

Rural Renaissance

The rural renaissance group seeks to:

- Gather best practice across the region of rural church initiatives and to help dissemination
- Be a focus for theological reflection
- Provide expertise to the CRC, Church Leaders and partners in the area of rural work from a Christian perspective.
- Act as a catalyst for specific rural initiatives

Specifically at this time there are three immediate projects:

The first is the production of a Rural Renaissance report highlighting the level and distinctive nature of rural church social action and suggesting ways in which the rural church can and does interact with community. The report seeks to complement "Angels and Advocates" with a rural dimension. Publication is expected on July 5th, Thirsk racecourse, at a joint conference with the Arthur Rank Centre about the government initiative to revitalise the countryside through market towns. To find our more about this conference, "Focus on Faith: the Role of the Church in the Market Towns Initiative", contact **Johanneke Sytsema at the Arthur Rank Centre, 02476 853067.**

The group continues to support and encourage the wider development of the North Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative, which is in partnership with the Yorkshire Tourist Board and managed by the Tourism Group

Thirdly the group is initiating a rural socio-economic pilot project within a designated locality in the North Yorkshire sub region. Through the appointment of a suitably qualified person the aim is to model an integrated approach to advice and support within the rural economy that harnesses the distinct contribution and contacts of churches. The intention is to improve the take-up of services for farm and rural business appraisal, restructuring and development and help to develop effective working relationships with statutory and commercial organisations. Encouragement will also be given to peer groups within the community.

It is acknowledged that this is a time of unprecedented change within the rural community with particular emphasis on agricultural restructuring. It is important that the church is effectively engaged with this area of ministry as it seeks to support those who are affected.

For more information on any of these contact the CRC office.

Howard Petch

Social Inclusion

The Social Inclusion Task Group is responsible for a range of issues under the umbrella heading of Social Inclusion. The vast range the group could cover is pared down to those to which we believe the CRC, as a churches representative body, with the resources we have, can make a significant contribution. We also take seriously our role to speak for and with the poor and socially excluded.

Angels and Advocates

The group has recently overseen the research and publication of Angels and Advocates, the CRC's report into mapping the extent and nature of church social action projects in the region. Alongside this, the Group is preparing to publish an Angels and Advocates Bible Study, which can be used by individuals and small groups. Its aim is to be an accessible and versatile resource for local churches and Christian groups to help people reflect on the theological and practical implications of the report.

Community Cohesion

The group has also completed a paper on Social Cohesion, which will be published on the CRC website (www.yorkshirechurches.org.uk). Liz Carnelley, the CRC's policy officer led on this paper as the CRC's response to the debate. It not only covers the major points made by a number of recent government sponsored reports, but moves on to make recommendations from a distinct Christian viewpoint.

In the pipeline for the group is the oversight of projects funded by the CRC's Initiative Development Fund and work on Faith and the Social Economy.

Ashley Hardingham

'Making our buildings sing'

The aim of the North Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative is to encourage and enable church communities across North Yorkshire to look at new ways of bringing church buildings to life for visitors who usually come when they are empty of people and seemingly devoid of activity.

The idea of a 'Ministry of Welcome' is something that many churches subscribe to and the North Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative was set up to support churches wishing to develop this aspect of their mission. Over the past year, 21 church groups have been offered funding through the initiative to enhance the interpretation of their churches for visitors, and projects that have attracted support range from adventurous audio-visual presentations to leaflets and displays.

Zoe Kemp, project co-ordinator said, "An excellent example of the type of project we hope to support has recently been undertaken at St Leonard's Church in Chapel le Dale. With the help of the North Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative the church has produced a full colour glossy guide book. The sale of the book will help to finance future developments."

In addition to offering funding, the initiative has organised several workshops and information sessions including a hugely successful Open Churches Trust Roadshow at Aldborough in October 2002 that was attended by over 70 people from across North Yorkshire.

The first North Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative annual conference is planned for 29 March 2003 and already over 100 delegates have booked places at the event. Speakers will include the Reverend Professor Myra Shackley on managing visitors to churches and the conference will also see the launch of the initiative's promotional leaflets and website.

In its first year the initiative has focused on engaging churches, gathering information and developing a 'quality product' to promote to visitors. With 224 actively participating churches, and links with 9 of the county's major ecclesiastical buildings, the scale of the project, and the commitment of the churches involved, is such that North Yorkshire is now well placed to play a significant role in the development of church tourism.

For more information about the North Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative, contact **Zoe Kemp on: 01977 614764 or email zkemp@ytb.org.uk**

News from the Active Faith Communities Programme

Active Faith Communities is a new organisation aimed at encouraging and building the capacity of faith communities in West Yorkshire to get involved in developing and renewing the neighbourhoods in which they are based. It will provide practical support and advice to faith-based groups to help them engage in regeneration and renewal initiatives, to develop or share in partnerships, to create social enterprises or to promote social inclusion in the way they work.

At the moment (March 2003) AFC is very much in set-up mode. It appointed its first worker, Ian Owers, as Chief Executive in November 2002 and he has been busy making contact with key individuals and groups in the faith, voluntary, community and public sectors to begin to find out what is already going on and check out the needs and aspirations of the different groups.

AFC is now about to launch its first project – the Bradford Faith Cohesion Programme – with the appointment of a project co-ordinator, Dominic Mughal, from the beginning of April. Dominic has wide experience of developing interfaith understanding and shared community projects and will be exploring new initiatives as well as co-ordinating three emerging projects designed to promote community cohesion in a multi-faith context.

AFC would very much like to hear from anyone with an interest in this area of work, and particularly from faith-based groups who would like to play a part in the programme's future – either by making suggestions or by registering the sort of support they might like from the programme.

Ian Owers - Tel: 01274 666649. Email: ianowers@beeb.net

Check out... Future Builders

Future Builders is a new government initiative which is investing £125m over the next three years to help voluntary and community organisations to engage more effectively in the delivery of public services.

This has been developed from the government's 'cross cutting review' and aims to help overcome obstacles and develop capacity to deliver services.

Focus

It is proposed that Future Builders will targeted to organisations working in the following areas:

- health and social care
- crime and social cohesion
- education and learning
- support for children and young people

Guiding Principles

Five guiding principles have been set out:

- maximise the value and impact of the resources
- ensure that good practice is adopted, promoted and replicated
- ensure that resources are targeted to schemes where the VCS can add value to service delivery
- lead to sustainable services
- ensure that smaller and local providers can benefit and thrive, as well as larger provider

Consultation

The Government is consulting in the Future Builders proposals until April, so time is short.

If you would like to find out more please visit the Treasury website on

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Spending_Review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_voluntary/ and search for

"Future Builders". At this stage let the government know what this could mean for faith communities and watch for further developments. Alternatively you may want to contact Graham at CRC to discuss issues this raises.

To contact CRC write to the office at: 20 New Market Street Leeds, LS1 6DG, phone 0113-244-3413, or email info@yorkshirechurches.org.uk

TfR Update

TfR has seen some major developments in the past year. Increased funding now enables the project to employ: **Joanne Bott (Project Manager)**, **Colin Blain (Rotherham)**, **Iain Cloke (Sheffield)**, **Mel Broomhead (Barnsley)**, **Amie Rowland (Doncaster)**, **Hilary Perry (Senior Administrative Assistant)** and **Karen Teather (Administrative Assistant)**.

As a result of widespread consultation, the role of TfR has taken a new and exciting direction. TfR is developing new ways of delivering our mission to enable churches of all Christian denominations to play a key role in the social and economic regeneration of the most disadvantaged communities across South Yorkshire.

The TfR Advisers are currently supporting churches in a number of areas of South Yorkshire to engage with their local Community Partnership as key partners. These partnerships play a crucial role in local regeneration and channelling funds. Churches are able to play an independent and non-political role in the process, often helping to build bridges across their communities. Community partnerships are producing community action plans showing priorities for the future as a basis for attracting funding. As churches are an integral part of their community the have such an important part to play in this whole process.

We are also continuing to develop TfR local groups in each of the local authority areas. These meetings are open to any members of the clergy or laity from across South Yorkshire and provide advice, support, training and networking opportunities. TfR currently has very limited capacity to support church-based projects outside our geographical areas of work, on an individual basis. We are, however, working hard to remedy these gaps. In the interim, TfR is providing surgeries and can direct churches to other sources of support.

In conclusion, I am excited and greatly encouraged by the work that is going on. The new and groundbreaking work by the churches within community partnerships is receiving recognition at a regional level. More crucially the central importance of churches within the community, both as a community resource and facilitator of community action, is being recognised and valued by local people. Together we can make a difference!

Joanne Bott

To contact TfR write to: TfR, Church House, 95-99 Effingham St, Rotherham S65 1BL or ring: 01709 309109 email: joanne.bott@sheffield-diocese.org.uk



News from the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber



CRC Team: Mary White, Graham Brownlee, Julian Cummins and Liz Carnelley

Canterbury Tales

At the enthronement of Rowan Williams as the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, he gave a theological rationale which underpins the work of the CRC.



"We believe in a Jesus who is truly Lord and God, not the prisoner of my current thoughts or experiences...it is this that gives us the freedom and the obligation to challenge what our various cultures may say about humanity. If all we have to offer is a Jesus who makes sense to me and people like me, we have no saving truth to give. But the truth is that we are given the joy of speaking about one who is the secret of all hearts, ..as the one that each person can recognise as 'more intimate to me than I

Liz Carnelley

Challenge and Integrity

The CRC conference featuring **Kathy Galloway of the Iona Community** and **Bishop James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool**, is on **Friday 19th May, at the award-winning Magna, Rotherham. To book contact Mary at the CRC office – 0113-244-3413, or email mary.white@yorkshirechurches.org.uk**

Community Recycling is boosted

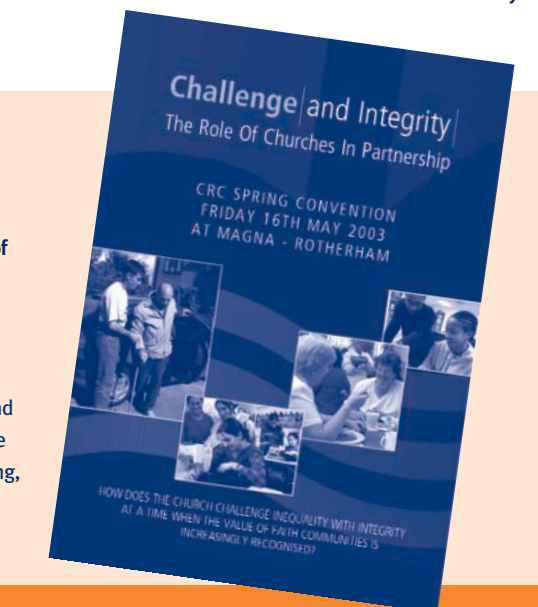
UK charities running recycling projects are to get a £35 million pound boost. The Community Recycling and Economic Development (CRED) scheme will be funded by the lottery. Grants of £50,000 - £300,000 will be awarded to not-for-profit organisations which engage with disadvantaged communities delivering recycling, reuse and composting schemes. For a CRED application contact the New Opportunities Fund – 0845-000-0121

Going Live - The new updated CRC website goes live in March 2003 – www.yorkshirechurches.org.uk. Check it out for your chance to keep in touch and get involved.

myself. This is why the Christian will engage with passion in the world of our society and politics - out of a real hunger and thirst to see God's image, the destiny of human beings to become God's sons and daughters come to light - and it must be said also, out of a real grief and fear of what the human future will be if this does not come to light. The Church has to warn and to lament as well as to comfort."

In these troubled times we can stand firm in the hope that grounds us, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, allowing his light to shine out as we work as peacemakers and reconcilers, passionate to see people valued and recognised as sons and daughters of God. For "once we recognise God's great secret, that we are all meant to be God's sons and daughters, we can't avoid the call to see one another differently. No-one can be written off; no group, no nation, no minority can just be a scapegoat to resolve our fears and uncertainties. We cannot assume that any human face we see has no divine secret to disclose: those who are culturally or religiously strange to us; those who so often don't count in the world's terms (the old, the unborn, the disabled)."

We can celebrate that so many people in our region's churches are working to make this vision a reality, where the voices all of can be heard, and all are able to see others as sons and daughters of God.



Trying Something New?

We know that churches are involved in almost every community and providing an impressive range of social action. Yet there are new ideas waiting to be acted on; new partnerships to be started and fresh opportunities to be grasped. CRC is keen to encourage local churches to go for it. Therefore we are launching an Initiative Development Fund, which aims to support innovative church work.

We are aiming to sponsor contributions to social inclusion, rural renaissance, culture and inter faith working. This fund is open to local churches and church projects, particularly those working partnership with other denominations, faiths, and public, business, or voluntary organisations.

What we are looking for this year:
The initiative themes for 2003/04 are -

- Environmental action
- Disability partnerships
- Enterprise initiatives
- Healthy living
- Young people, particularly links with education in schools or colleges.

If you are starting something new, or extending the work of an existing project in one, or more, of these themes, it's worth getting in touch. We can fund a study, support for a group, or the time put in by workers. We cannot fund building work. You can use this fund alongside other sources of funding.

What we are offering:
Initiative Development Fund grants will be between £500 and £5000 for 2003/04.

How to apply:
You need to complete an expression of interest form (2 sides of A4), with a copy of the guidance notes.

The forms and notes can be obtained by contacting Mary White at the CRC Office. Alternatively you can download a copy from our website: www.yorkshirechurches.org.uk and clicking on 'What we do'.

Forms need to be in by 31 May 2003 and we will let you know by 30 June 2003.

Faith Matters

The Inter-Faith Task Group, recently commissioned by the CRC, has begun to tackle some of the thorny issues surrounding inter-faith relations in the area. In particular, it has worked with the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly to promote a booklet and presentation entitled Religious Literacy, which was originally funded by the Regional Assembly and has already been well-received by groups from agencies, companies, and churches. Plans are for this important work -

promoting greater awareness of fundamental characteristics of the world's major religions - to be expanded and promoted more widely in the region.

In addition to the practical work associated with the Religious Literacy programme, the Inter-faith Task Group has recently commissioned a major feasibility study from Leeds University (led up by Professor Kim Knott) on issues surrounding the formation of a Regional Faith Forum. Faith fora are well-known in cities and localities across the country, although they are structured and used differently. The Regional Assembly has asked the CRC to consider the implications and possibilities of there being a new Regional Faith Forum for the Yorkshire and Humber region. The feasibility study is due to be completed towards the end of 2003, with recommendations being made to the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly about implementation and management of the Regional Faith Forum. The CRC will be submitting a Christian response.

The role of the Inter-Faith Task Group is both active (initiating and promoting good practice and theological reflection) and reactive (monitoring inter-faith events and programmes across the region) to ensure that the rich diversity of the region and its faith communities are honoured and supported. This work necessarily overlaps with work being done by other bodies more directly addressing issues of social inclusion, institutional racism, and urban cohesion. Though the Inter-faith Task Group is still in its infancy, the possibilities and potential of its work are already clear to those involved. There can be few projects more urgently needed and so little understood in this part of the country.

Chris Hancock



Inter-Faith Learning and Skills Conference, Bradford

Culture Club

The Culture Task Group of the Churches Regional Commission came into being as a result of a desire and need to engage more closely with the emerging cultural agenda of the Regional Cultural Consortium, and to remind those making policy of the contribution churches make in the arts, theatre, music, heritage, tourism, and architecture.

The CRC had made a major input into the draft regional Cultural Strategy document which resulted in the place of Belief and Faith Communities being written into the Strategy. The former Chair of the CRC, George Nairn-Briggs, was asked to "take the lead" on cultural matters. This resulted in the formation of the Cultural Task Group. Its members represent a wide range of expertise, interest and experience from across the region.

The CRC meeting on 3rd October 2002 agreed a remit for the Cultural Task Group. The Group accepted this remit at its first meeting on 14th February 2003. The whole of the remit is available from the CRC office but perhaps the heart is, "the role of the Cultural Task Group is to represent churches among regional cultural bodies and to champion good practice, innovation and recognition for the Christian churches in the cultural life of our region".

The immediate Action Plan to which it is working is:

- Mapping and prioritising of key elements of church cultural input in the region
- Incorporate good practice from the Church Tourism Initiative into the Cultural Beacons development.
- To identify partners and sponsors of "Cultural Beacons" pilots.

Churches Regional Commission: Angels and Advocates

Supplementary Story 1: Barnsley, Crisis Fareshare



No one likes the thought of food going to waste when there are hungry people both at home and overseas who could benefit by having access to surplus supplies. All things are relative and, whilst hunger at home does not compare with the problem in some famine-stricken parts of the world, there is a need for expertise and strategy if the surplus of some is to become the hope of others.

Most people therefore will welcome the strategy of Crisis Fareshare, whereby food left on the shelves of some of the UK's largest super-markets now finds its way into the stomachs of the hungry in south Yorkshire.

Talk to Kath Elliott, Project Manager of Crisis Fareshare South Yorkshire (CFSY), based on an industrial estate in Barnsley, about the aim of her work and she will tell you that it is quite simply "To provide a nutritious diet for homeless people".

Whilst from one perspective it is a health project, from another it addresses an environmental issue. It is clearly better for everyone if surplus food that might otherwise become yet another burden on our land-fill sites becomes part of a balanced diet for the hungry, the homeless and the lonely.

Apart from initial financial backing from the Church Urban Fund, one could hardly describe Crisis Fareshare as a church project. Other funds have come from secular bodies such as Enventure (Landfill), Health Action Zone, Key Fund and Crisis National. However, Kath and her team regularly supply food to church-based initiatives in Sheffield, Doncaster, and Rotherham as well as Barnsley itself.

Whilst that kind of church involvement is good as far as it goes, Kath herself feels that some churches are just not using the system to the advantage of their clientele as much as they could. After all, the project is planned so that the local luncheon club, breakfast or after school club could benefit as much as the city soup run.

CFSY is contributing 300,000 meals per year to various programmes in the region. That must be a big budget saving for the organisations and communities involved. One doubts whether any church-based programme can afford to ignore this helping hand with "no strings attached".

The national scheme started in London in 1994 with help from the Food Hygiene Bureau, the National Lottery Charities Board, and food retailers such as Marks and Spencer and Sainsbury's. It came to South Yorkshire in 1998 as a franchise of the parent organisation. The organisation's booklet, "How it Works", states: "Many day centres and hostels providing meals for homeless people cannot afford a regular supply of fresh food and yet are the main meal providers for many street homeless people. At the same time, food retailers and wholesalers are throwing away huge amounts of high-quality fresh food due to stringent company policies. Often the food is within its use-by date or nearing or outside its best-before date, or is surplus to the company's daily needs. Many retailers and wholesalers are frustrated by the waste, but do not have the means to arrange and co-ordinate distribution. Crisis Fareshare can help avoid food wastage, providing and helping to ensure that homeless people have access to a more nutritious diet"

I caught up with Kath Elliott on a quiet morning. She is the co-ordinator and is assisted by 2 other paid staff and 22 volunteer drivers/navigators. She spoke of the success of the work and gave me a conducted tour of the factory unit in Barnsley where the work is based. She explained that Sainsbury's were the first company to come on board with Marks and Spencer joining the scheme in 2001, along with more local firms like Potts the Bakers of Barnsley and Bingham's Potted Meats of Sheffield.

The food is collected daily from the shops involved and sorted for delivery the next morning to the front line

projects that will use it. Some of the volunteers are themselves former homeless people or have family links with them.

Programmes directly benefiting by the scheme include women's and family refuges, young people leaving care, day and residential centres as well as drug and alcohol rehabilitation. centres. Church based programmes glad to use this resource include: Beacon House Doncaster, Nether Hall Community Life Church, Doncaster, Shiloh, Rotherham, Church of God, Sheffield, St. Wilfrid's, Sheffield, and Sheffield Cathedral Drop-In Centre.

Five New Deal people, paid an extra £15 per week by the government scheme have spent six months with Crisis Fareshare in Barnsley as part of their NVQ Training. Kath observes that this has not only been a route to work and wages but an important development of people's social skills, confidence and self-worth. One 20 year old gained enough confidence to go on Barnsley Voluntary Radio to talk about the work.

Crisis Fareshare South Yorkshire is about to embark on a 3 year development plan with backing from Rotherham Metropolitan Council, Henry Smith Foundation, Lloyds TSB, Tudor Trust and Eventure (Landfill). The plan involves the purchase of a new van, bringing into the scheme of more firms, and extension of number of Yorkshire programmes being served. Crisis Fareshare wants Parliament to enact a Food Poverty (Eradication) Bill to tackle the problem of food poverty.

Kath speaks of much encouragement and support coming from the Board of Trustees, chaired by the Director General of the Pollen Count and with wide-ranging membership, including people with experience in nutrition, food and hygiene, finance and banking, British Steel, education and a Women's Refuge.

Since the Church's Founder once spoke of feeding the hungry as being the equivalent to feeding Him, all church traditions will want to give both practical and prayerful support to this work as well as helping to channel the food to those who need it.

Political support has been expressed by Rt. Hon John Prescott MP, who said: "Crisis Fareshare makes a real difference to the lives of homeless people, providing vital access to a healthier diet".

For further information contact Kath Elliott, Crisis Fareshare South Yorkshire, Unit 19, Grange Lane Industrial Estate, Carrwood Road, Stairfoot, Barnsley S71 5AS.
Telephone: 01226 213255 Fax :01226 213282
Email:crisisfaresharesy@connectfree.co.uk

Angels Still Singing

A £30,000 investment and a year's hard work by the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber (CRC) has produced 'Angels and Advocates', a report on church social action across our region. This groundbreaking report shows that Christians are more than twice as likely to volunteer for work in their community. With 420,000 church goers in 3,600 churches across Yorkshire and the Humber that adds up to major good news.



David Price

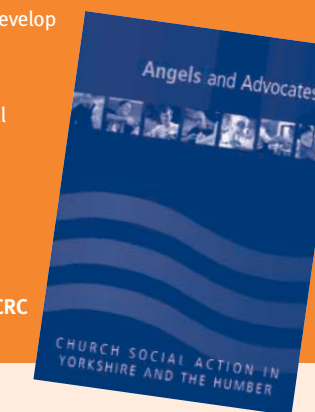
Report author, David Price, comments "the Christian faith is not just about prayer, pews and praise, it produces action tackling homelessness, poor health and isolation. It means literacy work, lunches, drama, jammin', training and so much more."

And the title?:

Angels is the Christmas part of the performing arts programme at the St. Michael's Youth project in Hull. Over 500 enjoy this project, an initiative which "helps raise the morale of young people in the area, to foster in them a sense of self worth ... and to help them develop towards maturity as responsible members of society."

The Advocates are found in 'York Advocacy', who link up with local people with learning disabilities to speak for their rights and entitlements. So that the York Salvation Army Community Project "offers more than just a luncheon club training scheme."

The 80 page report, featuring some urban case studies from our region, is available at a cost of just £3.50 plus P&P. Contact the CRC office: 0113 244 3413



SEARCH

(Social and Economic Action Resource of Churches in Hull and District)

Mission Statement

"To assist local churches in the key mission aim of engaging with God's world in compassion, care and service, in the context of their local communities".

Search was established in 1999 to support church-led community action in Hull and District. It is ecumenical in both its structure and approach, working at grass roots level to be a relevant and responsive resource to the churches in Hull and East Yorkshire.

Search has established a solid core of work in Hull, working in partnership with a wide variety of churches and Christian projects and has been instrumental in building the Churches' capacity for engagement in social action and community development.



Building on our experiences in Hull, funding has been secured for SEARCH to extend into the East Riding of Yorkshire. The aim is to replicate the success of work in Hull, taking into account the needs of both urban and rural communities.

Whilst the primary focus of SEARCH is to work with the poorer and least resourced churches, we regard ourselves as a resource to all the churches and Christian groups and will respond to any request for help.

SEARCH: can be contacted at St. Michael's, Orchard Park Road, Hull HU6 9BX
Tel: (01482) 851008. Fax: (01482) 851013. E-mail: Heather Black – development worker Hull – search@care4free.net. Denise Trowsdale – development worker East Riding: search@fish.co.uk

Book Review

Challenging Communities:

Church related community development and neighbourhood renewal. 38pp. £6.

Challenging Communities is the collaborative work of The Churches Community Work Alliance and the Church Urban Fund. It is a 'how to' manual on church related community development and neighbourhood renewal, with its main contention being that 'the government and the churches have much to gain from closer partnerships' (pg 13.). The manual is helpfully sub-divided into three sections, covering the nature of Church Related Community Development (CRCD), illustrations of CRCD, work in practice and recommendations to churches, the government and practitioners. The strength of the publication is that it encourages (nay, drives) churches to look at partnering with the government to more effectively implement community renewal. It contains the warning that, 'if CRCD fails to grasp firmly the current opportunities it will run the risk of failing in its duty.' It defines the terms of engagement for the various partners and highlights the possible areas of conflict which it believes can be overcome through better understanding and communication. The illustrations of CRCD at work are excellent, helpfully detailing outcomes and the underpinning theology of the project as well as its history and practice.

However its weaknesses are not insignificant. It is an unbelievably wordy document, which often repeats itself and contains an excess of adjectives, jargon and a proliferation of 'amelioration'. This simply makes the document harder to read than need be. I'm not sure what a local council official would understand when reading the recommendation that they should 'recognise the prophetic role of faith communities', or what 'the concept of power as a zero sum' is.

Challenging Communities is a good contribution to this issue, with its strength and weakness being its attempt to speak to both the government and local churches in order to make them hold hands.

It is available to order from the Church Community Work Association website – a useful site anyway – www.ccwa.org.uk.

Ashley Hardingham