



## ABOUT CRC

### 1. BACKGROUND

The CRC was established in November 1998. Its objectives are to represent the churches to statutory bodies across Yorkshire and the Humber, challenge economic, social and educational disadvantage, promote the well-being of people in Yorkshire and the Humber, and equip churches for social action. The CRC has a Commission of 25 members which meets up to four times a year. From the Commission is elected a Board who act as the Trustees of CRC.

Key achievements include nationally recognised work on church social action, migrant workers, inter-faith engagement, faith tourism, religious literacy, rural engagement and (with Faithworks) Effective Christian Presence and Enterprise, looking at effective community engagement.

The CRC took a lead in securing funding and support for the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum (YHFF) which was launched in December 2005. Inderjit Bhogal acted as the Director of the Forum which enjoyed membership from 9 faiths. The CRC acted as the accountable body until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. YHFF ceased to function on a day to day basis in March 2011 after the ending of its funding.

### 2. STAFFING ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

CRC secured a contract with Yorkshire Forward worth £1.2m through to 2008. Now CRC receives funding from the Churches of the region, and from various project grants and contracts. The CRC is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a registered charity.

The CRC office is in Leeds. The staff comprises the Policy Officer (Philip Bee), Project and Development Officer (David Slater), Janet Bryer (Administration and Finance Officer). Rural Development Officers, Bob Baker, Graham Bulmer and Pauline Broadwith are supported by Clare Wise based at the Thirsk office and manage the Farming and Rural Business Project. Jonathan Charlesworth is the South Pennines Rural Support Officer, in Penistone.

The CRC reports ultimately to church leaders from across the Yorkshire & Humber region who meet annually. In turn, they are answerable to the region's 4,000 local churches and 420,000 regular churchgoers.

Nationally, the CRC is part of the Churches Regional Network, which brings together similar bodies in each of the nine English regions.

CRC is part of a national project called Faith to Engage, managed by Faithworks, to enable faith groups to influence policy at regional level, encourage partnerships, and effective community engagement. We are the Yorkshire and Humber partner. As part of this work we are developing a programme for creative leaders in rural churches with the Arthur Rank Centre.

### 3. KEY AREAS OF WORK

The CRC currently has four key areas of work each headed up by a task group, which promotes good practice and delivers the CRC's programme. Spanning these policy areas, the CRC is the body which represents the churches to regional and local government. CRC is currently meeting with MPs in the region.

#### a) SOCIAL INCLUSION.

Most church work happens at a local level, and churches make a major contribution to social inclusion. In November 2002, the CRC published *Angels and Advocates*, a groundbreaking report which provides analysis, statistics, grass roots stories and strategic recommendations. Since then the CRC has published a series of keynote policy papers covering issues of well being, enterprise and cohesion, as well as briefing papers. There have been seminars on financial inclusion, migrant workers and unemployment. Current work is around housing and homelessness, the 'Big Society' agenda and poverty.

b) INTER-FAITH WORK.

The CRC is working with other faiths to promote understanding between religions and in developing appreciation of religious issues among policy makers. We have previously provided Religious Literacy training seminars for public bodies, businesses and partnerships – entitled "Faith Matters". In October 2010 a day to resource churches on Inter-faith issues with partners was held in Huddersfield.

c) RURAL ISSUES.

The CRC is working with local churches to promote a positive future for the countryside and to enable churches to take part in it. A rural report, *Sowing the Seed*, highlighted distinct rural issues and churches' action. Since 2003 the CRC has managed a Rural Farm Business Project in North Yorkshire in partnership with the Farm Crisis Network and local churches. This project now receives funding from LANTRA and has a skills and training focus and has expanded to parts of South and West Yorkshire. The rural task group is a joint group with the Rural Churches Support Network – the Rural Churches Steering Group, and events, conferences and training are arranged to resource rural churches.

d) CULTURE.

The CRC leads on cultural work to encourage the churches to work with statutory bodies involved in culture, heritage, tourism, arts, sport and archives. CRC aims to forge partnerships across the region, and resource the churches. The *Treasures Revealed* in West Yorkshire project finished in 2011. It aimed to engage places of worship of all faiths in heritage, tourism and cultural expression in local communities.

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