Christian contribution may be made by ensuring that there is a moment of thanksgiving for food and thanksgiving

for the Queen, who has demonstrated her commitment to the Christian faith as a Christian leader with 60 years of loyal service in a constantly changing nation which today welcomes and embraces people of all faiths or of none.

Many churches will no doubt also want to offer a specifically Christian act of worship prior to the Big Lunch and some will have opportunities to feed information and suggestions into school assemblies and lesson plans.

Churches involved in community events will wish to be sensitive to the presence of people of other faiths or no faith at all, remembering that the Queen is not only head of the church but also head of the nation which can no longer be taken as universally 'Christian'.

For further details see www.thebiglunch.com.

Ever wanted to join the Fire and Rescue Service, – yet knew you could never make it? Claire Harris explains how Community Volunteers can provide back-up

A two-year-old Wealden pilot project to explore the possibility of Community Volunteers offering support to the Fire and Rescue Service has been so successful that it is now being rolled out across East Sussex including the City of Brighton and Hove. This means that volunteer support will be available to all Borough Commanders, headquarters staff and fire stations regardless of where they are based within the county.

The object was to enrol Community Volunteers to enable the Service to achieve its vision of 'safer and more sustainable communities' and the scheme was launched in 2009 with volunteers based at Heathfield fire station. By September 2010 eight volunteers had been recruited and within a year they were clearly making a vital contribution providing fire and road safety information and practical support not only to the Service but to the local community.

Volunteers, who have varied life experiences which help them to understand the needs of their local communities, come from all walks of life. Motivations vary. Some simply want to help their local communities, some have been helped by the fire service and want to give something back and others want to pursue a career in the uniformed services.

All complete an induction period, where they learn about the Fire Service, are given a tour around their local station, and undertake relevant training to enable them to carry out their roles.

The range of activities is varied, depending on individual skills, availability and training, and have included supporting staff at fire station open days, acting as role players for training activities, 'warm calling' householders to tell them about free home safety visits, and talking to the public at big community events, such as Heathfield Show and a 999 Emergency Services Weekend. In the last twelve months they have contributed over 400 hours and generated over 250 home safety visits.

In many cases they bring additional personal skills to the job. One, skilled in British Sign Language for example, was able to use 'signing' to help a deaf couple on the 999 Emergency Services weekend in Eastbourne, thereby considerably enhancing their enjoyment of the day. Another was able to alert the RSPCA and the police to a property where neighbours had not picked up on animals in distress.

Churches in West Sussex might note that discussions are already taking place there with a view to a similar development.

Mark Matthews, Borough Commander Wealden, says 'We are already reaping the benefits of Community Volunteers to support our staff. As 'eyes and ears' on a local level, volunteers can get the message of the importance of fire and road safety to their local communities to reach those who are most vulnerable.'

For further information or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer contact Claire Harris (Tel 07950-876771. Email claire.harris@esfrs.org or claire.harris@3va.org.uk or see www.esfrs.org/community/volunteers).

'A rewarding job' – Volunteer smiles say it all!



How to Protect Your Church

In the last two years East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services have attended 27 incidents in places of worship. One was an electrical, two were accidental and four deliberate

- 1 Overcome complacency. We go to church, get used to everything being in the same place and then fall short when it comes to security and the risk of arson when a few simple steps could avoid the damage, or even destruction, of our much loved buildings.
- 2 Check on security, ensuring all perimeter fences and walls, doors and windows are in good order and premises locked when not in use. CCTV signage also helps. Most cases of arson arise from antisocial activity around the premises.
- 3 Keep all valuables locked and out of sight, all flammables out of reach, and check where you store your refuse. Arson is often a cover-up another crime.
- 4 Highlight defective areas and deal with them by having a fire risk assessment, required as part of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

For further information, see the website (www.firesafetyguides.comunities.gov.uk) and the guide Fire Safety Risk Assessment (Small and Medium Places of Assembly) or contact East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Technical Fire Safety on 0845 130 8855.

Street Pastors

Martin Walker testifies to their Value to the Community

Chief Superintendent Martin Walker is the Divisional Commander of the West Sussex Division of Sussex Police and is the Force's Faith Patron. He explains why it is so important that organisations such as the Street Pastors are supported within our communities.

As part of my work for Sussex Police, I champion engagement with faith groups, making sure the police link in with local faith communities from all main faith groups in Sussex. I actively encourage districts across the force to work with faith communities in order to keep Sussex a safe and peaceful place.

I believe that agencies such as the police, local authorities, health, social services and education all have a responsibility to find a lasting solution to social problems and the right way to bring about real and lasting change is for us to work in partnership. For years, faith communities have been making a difference in neighbourhoods and since a Sussex Police conference on the subject last year, we have been working as a Force to make sure this work is recognised and supported.

There are already many partnerships between the faith groups and the neighbourhood police teams and it is exciting to see more and more developing. Recently, eighty people offered to volunteer to help their community in Bognor because they were brought together by a Redeeming Our Communities (ROC) event.

Street Pastors and Street Angels are an essential part of this mix. One of the reasons I am so passionate about the schemes, is that measurable results show they have been effective across the country; cooperation really does make a difference

We have two Street Pastor schemes in West Sussex, in our two busiest towns of Worthing and Crawley, and in Bognor we have the Arun Angels with a similar aim. These schemes mainly help tackle alcohol related disorder on Friday and Saturday nights. They make sure people who are vulnerable because they have drunk too much are able to get home safely — something that police officers greatly appreciate during such a busy time.

We hope to extend Street Pastors to other areas and it might be that in villages and smaller towns the focus will be on different issues, depending on the needs of the community. They might, for instance, help engage with young people who are hanging around outside late at night.

Although we work very closely with the Street Pastors, it is important that their work is seen as separate from the role of police officers. Their commitment is looking after the welfare of those who may not have done anything illegal but may well need help after a night out. At the same time I have no doubt that the presence of the Street Pastors on many occasions can calm down potential disorder.

The police and faith groups have a long history of working together with all sections of society. It makes sense to me because we share common values such as compassion, treating people fairly, standing up for what is right and protecting the vulnerable in our society. I hope that we can continue this tradition and continue to develop our work to help more and more people.

If you are interested in finding out about a local scheme or helping to set one up, please contact Community Engagement Sergeant Peter Allan (Email peter.allan@sussex.pnn.police.uk) or call 101 extension 81255.

For a Mother's appreciation of Street Pastors see page 6 ►

Redeeming our Community A Chance to Say Sorry

Just over a year ago, at a Christmas Party, Malcolm (not his real name) lost control and assaulted one of his colleagues resulting in sufficiently serious injuries to his victim to earn himself a custodial sentence. Once in prison he expressed a wish to apologise to his colleague and after due consideration by prison staff, Sussex Pathways and Sussex Police he was given an opportunity to do so.

Two police officers put in a lot of time briefing all parties and securing their confidence to ensure that the process would be fair and inclusive. Neutral territory was called for and an approach to St Andrews, Ferring, was given a warm reception with the full cooperation of the priest, Rev Garry Ingram, who gave up part of his vicarage to facilitate it.

It was a huge success and the opportunity for reflection to address the impact had a beneficial effect on all those concerned. The offender was able to return to work in the same environment as the victim, overcoming a substantial obstacle, and giving Malcolm a chance to restore relationships with his victim and former colleagues.

Hopefully it will prove to be the first of many similar attempts to engage in Restorative Justice, or Community Resolution as Sussex Police call it, leading to an alternative way of Redeeming Our Communities rather than rushing to lock people up.

In part it is the fruit of closer relationships and partnerships with the public sector, especially church, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies. The seeds of this approach were sown and tested in Manchester over ten years ago when churches were encouraged to work more closely with the police and crime went down 11.5% in the first year.

Since then the practice has spread across the UK to include



major cities such as Birmingham, Liverpool, Plymouth, and London.

ROC arrived in Sussex in the summer of 2011 and has now been launched in Bognor, Littlehampton & Eastbourne. In Bognor, over 200 people met with Sussex Police Neighbourhood Teams to hear what churches are already doing in the town and to commit themselves to work more closely together.

In Eastbourne, over 400 people gathered at the Winter Gardens to hear Sussex Chief Constable Martin Richards, (pictured here) refer to the impact of the Welsh Revival on communities across Wales and to endorse the programme.

The churches' involvement in the community — working with the elderly, young people, the homeless, drug addicts, alcoholics, people in debt and gang members — were described by Paul Wilson, ROC Regional Coordinator, as 'endless,' adding, 'it's not that churches need to work harder to impact their communities, but to work smarter' with encouragement 'to work together in partnership with statutory agencies.'

Faith and Diversity lead for Sussex Police, Chief Superintendent Martin Walker, said of ROC, 'Sussex Police are fully committed to working with churches and with ROC. The Police, statutory agencies, charities and the Church all share the vision of peace and justice in our communities. Alone, none of us can tackle the root causes which harm our communities, but by working together we can. ROC provides the spark to bring local people together who are passionate about service and who want to make a difference to the lives of people in their community'.

Further information from Paul Wilson, Regional Coordinator for the South East. (Email Paul.Wilson@roc.uk.com or see www.roc.uk.com).

From STREET PASTORS to STREETWATCH to COMMUNITY RESOLUTION

A View from the Street

Why would anyone want to walk around for several hours on a cold Friday night wearing a bright blue jacket? In my case because I enjoy talking to people, young or old, and of different nationalities, beliefs or skills, with opportunities to help in all kinds of practical ways.

It is a privilege to work in cooperation with the Police, with door staff struggling to keep establishments safe, and every shift with a potential for something new and exciting, from friendly banter with those we meet or handing out flip-flops to young ladies with shoe problems to sitting with someone feeling nervous waiting alone at a bus stop or telling them when to expect it. In tense situations a calm word can help prevent an argument going too far.

In short, offering support and keeping our town safe and enjoyable. Physically it can certainly be hard work but if we can make a difference or help even one person in a small way, that's more than enough motivation for me and the team to put on a blue jacket and go walking around town on a cold Friday night.

Pete, Team Leader, Crawley Street Pastor

Street Watch

Peter Allan issues a New Call for Help

Peter Allan, Community Engagement Sergeant for West Sussex Police, introduces Street Watch, a new concept for closer cooperation between the police and the community and since its overall objective is to improve the health of our society it will have a strong appeal to the churches who will welcome it and want to support it.

The concept of Street Watch is that of community minded people serving their community through positive citizenship. Volunteers patrol their local streets in high visibility jackets with the intention of providing reassurance, engaging with community issues and reducing anti-social behaviour.

Street Watch schemes are run by coordinators within the community and every volunteer is police checked. Each scheme will have its own single point of contact within the police and officers will link in with Street Watch members regularly to share information on issues such as crime prevention and areas currently experiencing anti-social behaviour.

Some examples of what Street Watch volunteers might do

- * Alerting officers to fly tipping.
- * Contacting the right people to get graffiti removed.
- * Engaging with groups of young people.
- * Arranging for supermarket trolleys to be returned to the store.

People patrol in pairs and can check who else is available using an online calendar. Volunteers need to be able to patrol for at least two hours every month. Each member is covered by an insurance policy which even allows them to patrol with their dog.

It is non-confrontational and every member has the responsibility to act within the law and with personal accountability for their own actions. Police Community Support Officers will sometimes go out on patrol with Street Watch members.

Assistant Chief Constable for Neighbourhood Policing, Robin Merrett said,

'It is vital that the police work with their communities and Street Watch is one of the ways that people can get involved in keeping the area they live in a safe place.'

'The scheme is already proving successful elsewhere in the country and I am confident we can build upon that good work here in Sussex.'

'I believe this new scheme will complement the work already being done by organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch and Street Pastors and I look forward to being able to update you when we have more information.'

Street Watch is being piloted across the Arun District. Following a review of the scheme it is hoped that it can be rolled out across the rest of the county.

Further information from Peter Allan (Tel 101 Ext 81255. Email Peter.allan@sussex.pnn.police.uk. www.tumblr.com/blog/peterallan). See also the national website at <http://www.street-watch.org.uk> or <http://twitter.com/sgtpeterallan>.

AGENDA FOR SNOW SHIFTING

After two decades of snow-free winters, Sussex has been hit by the white stuff more than once in the last few years. Following up the Uckfield story (page 1) Ian Chisnall is looking for a more positive response from church and community

According to the Met Office website there were no significant incidents of snow across the UK from 1990 to 2008 but then there was snow in October 2008, February and December 2009 and January, November and December in 2010. Time to attend to the human factor and the need for adequate resources.

The Human Factor

We need Community Catalysts or coordinators for action to identify the vulnerable in need of assistance. Even members of churches with a strong geographical focus do not usually live in neat and tidy areas and that gives us a special opportunity and responsibility to respond wherever we are.

Vulnerable (predominately elderly) people unable to clear snow from their own paths, let alone the pavements and shared areas, call for special care. Knowing where they live and ensuring they are well and have basic requirements in these very cold snaps could be a top priority of a Snow Patrol. Some may also benefit from support from the Fire and Rescue service for smoke detectors, etc. Some method is needed to ensure that these households can be mapped in a sensitive manner.

Community Catalysts, or Snow Patrols, possibly the able bodied with no fixed daily work routine or whose work is closed during heavy snow falls, are at the heart of this proposal which calls for

a combination of traditional networking such as church meetings and telephone networks alongside newer if less familiar social networks such as Twitter and Facebook.

Local Authorities have access to better sources of forecast information than residents. We need nominated individuals in every community to be alerted when snow is likely.

Resources

Local Authorities have clarified that clearing pavements will not lead to prosecution but we need training and advice on the most effective way to clear snow and to foster the idea that snow clearing is something we can all do.

Getting the job done well depends on having the correct tools and few of us own snow shovels or have access to grit spreaders. Uckfield has already led the way but low cost grit spreaders could extend the supply of grit, ease access and reduce the need for an extensive clear-up later.

Equally important is identifying the location of salt and grit bins, securing them (from theft) and ensuring that they are refilled when empty, and that depends on having a dynamic communication mechanism with the Council and those responsible for the snow and ice remedies

Action

Initially a Call to Priests and Ministers

- * to inspire members to play an active part in their neighbourhood by becoming Community Catalysts or the like to be informed when snow is likely to fall.
- * to encourage members to cooperate with others to improve the clearance of community spaces.
- * to provide information on access to appropriate snow clearing equipment or purchase items at the lowest possible price.
- * to develop an awareness of homes and places where snow clearance would be appreciated, especially the homes of vulnerable people and common areas which Council teams are unable to reach, such as doctors' surgeries and twittens.

TIME TO GO TO IT NOW

Unsolicited Testimonial to a Sussex Street Pastor

One Thursday in August my 18-year old son went out in Brighton to celebrate his successful A level results. Unfortunately, not being a 'street-wise' sort of boy, he consumed way too much alcohol and was found slumped in the street by a Street Pastor. I received a telephone call and immediately headed over to Brighton to collect him.

I want to thank your group of pastors who stayed with my son until I arrived to take him home. I dread to think what would/could have happened had he not been looked after as he had lost both his mobile phone and wallet containing his money and ID which had all his details on it.

Until then I did not even know that Street Pastors existed and only wish that there were more caring people around in this day and age. Massive thanks to ALL the street pastors in Brighton and especially to the one who made sure that my son was taken care of until I could get to him.

A Mother

TWITTER AND FACEBOOK. PASSING FAD OR USEFUL TOOL?

by Alistair Cutting, Vicar of Henfield

Twitter is a 'micro-blogging' platform: like texts from your computer or your mobile phone. A Twitter can't be more than 140 characters long and can have hyper links to web pages on the internet. Twitter posts can be linked to update Facebook or LinkedIn status, and have geographical position data attached with the likes of Foursquare or BrightKite.

So, it can be a bit of fun, yes. But can it be useful? Or are such Social Media just a waste of time, a distraction from our Christian calling and God's mission?

First, let's not forget the influence of Facebook, with more adherents than the population of some continents. If you are on it, you will know; and if not, most of your friends and family certainly are. So are many of the people in and (what is more important) on the fringe of our churches. These varieties of social media are all about making relationships, however tenuous, and relationships are what churches should be about too.

Secondly, they are very immediate. Twitter is often how news now spreads most rapidly, as for example much of the initial news about the Arab Spring in early 2011 and the prompt clamp-down by the authorities of internet and mobile phone networks. They can contain images, and links to video or other sites for further information. Messages can be re-tweeted, forwarded, and if picked up by a 'celebrity' can gain huge circulation very rapidly. Spreading the Good News is also what churches should be about too.

Thirdly, the social aspect of these new media can help to gather people together, especially invitations to Facebook events. Twitter can also be used to gather people for a 'Tweet-up' (meet-up). You may have heard how 'flash mobs' (instant gatherings) can be convened at short notice through tweets and messages, such as the @FlashEvensong called on the steps of St Paul's during the week it was officially 'closed'. Gathering is what churches should be about too.

Fourthly, these new media allow fresh ways of re-telling the story. Take the 'Natwivity' for example (the re-telling of the Christmas story through Advent in 2010 and 2011), or the Twitter Passion Play from Holy Trinity Wall Street, or the 140 character summary of each chapter of the Bible presented daily. Here are new ways people are putting into practice spreading the 'faith the church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation'.

Of course such media may well be a fad that will pass, but at the moment they are making quite an impact with the very groups churches find it hardest to attract: teens, twenties and young parents. Individuals, churches, bishops and archbishops are all using them and there are lists of folk who are on. Is it not time for churches to take them more seriously and make use of them to scatter seeds of the gospel on fresh soil. Just another tool to add to your mission kit.

Alistair Cutting twitters for the General Synod, St. Peter's Henfield, and himself. Hyper links in this text are printed in green. An 'online' version is available on <http://j.mp/TwitterMission>.

Don't Miss the Flame

An Invitation to Join the 70 Day Cascade of Prayer

The Torch leaves Lands End on May 19 to travel the length and breadth of the British Isles, stopping at 68 evening places en route to the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony on July 27.

Sussex Itinerary

July 15 The Torch stops overnight at Portsmouth.

July 16 The Torch travels to Rogate, Midhurst, Easebourne, Tillingworth, Petworth, Duncton, Chichester, North Bersted,

South Bersted, Bognor Regis, Woodgate, Westergate, Arundel, Worthing, Lancing, West Blatchington and Brighton & Hove, where it stops the night and there is an Evening Celebration.

July 17 The Torch proceeds on its journey to Crawley, Copthorne, Felbridge, East Grinstead, Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Lewes, Eastbourne, Pevensey Bay, Pevensey, Bexhill-on-Sea, St Leonards-on-Sea, and Hastings, where it spends the night and once again there is an Evening Celebration.

July 18 The Torch departs for Rye.



The Olympic Flame plans to stop overnight at Portsmouth on July 15, travels to Brighton for the evening of July 16 and on to Hastings for July 17, and Sussex Churches are already planning an appropriate response.

More Than Gold is working with over 60 denominations and Christian agencies, including Churches Together in England and the Evangelical Alliance to enable churches to engage with the Games.

There are many ways churches can be involved, such as offering hospitality to athletes, their families and international guests from around the world, sharing fully in local community activities such as Guest Events, Sports Outreach and Creative Arts, or linking hands with other churches to run Community Festivals or Hospitality Centres.

One vision is to see Christians coming together to pray creatively for the light of Christ to be seen in our nation and locally in each place where the torch stops (Isaiah 60:1-5), with written prayers or a prayer baton handed on and transported to the next stop on the route. Other places may organise at least one prayer event as the Torch passes through and some will want to organise prayer walks or vigils. All plans, however, need to be communicated and integrated with the plans of the Council and others.

Further information from More than Gold (Tel 0845-475-2012. Email info@morethangold.org.uk or see www.morethangold.org.uk).

FUNDING OR CAMPAIGNING ARE NOT ALTERNATIVES

Churches lack nothing in commitment to CAFOD, TEAR Fund, Christian Aid and other similar agencies when it comes to fund-raising, particularly for the poor and especially in the Third World, but where does your church stand when it comes to campaigning for Justice, whether it be something big (like the JubileeAppeal) or something small like letters to your MP on justice at a local level?

Kate Parr, Regional Co-ordinator for Christian Aid, suggests a New Year Resolution we can not only keep but one which will also change the world for good. How about a determined and serious attempt to use your contacts with other churches in your immediate locality so that together you can raise your voices collectively, and loudly, to campaign for justice for the world's poor, wherever they are, and in whatever way seems appropriate for you.

Christian Aid believes that challenging poverty and injustice is vital and backs up belief not only by providing urgent practical assistance where the need is great but also by campaigning to tackle the root causes of poverty and change the structures that make and keep people poor.

Christians have a history of challenging the status quo, and being at the forefront of political and economic change and

campaigning in solidarity with the world's poor. The teaching of Jesus demonstrates the values of justice and peace and his life is a constant reminder of how costly such values may be. Justice and peace are a challenge not only to the more populist values but also often to our own assumptions, prompting us to re-examine how our lifestyles affect others.

Two current campaigns being promoted by Christian Aid in 2012, for example, are one to end tax-evasion and the other a renewed call for climate justice. Time perhaps for Sussex churches to raise their voices and get behind either, or both. There are many other similar and equally important campaigns and the websites for any of the major agencies are likely to have more.

For ideas, help in where to begin, or information on training and workshops for churches to explore campaigning issues and help your church campaign effectively, call Kate. (Tel 0207,523-2376. Email KParr@christian-aid.org)



Peter Dodes, a Non-Stipendiary Minister living in East Sussex, with Permission to Officiate in the Diocese of Rochester, has been a loyal supporter of Christian Aid for thirty years. Why?

'Because Christian Aid is what our faith is all about, following the example of Jesus by looking after and drawing the world's attention to the plight of the poor and victims of injustice — Christ's job description in action.' And why do we have to campaign?

'Because the Church of God is the people, not a building, and the more we campaign the better. When those of us within the Church stand up to be counted people do stop to listen. In the garage I have a Christian Aid poster I carried around London on a Climate Justice march. It was a declaration not only that many Christians were on the march but also that Christians really do care. I think Jesus would have clapped his hands'.

Elizabeth Clark, member of West Worthing Baptist Church and their Christian Aid representative, has been involved in supporting many campaigns over almost thirty years in all sorts of ways. When asked how, she said,

'Keeping in touch with local MPs to make sure they know what concerns us. Writing letters, sending postcards, collecting supermarket till receipts and attending events. Perhaps my most vivid recollection is joining in the Wave March, one of thousands, with many diverse groups, all symbolically dressed in blue to achieve the impression of 'The Wave', walking through London on what seemed like an interminable march, and all in the interests of Climate Change. London certainly knew we had arrived. Sometimes it is difficult to see the difference we make, but we still keep going. It was fun. It was learning. We have to be seen and heard. Thousands of people in a peaceful march must be noticed'.



Together is the Newsletter of Churches Together in Sussex though views expressed are not necessarily those of Churches Together in Sussex, its leaders or its officers

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