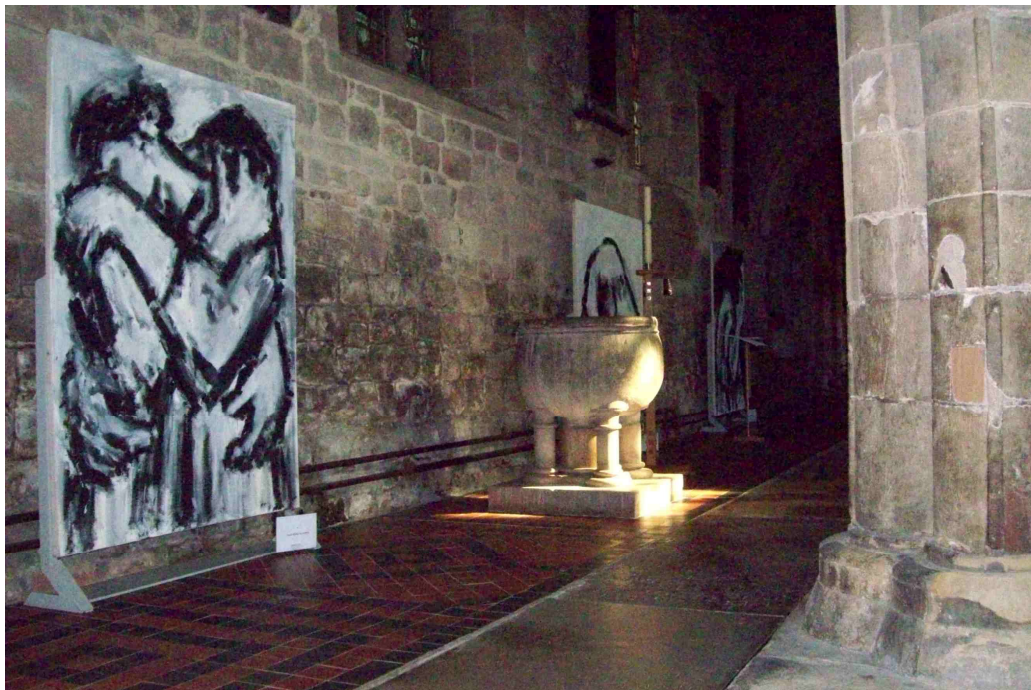


TEN YEARS ON

A REVIEW OF THE MILLENNIUM COMMISSION FUNDED RURAL CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMME



St Mary the Virgin Church hosts the Ghislaine Howard exhibition,
part of the Town Festival September 2009

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September 2009

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RURAL CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE
PROGRAMME



The reordered bell tower at All Saints, Suffolk

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- o The Rural Churches in Community Service (RCCS) programme, funded by the Millennium Commission, ran from 1998 to 2001 and assisted 99 churches, in rural areas throughout the UK, to develop community projects in church buildings. It is now 10 years since most of the projects started development hence TEN YEARS ON
- o In 2003 a review of the projects developed *within* Anglican churches in England was under taken. This showed that 92% of the churches reviewed were successfully running community activities and 79% of the churches report a positive effect on the congregation.
- o The 2009 study has reviewed 59 churches from the 2003 review with regard to achievement against their original aims and their performance in 2003. The review has considered the impact of community use on the wider community and on the church; it has tried to establish what makes projects sustainable.
- o Whilst community activities are still taking place in most of the churches reviewed, generally there is less happening than in 2003 and in some cases the vision has been lost. The reasons for this include overstretched volunteers and considerable turnover of leadership. There is a need for “project champions” who can inspire others and ultimately be able to hand down the vision.
- o Church facilities that are being run by community organisations are being run in a more business-like way are, on the whole, more successful than when the facility is managed by the church.
- o There is no doubt that the vast majority of churches have benefited significantly from the provision of good facilities which give opportunities for different forms of worship, fellowship, training courses, festival meals and financial stability.
- o But the main lesson from this review, echoing the findings of the 2003 review, is that **projects are made successful and sustainable by a regular supply of willing, reliable and competent volunteers drawn from within and without the church.**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Rural Churches in Community Service Limited

Rural Churches in Community Service Limited (RCCS) was set up to distribute and manage £2.5 million grant from the Millennium Commission to enable 100 rural churches to convert their buildings for community use in addition to worship. Grant aided works had to be of high quality but also give good value for money. Whilst the funding was for capital works, the initiative had to be firmly focused on the wider community with all projects needing to demonstrate projected **high levels of use and the support of the community**. Projects were to celebrate the past millennium as symbolised by the church buildings and establish new and lasting work for the coming generations of the new millennium.

2.2 The RCCS remit from the Millennium Commission

The remit was very clearly defined; grant aid could NOT be used for renovation, restoration or repair work, church floodlighting or bells. Grant aid was available to assist groups in rural locations to adapt their church buildings to enable them to be used for community activities. Grant aid to a maximum of 50% of the total project cost could be awarded. However, given a £2.5 million budget and a target of 100 projects to meet, RCCS was unable to offer most projects more than £ 25,000, which was often far less than 50% of the total project cost. **The total cost of all of the projects in the programme delivered by the RCCS initiative was in excess of £7 million.**

The Millennium Commission specified that the RCCS projects came from a wide geographical area and from different Christian denominations. Both of these criteria were achieved with projects stretching from the Outer Hebrides in the north to Cornwall in the south. Although most of the projects were in Church of England buildings, there were projects in Baptist, United Reformed and Scottish Episcopal churches, the Church in Wales and one Roman Catholic Church. Some of the projects undertaken were in buildings owned by the church but not used for worship, for example, old school buildings and, in one case, a stable in a churchyard; a few projects were to construct new buildings within the churchyard.

About 400 applications for funding were received, some did not meet the criteria and were rejected, those which looked the least likely to meet the completion deadline of 31 December 2000 were also rejected. By the end of 2000 a total of 99 projects were completed and a wide range of community activities achieved.

2.3 The 2003 review

Three years after all of the RCCS projects were completed, a review of the programme was commissioned. The scope was limited to projects developed *within* Anglican churches in England and the following aspects were examined:

- o Whether the proposed community activities had been achieved
- o Who was benefiting from the new facilities
- o What was the impact on the church congregation
- o How had the church finances been affected
- o What lessons had been learned

Of the 70 churches approached feedback was obtained from 66 of them. The results were very encouraging. 92% of the churches reviewed were successfully running community activities. 79% of the churches reported a positive effect on the congregation. There was a lot of good practice gleaned from these projects that could be used to inform potential community project developers.

The majority of these projects shared the characteristics of

- o Good research resulting in community activities that answered a proven need
- o Strong management teams drawn from within and without the church
- o A willingness to change as needs changed
- o Good relationships with "competitors"
- o An incumbent who is 100% in favour of community activities in church buildings
- o Good communication with the wider community.

Other pointers to success include

- o Advertising
- o Good links to the "target" market, for example, outreach into schools
- o Good booking systems and bookings secretaries.

It is worth noting that when the review was undertaken in 2003 many of the people involved in running the community activities had been involved since the conception of their project.

2.4 The remit of this review

The remit of the 2009 review is to revisit the projects reviewed in 2003 with regard to:

- o What each project set out to do
- o What had been achieved at the 2003 review
- o What is happening *now* and who are the beneficiaries
- o Impact on church attendance and finance

- o External changes (for example, increase/decrease in population, change in demography, increase/ decrease in local amenities) since the project began

with a view to **what makes community projects sustainable**.

Two specific questions were included at the request of the National Rural Officer of the Church of England, Dr Jill Hopkinson:

- o *Does your church have a website?*
- o *Is your church on a church trail?*

2.5 Methodology

Of the 70 projects contacted in December 2003, feedback was obtained from 66. These 66 projects were sent the 2009 questionnaire, a copy of which is attached as Appendix C. The questionnaire was sent out with a covering letter to the current incumbent of each church being reviewed. The covering letter named the person who had undertaken the 2003 review and it was suggested that the incumbent might wish to pass the questionnaire on the most suitable / knowledgeable person. Most completed questionnaires were followed up with a telephone conversation with the person who provided the data. No visits were made due to financial constraints.

Getting the questionnaires returned proved to be very difficult and time consuming, far more so than anticipated. There have been a lot of changes in personnel, both clergy and volunteers, since 2003. When being chased to return the questionnaire, many clergy said that they did not think that their comments would be helpful as they were not around when the work was carried out – despite the covering letter clearly stating that I was reviewing what was happening *now*!

One observation worthy of comment is the large number of clergy who have either no answer phone or just the 1571 service from BT – what if that `phone call had really needed a sympathetic voice in a time of need?!

3. REVIEW FEEDBACK

For ease of data handling the project numbers originally allocated for the RCCS programme have been used for cross-referencing feedback to the actual projects.

Questions were asked about demographic changes, there are very few places that have had significant growth, most returning “little change” or “loss of facilities” (mostly shops, the Post Office and pubs). Where the amount of development that has taken place could give a false picture of growth it is highlighted.

Before looking at the feedback in detail, let us revisit the original aim of the *Rural Churches in Community Service* programme:

“To adapt church buildings to accommodate community activities to serve the wider (non-worshipping) community.”

That is why the Millennium Commission funding was awarded – to support projects serving the wider community. So that is where this review starts, looking at how the community is benefiting from the extended use of church buildings.

3.1 Community activities and community benefit

There are only a handful of cases where the level of community activity is higher now than in 2003 and in many cases there has been a significant decline in the number of community activities.

3.1.1 Why activities cease

There are many reasons for activities ceasing:

- i. Several Mother and Toddler groups have moved out of church buildings having found alternative accommodation with better heating and more storage space. (see 040,150,152, 317 and 366)

Both inadequate heating and lack of storage space were identified as problems in the 2003 review.

- ii. Where new community halls have been built or existing ones upgraded, some community activities have moved into them and out of the church. Whilst the most common reasons cited are better location and better heating it should be noted that some people are still uneasy about using church buildings for anything other than worship. (see 040, 061, 098, 152, 203, 314, 318, 399)

- iii. Several drama groups have ceased operating altogether – the author thinks that this is a national trend and not peculiar to groups using church buildings. (See 035,148,149)
- iv. The most common reason for activities decreasing or ceasing appears to be **lack of volunteers** – people move away or die and there is no-one willing to step into the breach. (See 014, 017, 035, 040, 067, 284, 318). Although some respondents detailed this on the questionnaire, this problem was discussed at length during telephone interviews.

Whilst lack of volunteers affects all parts of the voluntary sector - from getting Brownie leaders, to volunteer drivers, to Trustees for registered charities - it is particularly difficult in small, rural communities. The rural church is increasingly kept afloat by volunteer activity – using Readers instead of stipendiary clergy, church wardens to do the duties of paid vergers and church members for cleaning, maintenance, secretarial duties and fund raising – and many of those volunteers are elderly. Because rural clergy have come to *expect* this level of support, they often do not acknowledge or value the tremendous effort and time spent by the laity. **Is it reasonable to expect the same people to also fulfil the volunteer role of setting up and running community activities?**

For projects to be run successfully, volunteers need leadership and management. Some clergy are very good at inspiring volunteers, nurturing and developing their talents and valuing their contribution; others are not. In some cases there is a leader or “project champion” who is a lay person – this can be even better because they are not shouldering the burden of the parish or, more likely, parishes, as well.

But leaders need not only to be good leaders but also to have **the ability to hand the role on when the need arises.** Generally clergy move on quite quickly, many of the churches interviewed are on their second or third incumbent since the works were undertaken. The archaic way in which clergy are recruited means that there is never a proper handover. If the incumbent is the leader of the community project, the experience is lost. It seems that, unless they die in post, members of the laity are better at handing over in a controlled way and the vision is not lost.

Is it too radical to suggest that the clergy recruitment process needs to reflect a world in which some jobs, for example, management of volunteers, cannot be left unattended for months?

Both *Open All Hours*¹ and the 2003 review recommended involving non-church members from the planning stage of community projects onwards but many rural churches seem to have difficulty engaging with the non-worshipping community. Many churches seem to feel threatened by the

¹ *Open All Hours: A Way forward for Church buildings in the 21st century*, 2000, published by ACORA
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inclusion of “non-church” people running “their” buildings. Maybe there just needs to be education.

Generally there is a lack of help at diocesan level objects:

- o help set up community activities (from community consultation onwards)
- o help recruit people from outside the church membership and broker partnership working, and
- o Advise on running community activities (the need for policies and procedures, finance etc.).

3.1.2 Where activities have been sustained

The churches that have been able to maintain a medium to high level of community activity have, on the whole, been the ones who have retained the people (clergy and/or lay people) who were involved with the project originally. This suggests that strong leadership or a “**project champion**” is desirable but people do not stay in the same place forever. “Project champions” need to be **able to inspire others and hand over the role**. The original project co-ordinator for the project (014) admitted that she had found it very difficult to hand over the reins but in the event community activities have continued successfully under a new team.

Another example is at the church (035), where the incumbents are a husband and wife team, who are fairly new appointments. They are championing new activities and supporting new people to the community who have the skills to run new activities such as Art classes and a monthly Community meal. They modestly attribute the success to others,

“Projects are really made successful and sustainable by a regular supply of willing, reliable and competent volunteers” (The Vicar)

It is worth noting that **several projects** of significant community benefit **have spilt away from the church** and operate independently within the church building:

- i. The community café at (284) is now run as a sole trader business. Whilst this is still of great benefit to a needy community, its sustainability is questionable. Originally the café was run by a part-time paid cook assisted by volunteers - this enabled the price of meals to be kept low. The current proprietor is trying to provide equally reasonably priced hot meals 5 days per week – including Sunday lunch – with paid assistance.

This **project was a victim of its own success**. The original plan was to serve hot lunches on 2 days per week. Very quickly demand exceeded supply and 2 days became 3 days and before long the café was operating 6 days per

week – which required a lot of volunteers. Then the vicar died in post and his wife, who organised the volunteer work force, left the area.

Maybe success should be looked at as part of the risk assessment process!

Whilst emphasis is put on what to do if schemes fail, very few people consider what to do if a project is highly successful and the need for it greater than anticipated. In the case of this centre, the response was to increase provision without considering the full effect on the finite number of volunteers.

- ii. Café 100, the cybercafé and young people's drop-in, accommodated in Holy Trinity church, (390) is now a registered charity employing its own youth workers. It has no direct interaction with the church.
- iii. The Arts Centre (085) has always been run as a separate charity and attributes its success to that.
- iv. The Community Hall (068) is run by a community association, which is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Neither (085) nor (068) find it difficult to get volunteers because they have a wide "customer base" hence a bigger pool in which to fish and they attract people who have nothing to do with the church!

Other cases of significant community benefit have people who are not church members delivering the activity, for example:

- o All Saints church, North Yorkshire (098) is used every day by the local primary school
- o The church in Derbyshire (329) now accommodates a bell ringing training centre, one of 40 nationwide
- o The church in Lancashire (279) accommodates a lot of training courses delivered by a variety of outside organisations
- o Holy Trinity church in Derbyshire (366) accommodates a plethora of community activities and services, delivered by volunteers who are not church members, voluntary organisations such as St John Ambulance and the PCT who run post natal classes there.

Both (279) and (366) are among the few churches that promote the availability of the building for community use in community newspapers.

The above observations support the 2003 recommendation of using non-church members to deliver services and activities and to advertise.

3.1.3 Where activities have increased

Two churches, which reported little or no community activity in 2003, (027) and (345), have been turned around by new clergy and are now developing community use (see 027, 345).

The 2003 review stated:

"Even in the few cases of failure, where community facilities are not being used by the community, the facilities will still be there beyond the current incumbency and could be the one thing that attracts a more "community minded " incumbent in future."

3.1.4 Why are some community projects more successful than others?

It is disappointing to report that the level of community activity is, in most cases, static or lower than in 2003. There are several reasons for this which have been discussed above:

- o Groups have moved due to the lack of storage space and inadequate heating.
- o Competition from new or upgraded community venues
- o Lack of volunteers
- o Lack of a "project champion" and/or good leadership
- o Lack of promotion. Very few churches promote the availability of their church buildings for community use so how will the wider community know that space is available?

Why were some of these problems not identified in the 2003 review?

There are a couple of reasons:

- o The novelty of using church buildings meant that people talked about it and there was press coverage so people knew about it
- o In the longer term the population changes and it is necessary to work a bit harder at getting volunteers and promoting the facility. It seems that a project can bumble along for a few years without taking a very business-like approach but then things start to fall apart.

Where community projects are being run by others they appear to be more successful. The reasons are:

- o They are being run by volunteers who are not trying to run the core business of the church as well!
- o They are run in a more business-like manner. Very few rural churches have anything approaching a Business Plan, no targets are set and projects are not reviewed on an annual basis. This is discussed further in section 4.

3.2 Benefit to church

There is no doubt at all that, although outside the remit of the original Millennium Commission brief, most churches have benefited significantly from the provision of good facilities – most of those in the RCCS programme had neither WC nor kitchen prior to the work being undertaken. Only 9% of churches reviewed in 2009 have found only a minimal benefit from their facilities.

Churches have benefited in the following ways:

3.2.1 Attendance

Not many churches are claiming increased numbers in the congregation. A few have seen an increase in family attendance because the church now provides a monthly family service. There is no doubt that the facilities have enabled older people to continue church attendance. Several churches reported a wider spectrum of people attending services since there was now a variety of services made possible by a more flexible building. The downside of introducing new forms of service was that some of the “regulars” stayed away!

One church reported a dramatic increase in the use of the church for weddings – people who had attended a social event, such as a concert, loved the situation and were impressed by the facilities (see 334). Two others reported an increase in weddings and baptisms (see 286, 388).

3.2.2 Fellowship

For most churches what has made the biggest difference is fellowship:

- o The provision of drinks after services has encouraged fellowship
- o Festival meals – Lent lunches, Seder suppers, Harvest - can be served
- o It is easier to hold study groups (Alpha, Emmaus, Bible study) with shared meals
- o Community activities offer opportunities for outreach without going out.

3.2.3 Financial stability

Most the churches that are well used by the community have a regular income that has contributed towards financial security. The big difference was when fundraising was necessary. The community were more likely to support fundraising activities because they now had a stake in the building and, due to the facilities, fundraising within the church building is much easier.

“Our church would not have survived without it “(community use and the income produced) Yvonne Scott, churchwarden, St Mary, (148) Derbyshire

Several churches reported that the income received hardly covered their costs. It seems that hire rates were set when the facilities were first provided and have not been reviewed in ten years. This is discussed further in Section 4.

3.2.4 Mission activity

Whilst most churches would claim that all of the community activities were mission, the questionnaire asked

"Is the building used for mission? (E.g. Alpha courses, Bible study, training days)"

58% of churches answered this positively. On the whole Alpha courses are not popular but church buildings are used for Emmaus courses, Lent courses, Bible study, Film and Faith evenings, baptism preparation courses and training for ministry teams. A lot of the churches reviewed said that they were now the place for deanery meetings and training days because of the facilities.

3.3 Questions from the National Rural Officer

The National Rural Officer of the Church of England asked for two specific questions to be asked:

- o *Does your church have a website?*
- o *Is your church on a church trail?*

3.3.1 Websites

50% of the churches reviewed featured on a local website – either their own, a benefice website or a village website. Those who claimed to be on a website but on examination this was either the diocesan website or *A Church Near You* are not included in the total.

Very few churches have dedicated websites but this is to be expected in rural areas where most churches are part of a benefice. From a community use viewpoint most of these websites are disappointing:

- o Few churches mention that they have good facilities
- o Few churches state that community activities are available or that new activities/ new users are welcomed
- o Whilst many churches describe every detail of their past history very few mention their recent changes, giving the impression that nothing has changed for decades if not centuries.

Websites are an excellent communication tool but most churches are not using them to communicate with the wider community.

The best website by far is (068), which is run by a registered Charity. The church (355), on the village website, not only includes details and photographs of the new facilities, it even acknowledges the funding! The “What’s On” section is still being developed but this website has a lively feel to it and makes you think that the church is very alive.

3.3.2 Church Trails

Very few churches appear on church trails as far as they know! Several said that they were on the Historic Churches Cycle Trail – by which they meant the annual “Ride and Stride”. The few that were on trails were in tourism areas, for example, Lincolnshire (017), Norfolk (085), Gloucestershire (153), Devon (310), Staffordshire (361).

Several people said that they thought that they should be producing a trail around the Benefice:

- o Somerset (075) reported the production of a trail as “on the ‘to do’ list”
- o Lancashire (334) said that a new tourism officer had been appointed and they will hopefully have a trail in 2010.

But again the problem is one of resources, how many churches have someone who has the expertise and the time to produce a church trail – as well as all of the other jobs?

Whilst this section has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of individual projects, the case studies in Appendix A show the range and success of projects across the country.

The recommendations, based on the feedback above, appear in *Section 4: The path to Sustainability*.

4. THE PATH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Before discussing sustainability let us revisit the “Lessons Learned” from the 2003 review.

Lessons Learned in 2003

Most community projects in churches are successful

Of the 66 projects reviewed 92% of them were successful. Community activities were being held regularly and were attended by a wide cross section of the community.

The majority of these projects shared the characteristics of

- ❖ *Good research*
- ❖ *Strong management teams drawn from within and without the church*
- ❖ *Community activities that answered a proven need*
- ❖ *A willingness to change as needs changed*
- ❖ *Good relationships with "competitors"*
- ❖ *An incumbent who is 100% in favour of community activities in church buildings*
- ❖ *Good communication with the wider community.*

Other pointers to success include

- ❖ *Advertising*
- ❖ *Good links to the "target" market, for example, outreach into schools*
- ❖ *Good booking systems and bookings secretaries.*

All of the above still hold true. This review has identified the causes for underperforming projects are:

- o Management teams that are weak through lack of volunteers
- o Lack of a good leader or “project champion”
- o Lack of promotion.

Church congregations appreciate good facilities

Of the churches reviewed, not one reported that the introduction of new facilities had had a negative effect on the congregation and 79% said that the new facilities had a positive effect on the congregation. Elderly people were more likely to continue attending church if there were toilet facilities. Families with young children will attend church when the church is warm and there are toilet and baby-changing facilities. Even quite modest kitchen facilities enable coffee after church services and congregations are enjoying the fellowship. The appreciation of good facilities has been shown by:

- ❖ *Bigger congregations*
- ❖ *Increased number of families with toddlers and children attending church*
- ❖ *Extra services*

- ❖ Increased use for private prayer
- ❖ Increased numbers of baptisms and weddings.

The 2009 review found that congregation numbers had not increased since 2003. However there has been a widening of the types of services being held in many churches especially family services. Although only two churches reported a significant increase in the number of weddings this could be a reflection on the licensing of so many more premises for marriage ceremonies.

The "can do" attitude

Having successfully applied for funding, achieved a major building project and implemented a community project, communities get a "can do" attitude which leads them into further activities, both within the church and the community, including:

- ❖ Further building work
- ❖ Getting revenue funding to employ youth workers
- ❖ Undertaking village heritage projects
- ❖ Forming campaign groups
- ❖ Volunteers undertaking tourism training
- ❖ Becoming a leader
- ❖ Encouraging other churches to undertake community projects.

This "can do" attitude is infectious and can spread way beyond the parish.

Apart from one church which has now completed phase 2 of their Millennium project there have been no other significant projects reported. Could this be because of the difficulty of getting and keeping volunteers?

Mother and Toddler groups work wonders

No fewer than 11 Mother and Toddler groups have resulted in increased numbers of young families in church and several have resulted in monthly family services being developed. Without the benefit of heating and toilet facilities, it is doubtful that outreach to a Mother and Toddler group meeting outside the church building would have resulted in new family services.

As reported, several Mother and Toddler groups have moved out of church buildings citing lack of storage and poor heating as the reasons. Whilst this is disappointing, in at least one case it was the success of the group and the increased numbers leading to extra toys and the need for more space that forced the move. The church had a facilitating role in getting the groups started and that should be regarded as success.

4.1.5 Links with schools

Having toilet facilities means that more churches are being used by schools for curriculum studies and special services. To actually attract school children to regular church services a lot of outreach into the school is necessary. Where good relationships are built with schools and the church invites school children to take part in regular worship, then parents come too. As above, the provision of facilities in church has probably helped to get both children and their parents into church.

This still holds true but getting children to church still seems to be a problem, children come when parents come as well.

4.1.6 Children's work is much easier in church with good facilities

A considerable number of parishes reported success working with children of all ages due to a warm space with good facilities. This applies equally to church work and to activities like After-school clubs and holiday clubs.

Children's work has ceased where there is a lack of volunteers.

4.1.7 Good people make good projects

It is clear that good facilities make an incredible difference to both community activities and the congregation. Without good people to manage the community facilities, to develop and promote community activities, to undertake outreach, and to negotiate with competitors, community projects do not succeed.

Without good people to manage the community facilities, to develop and promote community activities, to undertake outreach, and to negotiate with competitors, community projects do not succeed – this is a major lesson from the 2009 review as well.

4.1.8 Good projects encourage new leaders

"Building" projects and "community" projects require a lot of people and many different skills to make them happen. Many of the projects reviewed reported the emergence of new leaders throughout the construction stage, the implementation of the community project and beyond. Members of the church who felt that they had nothing to offer the PCC found that they had the skills required by the community project. For example, given the opportunity of a "home" for a Mother and Toddler group, new leaders emerged to set up and run the group. In another case the leader of a music group, which rehearsed in the church, discovered that he had skills needed by the PCC and is now a PCC member.

This is correct – unfortunately when leaders move on there is often no-one to fill the gap, churches are not good at succession planning.

4.1.9 Community projects in church buildings ease the financial burden of upkeep

There are several ways in which community projects can help finances:

- ❖ In cases where a church hall has been sold off, the proceeds from the sale can help pay for conversion of the church but there are also on-going savings from having only one building to maintain, to heat, to secure and to insure.
- ❖ The church can set hire charges at a level to cover not just heating and lighting but also cleaning, maintenance and depreciation.
- ❖ The increased "user base" of the church has a vested interest in keeping the building up to scratch and can be encouraged to help with fundraising for maintenance and repairs.

The majority of churches reported increased financial sustainability due to rental income and the relative ease of fundraising events due to the new facilities. However it is worth noting that some churches are now finding the hire charge is not covering costs – because it is the same hire charge as when the facilities were first made available to the community!

4.1.10 Good facilities attract new incumbents

When churches have good facilities it is easier to attract new incumbents. Not only will the new incumbent not have to undertake an upgrade programme, but, as already reported, good facilities offer so many more opportunities especially for work with children.

Whilst none of the new clergy the author spoke to, has admitted that the upgraded church had any influence on their choice, many have expressed their appreciation of the facilities already in place.

"The facilities are fantastic" Vicar, Somerset

"Excellent facility and the envy of many a church" Vicar, Kent

"Incredible facilities" Vicar, Lancashire

4.1.11 Interregna place enormous strains on small parishes

When a small parish goes into interregnum there is a burden placed on the churchwardens and the PCC. In several cases reviewed, the development of community activities had to cease during interregnum because there were not enough volunteers to run the church and the community project- archdeacons please note.

This still holds true.

4.1.12 Clergy moving immediately after the development of community activities is not a good idea

As described in paragraph 4.11, some small parishes found implementing a community project and running the church during an interregnum was impossible. But the clergy also

suffer. The problems faced during the "building" project are not the same as the problems that accompany the implementation of the "community" project. By leaving after the construction phase clergy do not experience the implementation of a community project, an experience which would be valuable if they were to undertake a similar development elsewhere.

Clearly this was not applicable to the 2009 review but it is still a useful lesson for any church about to extend the use of their church building.

4.1.13 *Appointing the right person for the job is crucial for success*

"The right person for the job" sounds so obvious, but this report contains several examples of "the wrong person for the job". When interviewing for a new incumbent for a parish that is already involved in using the church for community activities, there must be in-depth questioning to ensure that he/she is totally supportive of community use of church buildings.

There can be a more difficult problem where a parish is subsumed into an existing team and there is little choice.

What the 2009 review has found is that where the "wrong" person has been replaced by the "right" person there is a new impetus and situations can be turned around.

4.1.14 *Good facilities do not disappear*

Even if things go very wrong, no community activities happen and a dispirited congregation votes with its feet, good facilities are an investment for the future and could ultimately be the one thing to attract the right person to a parish. Good facilities last longer than most incumbents do!

The comments made in 4.1.13 and 4.1.10 support this.

The 2009 shows that all of the lessons of the 2003 review still hold true, so why are community projects underperforming?

4.2 What makes projects sustainable

This review established that whilst most churches consider that the new facilities have made their buildings and their congregations more sustainable, community activity has not always fared so well. This last section is going to look at how churches are operating now, why community projects are failing and what could be done to make things better.

4.2.1 The current situation

In order to secure Millennium Commission funding, churches had to produce a plan, but, because the money was for a *building* project, the plan focussed on

- o Details of the design. This was considered *the* most important bit due to the use of heritage buildings
- o Delivery of building works
- o What it was going to cost and how it was to be funded.

Applications for funding had to say what the building was going to be used for but that was as far as the community project bit went – **what we want to do rather than how we are going to achieve it.**

Having completed the building works, the only planning that most churches appear to have done is:

- o Agreeing how much to charge to hire the facility
- o Appointing a Bookings secretary
- o Drafting some Terms and Conditions of hire – but not all have done this.

And that has often been the full extent of “the planning”. As a result some churches have not revised their hire charges for 10 years and now find that the income is not covering expenses.

As the new facilities were being completed, each church received quite a lot of publicity; part of the Millennium Commission remit to *Rural Churches in Community Service* was to get publicity for every project – photo opportunities and articles in local newspapers. In 2009 very few churches appear to promote the availability of their church buildings for community activities. Village communities change over 10 years and new residents will know nothing of the Millennium Commission publicity - people will not use a building if they do not know it is available. Most church websites make no mention of the availability of the building for community use.

Some community activities have ceased because people have moved on and there is no-one to fill their shoes – **a lack of volunteers but also a lack of succession planning.**

Also **volunteers need leadership and management** and whilst some clergy are good at managing volunteers, others are not. Leaders need not only to be good leaders but also to have **the ability to hand the role on when the need arises**. Generally clergy move on quite quickly, many of the churches interviewed are on their second or third incumbent since the works were undertaken. The archaic way in which clergy are recruited means that there is never a proper handover. If the incumbent is the leader of the community project, the experience is lost. Whereas it appears that, unless they die in post, members of the laity are better at handing over in a controlled way and the vision is not lost.

Often it is the same people running community projects and the core business of the church. It helps immensely to get non-church members involved in running activities. This review has identified that where the community side of the business is run by the community, it is successful!

It seems that community projects fail when they are not being run in a business-like manner so the answer must be – **be more business-like!**

4.2.2. A more Business-like approach

How many rural churches produce a Business Plan for the running of their church? Not many. Even the production of a budget for the year seems to be a rarity.

Whilst the thought of producing an annual Business Plan may seem totally over the top for many churches, that is exactly what is being proposed. By producing a budget for running your church as a community facility and discussing it within the Management committee, many of the questions that a Business Plan should answer will be covered. For example:

- o Does the projected income cover the projected costs? If not, why? Fewer users? Unrealistic hire charges?
- o Why are there fewer users? Is there a need to promote the community facility better? Is there anyone who can produce promotional material?
- o Unrealistic hire charges? Are they too low? Are they too high? What does the competition (Village Hall, school) charge?
- o Are the activities provided still needed? Has the make-up of the community changed? Have the needs of the community changed?
- o You need to fundraise to replace some kitchen equipment – who is in charge of fundraising events?
- o Someone has been reading about safeguarding legislation– what do you need to do? Have you got the expertise in-house? Who can you ask? Who is going to be responsible for following this through?
- o The Treasurer has announced that she is moving out of the area – have you planned for succession? How are you going to find a new Treasurer?

None of the above is rocket science but by discussing it and documenting the outcome you will have a Business Plan that states:

- o Where you are now
- o What you want / need to do
- o How you are going to achieve these ambitions / needs
- o How much it will cost and how it will be paid for
- o Who is going to do it
- o What are the risks involved

A Business Plan shows that you know what you are doing and that you are taking your responsibilities seriously.

But remember, this is a review and not a handbook on Business Planning. Hence it must be noted that the above is not a comprehensive list of what should be in a Business Plan, it is merely to show that business planning is commonsense. **A Business Plan is not an end in itself; it is a tool for running your community facility successfully and should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.** Whilst Business Planning training is available from many organisations - the Rural Community Councils are particularly helpful as they understand the environment in which the rural church works – maybe dioceses might consider employing a Community Development / Project Advisor to:

- o Help set up community activities (from community consultation onwards)
- o Help recruit people from outside the church membership and broker partnership working, and
- o Advise on running community activities (the need for policies and procedures, finance etc.).

4.2.3 Widening the pool of volunteers

Throughout this report the lack of volunteers has come up time after time and has been acknowledged as a problem throughout the Third Sector. The 2003 review stated:

“Without good people to manage the community facilities, to develop and promote community activities, to undertake outreach, and to negotiate with competitors, community projects do not succeed ”

It also highlighted

“Strong management teams drawn from within and without the church”

As very few rural churches can boast growing congregations, attracting people from outside the church to help to manage the community facilities, to develop and promote community activities is desirable, if not essential. Those outside the church may be the ones who have the Business Planning expertise or the knowledge of the latest safeguarding legislation or hands on experience of health and hygiene in the kitchen – but people need to be asked. Most folk

do not respond to an advertisement in the Parish magazine, but they may respond to a personal approach.

And what has this got to do with the exhortation to be more business-like?

Most people want to be associated with organisations that are well run and have the potential to be successful - a Business Plan should allay any fears that the whole organisation is being run on a wing and a prayer – however fitting that may appear to be!

In summary, what helps to make community projects sustainable is:

- o **All of the guidance from the 2003 review, as in Section 4.1**
- o **A business-like approach**

AND MOSTLY IMPORTANTLY

- o **Good people - dedicated volunteers with appropriate skills and expertise, drawn from within and without the church.**

Appendix A: Project Descriptions

014: A church in Northamptonshire
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331: A church in Yorkshire

334: A church in Lancashire
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014: A church in Northamptonshire

In a small village with a population of about 500, which increases dramatically in the summer due to a semi-residential caravan park with 300 caravans and the village's position close to the Grand Union Canal. The church dates from 1180 and includes a fifteenth century king-post roof which was rediscovered and restored in the latter half of the 1930's when a plaster ceiling installed in 1770-1774 was removed; the building is listed grade I.

The project, was

- o To convert the Mansell room, constructed some years earlier at the west end of the north aisle, to accommodate a kitchen, a disabled access toilet and a new meeting room at first floor level
 - o To remove the pews in the north aisle to create flexible space
 - o To opening up the C13 door in the north aisle to provide level access to the church for disabled people
 - o To create a new path from the new entrance to the existing path.
- Subsequently new heating and lighting systems were installed.

In order to accommodate

- o Social activities
- o Cultural events, concerts and drama catering for people from the surrounding villages, the caravan park and the Grand Union canal
- o Regular events for children, Mums and Toddlers and pensioners
- o Refreshments for travellers.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the above plus

- o An advanced Embroidery class
- o A Saturday afternoon Art class
- o School use for End of Term services and curriculum studies.

By 2009 the regular refreshments for visitors had ceased as most of the group who provided this service had died, there are also less concerts and cultural events than before. However one new user is the Fiddle class – violin lessons held every Tuesday with an annual concert in church. The good links with the school, established immediately after the facilities were completed, have continued with the school staging plays in church where appropriate.

Impact on church and community

The facilities at church are enjoyed by a wide cross section of the community and much appreciated by the tourist community. The church is open every day and attracts a large number of visitors from all over the world.

The church has benefited in that the facilities allow a wider range of services, including a family service and services for the people who live on barges, with fellowship afterwards.

017: A church in Lincolnshire

Village is about 12 miles inland from Skegness and now has a population of about 400. It has the church, a small shop and a pub; the Methodist chapel has now closed down. It is a beautiful early English church, which stands in the middle of the village, is listed Grade I.

The project was

- o To develop the Nave to enable it to be used very flexibly
- o To provide a small meeting room at the East end of the North aisle
- o To provide kitchen and toilet facilities in the base of the tower
- o To provide full disabled access throughout the building.

In order to accommodate

- o Concerts
- o Meetings
- o A young people's coffee drop-in
- o A luncheon and social club
- o Various craft classes (flower arranging, crochet, art)
- o Education and training
- o Tourist activities

The project was long in gestation but was been thoroughly researched, well supported by the church, the district council and others.

What was achieved

By 2003 most activities had started in some form with the exception of education and training. The luncheon club had become a weekly social gathering and the young people's coffee drop-in a junior youth club once a month. About 120 people per month were using the church for community activities.

By 2009 the social gathering and the junior youth club had ceased, the former due to lack of volunteers, the latter due to lack of youngsters. However a Camera club has been started and the Council use the church for a variety of activities including as a polling station.

Impact on church and community

Both the community and the church have benefited from the facilities. The small size of this community means there is a smaller pool from which to find volunteers and this is threatening the sustainability of community activities.

Whilst the size of the village has increased by about 100, the congregation has not grown. However the vicar is confident that, when he retires and the current group is split between two other groups, this church will survive (i.e. not be closed) because of the facilities it offers – one of the few with a WC!

021: A church in Yorkshire

This is in a fairly deprived area with a high proportion of ex-miners following the closure of the local collieries. **The** church is 15th century and a Grade II* listed building.

The project was part of a major re-ordering of the church and provides

- o A quiet meeting room
- o A community room accessed via a lobby to allow access and use of the worship area and the community area simultaneously
- o A balcony room
- o Kitchen and toilet facilities
- o A car park.

In order to accommodate

- o Meetings of Community organisations
- o Community Education in partnership with the Castleford Community Learning centre, with crèche provision
- o Mother and Toddler group
- o By schools for curriculum studies
- o Art exhibitions and concerts.

What was achieved

By 2003 everything planned had been achieved and more! The adult education courses had taken more effort than estimated and were an area of concern.

By 2009 all community education had ceased, due to funding being withdrawn by the council, and the Mother and Toddler group had folded due to lack of toddlers. However three craft groups have started:

- o Flower arranging
- o Art
- o Bobbin and lace making

There is a weekly coffee morning and the church is used as a Polling station.

Impact on church and community

The church's work with children and youth, which started when the project was complete, continues to flourish. There is now a Men's group to encourage more men to church and the church is used for Bible study, diocesan training days and conferences.

The community activities are now attended largely by members of the church so the impact on the wider community is less than it was. A huge amount of voluntary effort is needed to keep things running and *"we have attracted very little new blood. As youngsters grow up and go to college / university, they have to move out of the area and do not return"*.

027: A church in Northamptonshire

Village has a population of about 800; the WI Hall has been taken over by a Village Hall management committee to enable use by a wider audience. The church was built in July 1807 and restored and enlarged in 1903; it is listed Grade II.

The project was

- o To build a small extension at the south west corner of the church to accommodate a small meeting room, kitchen facilities and a disabled access WC
- o To remove the pews in the south aisle to create "social space".

To enable

- o Social events and lunches for elderly people
- o Community group meetings
- o Provision of refreshments at concerts, festivals and other performances

What was achieved

In 2003, none of the planned community services was developed. The project had been developed during an interregnum by the PCC and the new vicar was against using the church for community activity. As a result the whole development team, most of whom were also PCC members left this church.

By 2009, following the arrival of a new incumbent in 2004, the church status has been downgraded to a chapel of ease, the pews have been removed and the church is well-used for community activities:

- o Lunch club once a month
- o Tots group once a week
- o Holiday club
- o Concerts
- o Meetings

The Youth worker is based there.

Impact on church and community

In 2003 there had been no impact on the community now it has.

Reported in 2003 as "*one of the saddest stories that the author has heard*" this is a total turn around due to a committed, energetic vicar who has vision and drive. He is a firm believer that "*rural churches must change to survive*" he has reorganised this and the adjoining parish so that together they can offer different styles of worship and community use of this church. The church is used for retreats and quiet days by other churches and diocese use it for some meetings.

035: A church in Essex

A scattered community of 850 people. At the time when the project was developed the village had a youth sailing centre, an ecumenical community, 2 caravan sites and a marina, historical attractions include the remains of a Roman fort, a 7th century Celtic chapel, a mediaeval church, an Old World War II airfield and a nuclear power station. There was also a large area along the beach and marshes designated as a bird sanctuary. There were numerous visitors, 22,000 per year to the Power station visitor centre, 14,000 to the chapel plus those by boat and caravan. The church dates from the thirteenth century although the only remaining part from that date is the chancel. The nineteenth century brought "restoration" and the gallery. The church is listed Grade II*.

The project was

- o To provide a carpeted entrance area with bookstall and notice boards
- o To create a "soft" meeting room on the ground floor
- o To install a kitchenette and a disabled access WC
- o To extend the gallery forwards to provide an upper room at the rear for meetings, with a gallery area at the front for worship
- o To create a teenager "den" in the bell tower.

In order to provide

- o A welcoming place and facilities for visitors to the church
- o A ground floor meeting space used for a coffee drop-in for elderly and disabled people, social clubs during the week, study groups for visitors, local exhibitions
- o Meetings in the upper room
- o A bell tower room for the exclusive use of younger teenagers.

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the above had happened except the teenage drop-in; located in the ringing chamber, the bell ropes were considered to be a safety hazard.

Additional uses were

- o French, Spanish and Italian classes run by the Local authority: these are subject to attracting a minimum number of attendees
- o Cream teas for visitors
- o Hospitality for groups visiting the 7th century chapel
- o Rehearsal space for village drama group

By 2009 the cream teas had ceased as the organisers had moved away and the drama group has ceased to function. However many new activities are happening:

- o Weekly Art class
- o Monthly Community meal
- o School governor meetings
- o Fundraising functions for various charities

A community shop was tried but ceased after 18 months. The church was also used as an overflow classroom by the local school when it was needed for 2 years.

Impact on church and community

The activities accommodated in the church have made a significant difference to the community, which has suffered greatly due to the loss of the major employer, when the power station closed, and the closure of both the shop and the Post Office.

Church finances have improved due to a small income from lettings and fundraising is much easier.

The congregation has neither grown nor diminished although the individuals have changed.

“Projects are really made successful and sustainable by a regular supply of willing, reliable and competent volunteers”

040: A church in Nottinghamshire

A village of 2000 people. At the time that the project was undertaken the village had no village hall and the only affordable meeting place was the 1960's Sports pavilion. It is a modest church built 150 years ago but well looked after.

The project formed the second stage of a planned refurbishment; the first phase comprised of rebuilding the vestry, the construction of a parish office above the vestry, the provision of a disabled toilet and the replacement of all of the windows.

This project was

- o To remove two rows of the pews at the back of the church to accommodate a new sound proof meeting room on the ground floor with a balcony room above
- o To provide a kitchenette in the ground floor room.

In order to provide

- o A crèche during services
- o A drop-in facility for older people
- o A home for the youth group
- o Coffee after services and concerts
- o A Meeting room
- o Parenting group, Counselling facility, Cancer Care and other health/social service use.

What was achieved

In 2003 the only services, which had not been achieved, were " *Parenting group, Counselling facility, Cancer Care and other health/social service use*", all of which were being "pushed" by the wife of the then vicar whose professional background was in health. With her departure there was no one with the expertise to take this forward, especially as it coincided with the re-organisation of the health service into Primary Care Trusts.

There are far more community groups using the new rooms than had been anticipated including the Parish Council, WI, music groups for rehearsals, Guides and the Local History Society.

By 2009 a new Village Hall had been built and the Toddler group, Parish Council, WI, music groups and Guides have moved there. However, there have been new activities started:

- o A Monday club for children aged 9-12, currently ceased due to lack of helpers

- o The school come to church once a month for morning assembly. This has come about through a group going into school regularly and an enthusiastic new headmistress.

Impact on church and community

Until the construction of the new village hall, the extended use of the church building was having a significant impact on the community. Although there is less community use, there is still some:

- o The Drop-in for older people
- o Gardening club
- o Local history society
- o Concerts.

The remaining pews have now been replaced by stacking chairs. This has enabled more church led activities such as Parish suppers, Church Fayre and a Victorian Christmas market with the Local History society.

Church finances have benefited from rental income and the building makes fundraising much easier.

043: A church in Essex

A charming little village, with a population of 1300, close to airport. **The Church of St Mary the Virgin** is large, imposing and listed Grade I. It stands on the site of the Priory of Hatfield Regis and some parts of the church, the tower and the porch, date back to the 15th century.

The project was

- o To create "social space" at the west end of the nave by removing some box pews
- o To provide toilet and kitchen facilities in the base of the tower
- o To extend the chancel into the nave to provide a "platform" to accommodate a new (moveable) altar or larger choirs and orchestras. This necessitated the removal of the rood screen.

The rood screen was repositioned at the west end of the nave separating the "social space" from the worship area. The doors from the ends of the redundant box pews were re-used to make the kitchen fittings.

To enable

- o Easier use of the church for school visits
- o Better facilities for concert goers and those attending the annual flower festival
- o Meetings
- o Social gatherings.

What was achieved?

By 2003 all of the planned benefits had been achieved plus a new Mothers and Toddlers group, the "Church Mice".

2009 saw all of the activities continuing with the addition of choral concerts.

Impact on church and community

This project has had an impact on both the village community, through the Mother and Toddler group, and the wider community of those who attend concerts and flower festivals and schools in the area. The church benefited by the introduction of a new monthly Sunday service, focussed on young families, which is very successful.

061: Church in Derbyshire

A small town, with a population of 5,600. St Mary's attracts a considerable number of visitors and twice a year becomes the focus of activity, for the Well Dressing Festival and for the town Festival. The church of **St Mary the Virgin** dates from 1270, it is a large cruciform church and listed Grade I.

The project was

- o To provide toilet and kitchen facilities
- o To create "social space" in the North transept
- o To provide significant extra storage space.

In order to accommodate

- o Concerts, recitals, opera, talks
- o Exhibitions
- o Workshops
- o Children's holiday club
- o Young mothers' fellowship
- o Training events
- o Meetings of voluntary groups
- o Drop-in centre for young people

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the planned activities were taking place, plus a weekly "Soup and Surprise" lunch attracting people from local businesses.

By 2009:

- o The Young Mothers fellowship and meetings of voluntary sector groups had re-located to more suitable premises
- o Training events had proved difficult in church due to the expectation of could IT facilities, which were difficult to achieve in church.

Nonetheless, about 500 people per month use the Youth drop-in and the "Soup and Surprise" lunches about 500 people and concerts and the holiday club are well-attended.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities are appreciated by all who visit the church - the local residents, visitors to the well -dressing, festival and concerts and tourists to the Peak District. Since 2003 the church has developed its parish room for wider community use.

Church funds have benefited from the wider use and fundraising is easier. Despite the very positive impact on the community the church congregation has remained about the same.

065: A church in Lincolnshire

A small village, population of about 200. The village has no facilities other than the pub. **St Mary's** is a large Grade I listed building. The church was partially and poorly re-ordered some years ago when the pews were made moveable and toilets were put in but were poorly positioned and a bit of an eyesore.

The project was

- o To lay a new flagged floor in the nave
- o To install new under floor heating
- o To remove the existing toilets from the north aisle to free up the whole of the nave and aisles
- o To install a disabled access toilet and kitchen in the base of the tower
- o To upgrade the lighting.

To enable the building to be used all year round for the following:

- o Musical evenings
- o Social events
- o Antique Roadshows
- o Keep fit
- o Line dancing
- o Badminton
- o Adult education classes

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the proposed uses have happened plus hiring for children's birthday parties and Old English Country Dances.

In 2009 the church is still well-used for most of the activities listed plus regular use by the Parish Council. The Social events are usually after specific church services when most of the village attend.

Impact on church and community

The church was used for community activities before this project was undertaken but it was impossible to use the church in the winter because it was too cold. With heating the impact on the community has been significant and the building continues to be well used. The church has benefited financially and has seen a slight increase in the numbers attending special services - Easter, Harvest and Carol services, which are also social events - but Sunday worship remains about the same.

067: A church in Lincolnshire

A small village, on the Lincolnshire marshland a few miles inland from the coast, with very few facilities; a Village Appraisal clearly identified the need for improved communal facilities. For many years there has been a local Ecumenical Partnership and the Methodist Chapel was sold to part fund this project. Worship takes place every Sunday, alternating Anglican and Methodist ministers.

The project was

- o To provide heating
- o To put a kitchen and toilet facilities in the North aisle

The pews had been replaced with chairs before this project.

To enable

- o Community events (e.g. Harvest suppers)
- o Musical events
- o Youth club
- o Meetings of local organisations
- o Visitor teas
- o School use.

What was achieved

In 2003 the reported uses were

- o Community suppers were being held about 6 times/year
- o The school use the church
- o It is used for meetings
- o Village Christmas and Summer fairs
- o Christening teas and funeral wakes
- o A few concerts.

The Youth club did not happen as there were no volunteers to lead it and very few children as it has become more and more a retirement village.

By 2009 saw less community events due to a lack of volunteers.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities gave the village a pleasant communal social centre and support for village activities such as the Harvest supper and the village fairs. Good links were made with the village school through outreach into the school, this has continued despite more than one interregnum. The result of the outreach is that the school uses the church for services like their Harvest festival and Christingle services.

Despite a new village hall being built the church is still used for community activities. The church does not get any rental income because it does not ask for any – the church received a large bequest upon the death of a parishioner.

068: Community Hall (in the Village Chapel), Wiltshire

The Chapel was built in 1887 and is a pleasing neo-perpendicular building; it is listed Grade II. Faced with the prospect of Westbury Leigh Church hall coming to the end of its life and wishing to make more use of the Chapel, the church hall site was sold for development and the proceeds put towards the cost of converting the church to dual use. Since the project was undertaken there has been a considerable amount of new housing and an influx of young families.

The project was

- o To provide a worship area in the chancel, separated from the nave by an folding screen
- o To create a community hall in the nave
- o To separate the south aisle from the nave with a full height screen
- o To provide kitchen and toilet facilities at ground floor of the south aisle
- o To create a meeting room at first floor level of the south aisle, with lift access.

To accommodate

- o The activities from the church hall, which include Bingo evenings, English Country Dancing classes, Keep Fit, Brass Band practice, as a Polling station and for social events
- o School plays and concerts
- o After school club
- o Pre-school group
- o Self help groups
- o Over-60's
- o Drop-in centre
- o Wedding receptions and parties.

What was achieved

By 2003 everything except the Pre-school and After-school groups had been achieved with 1,000 people per month using the hall. Since 2003 the building has been successfully run by the community association as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. By 2009 the school had ceased using the hall as it now has a new school building. However there are additional activities – yoga, pilates, French and Spanish classes, a Mums and Tots club, an accordion group and a monthly local produce market. There is an excellent website which advertises many of the activities but also gives a full history of the church and its conversion. The centre was awarded a certificate of excellence from the “Community Firsts” village halls in Wiltshire competition.

Impact on the church and the community

The community hall is well used and both community and church benefit are high. The current incumbent has used the facilities to extend how the church uses the building, using it for team services followed by lunch and training workshops, harvest suppers and a children's holiday club. The incumbent also promotes the use of the community hall for baptism teas, wedding receptions and funeral receptions. When the church wishes to use the community hall, it is booked in the same way as any other user but at no cost to the church.

075: A church in Somerset

A small village that lacks a focal point. It has a village hall but no shops or post office. The village hall, which comprises one large room, is heavily used by the Pre-school group in the day and by various organisations in the evening; it is neither comfortable nor suitable for use by small groups. **The church** is a small cruciform building; it is listed Grade II. The tower dates from the late 14th or 15th century, it is placed to the North of the Chancel and is octagonal from the ground; it is the only example of this sort of tower in the South West of England.

The project was

- o To convert the vestry in the north transept to accommodate a toilet with ambulant disabled access and a kitchen facility
- o To convert the south transept into a small meeting room.

Glazed screens were fitted in each transept arch.

To accommodate

- o Social events for the elderly
- o Meetings of the Parish Council and other local organisations
- o Facilities for visiting cricket teams, for which the church is one of the providers of "cricket teas"
- o Facilities for visitors to the church, which is open every day.

What was achieved

In 2003 it was reported that church meetings and Neighbourhood Watch use the meeting room. Social suppers and cricket teas are provided. In addition computer courses are being run in the meeting room.

By 2009 cricket teas and computer courses had ceased by additional users are the Parish Council and the Village Plan committee. The church has increased with Mothers Union and monthly prayer meetings.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community has been moderate but is now low.

The impact on the church has been very positive and the congregation has grown. Prior to the works, the transepts, especially the south transept, were in very bad condition and the church was cold and damp because of this and the church was not a very pleasant place to be. The project has greatly enhanced the look of the church internally and made it look and feel very welcoming. The new vicar reports a real sense of ownership from the community and, because of that, fundraising is easier.

085: A church in Norfolk

Village has a population of 800 and is expanding. It is a dormitory village for nearest city and fairly mixed in terms of age and income. The village has a school and a village hall, which is used mainly for sporting activities. **Church** stands in the churchyard of the parish church of St Mary's. In 1992 work began to convert this church, which was a disused and ruined mediaeval Grade II* Church, into a training and arts centre. Over the following 5 years £192,700 was spent on restoration and repair. Since the work was completed the church has been open everyday and used for morning and evening prayer, for Local Authority Educational Classes (Music, Art and Gardening), monthly concerts, monthly quiet garden (The church's Sacristan's garden is affiliated to the Quiet Garden Trust and recognised by the National Federation of City Farms) and for exhibitions. The church has become a tourist attraction. Since 2003 there has been new private housing and social housing built but the village has lost a couple of shops and public transport has diminished.

The project was

- o To provide toilets
- o To install a Kitchen
- o To provide car parking

To enable

- o Enhancement of existing activities (Concerts, Courses)
- o The development of courses appealing to a wider audience. The local authority will only consider additional educational courses when WC facilities are provided
- o Workshops (sculpture, textiles)

What was achieved

By 2003 the planned activities had been achieved with the exception of classes run by the local authority, the minimum numbers of students required could not be sustained. The building was being used by PCC's throughout Norwich for "Away days" and by the Diocesan Board of Education for training days. The building was well used by the local community for private concerts and receptions.

In 2009, operating as the Centre for Arts and Training, a registered charity, the building accommodates Art classes, concerts, exhibitions and receptions. Whilst it is rarely used by the diocese, it is well-used for Quiet Garden days. Recently a Girl Guide company has been started in the church.

Impact on church and community

The addition of kitchen and toilet facilities has made a good community resource even better and it is appreciated and well-used by the local community. The Centre has no difficulty in finding people to manage and promote it as they are drawn from all parts of the community, rather than just from the church membership. St Mary's church, which is in the same churchyard, benefits from the facilities in the Centre.

098: A church in Yorkshire

A small village, population 750, on the North Yorkshire coast. It has a village hall - used for dancing, jumble sales, playgroup, WI and polling station - about half a mile from the church and school across the busy Whitby to Scarborough trunk road. Church is a very solid Victorian building, listed Grade II, and situated on the edge of the village on the top of the cliffs and opposite to the village primary school.

The project was to reorder the church

- o To create a multipurpose community space in the nave
- o To provide a WC in the existing vestry
- o To provide basic kitchen facilities in the area under the tower
- o To install an electric storage heating system.

To enable

- o The local primary school, which has no hall, to use the nave for music, dance, drama, assembly and PE
- o The community to use the church as a meeting place and social centre
- o The Village Music Centre to use the building as a music lesson /rehearsal / concert venue
- o Exhibitions of interest to tourists and walkers to be held during school holidays

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the planned activities had been achieved.

By 2009 the school and village Music Centre continue to use the building plus occasional community meetings. The village hall continues to be well used as it better placed for community use being at the centre of the village, the church is half a mile away "outside the village".

Impact on church and community

The major user of the church is the school. This has made a tremendous difference to the activities in which the children can partake and a major financial contribution to church finances.

Shortly after the project was complete the vicar moved away. The church was subsumed into an existing ministry team and the "vision" of the church working with the community was lost at that point and, it appears never regained.

111: A church in Nottinghamshire

A small village with a population of approximately 100; it had no public buildings other than the church and poorly served by public transport, there is now no transport. The church was restored in 1878 when much of the church was rebuilt, only the wide low lancets in the south wall show the church's 13th century origins. The church is listed Grade II and is open 24 hours per day. The pews were made moveable prior to this project and although that gave a flexible space the lack of facilities limited the use of the space.

The project was

- o To build a small extension on the north side of the church
- o To install kitchen and toilet facilities.

To accommodate

- o Social events
- o Village dinners
- o Parish meetings
- o The discussion group.

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the proposed uses had happened plus a small library and video library (all items have been donated by villagers) in the vestry.

By 2009 the use had dwindled to 4 village dinners/year, 4 parish meetings/year and 2-3 fund raising events/year. The discussion group now meets in people's houses and the library was overwhelmed by damp.

Impact on church and community

The community has a good meeting place with capacity for more activities. There are only half the numbers of services now compared to when the project was undertaken and the vicar states

"When the last few elderly members of the electoral roll pass away the church will not be viable".

126: A church in County Durham

A small community where the church building is a symbol of continuity in a landscape that has constantly changed due to open cast coal mining. The mine closed leaving a community of high unemployment and low average income. **The church** is Victorian and listed Grade II; for years it was regularly considered for closure but it survived due largely to the will of the community. Since 2003 the village has lost its Post Office and only shop and the local pub; the future of the Working Men's Club looks problematical.

The project was

- o To convert the west end of the nave to provide two storey accommodation
- o To create a gallery at first floor level
- o To create a meeting area under the gallery
- o To provide kitchen and toilet facilities adjacent to the meeting area
- o To create a draught proof entrance lobby
- o To install some heating.

To enable

- o A coffee drop-in
- o Charity sales of work
- o Concerts
- o Arts and Crafts exhibitions

What has been achieved

By 2003 all the above had been achieved and more, including a Charity Shop and links with Sunderland University Arts department.

By 2009 the charity sales of work had been subsumed into the Charity shop and in addition to the activities listed above there are

- o Talks with an exhibition or file, for example International Anti-Slavery
- o Trade Union and NE Historic Society initiatives
- o Poetry readings
- o International Workers Memorial Day event, with a memorial service, exhibition and Trade Union involvement.

Impact on church and community

The initial impact on the community was tremendous because the church had responded to local needs - the charity shop, the coffee drop-in with facilities for toddlers.

In 2009 none of the original enthusiasm appears to have been lost and new projects are being planned, such as a new stained glass window depicting the mining heritage of the area and a joint PCC /trade union project to restore a Miners Lodge banner. The relationship between the church and the village and community life has been invigorated and the outreach has been stimulating. This

church has benefited from having a member of the congregation with great vision, so despite changes of vicar the leadership of the project has continued.

Financially the rental income has helped to make the stable and the fabric is in a much improved condition.

147: A church in Somerset

A lively village with a population of around 1,000 although the last few years have seen an increase in holiday home owners. There is a church hall, used for church functions, Brownies and WI and a village hall used for amateur dramatics and the local market. Listed grade I, the church is a mainly 14th and 15th century building. Prior to the works the church had been used for concerts, exhibitions and craft fairs but its location up a steep hill and the location of the nearest WC at the bottom of the hill made use of these facilities difficult especially for less able-bodied people.

The project was

- o To provide kitchen and toilet facilities under the north gallery
- o To create a "fellowship area" at the west end of the North aisle
- o To make a quiet area/meeting room in the base of the tower.

To enable

- o Enhance facilities for existing activities - concerts, exhibitions and craft fairs
- o Drama performances
- o Youth activities
- o A Christmas market
- o Meetings
- o A crèche during services.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities have happened. In addition a group of singers regularly use the church and their size and attendance has led to the expansion of the fellowship area being considered.

The 2009 review saw the church being well-used although some of the activities have changed:

- o Youth activities are now focussed on another parish
- o Exhibitions and drama performances happen only occasionally but there are more concerts
- o There are less breakfast services but the daily office is said in the chapel
- o The school now use the church for services and curriculum studies

In conjunction with the Methodist church a Fairtrade café has been developed in the Methodist church which has a monthly lunch.

Impact on church and community

There is slightly less community activity than in 2003 but the Fairtrade café with the Methodists is having a positive community impact. The church has benefited from the facilities and fundraising is easier – currently the church is raising money for an organ upgrade and a new heating system.

148: A church in Derbyshire

A expanding village in a rural location in an old coal field area; the community is made up of ex-miners, some agricultural workers and an influx of white-collar workers to the new housing. At the time the project was undertaken the village had a school, 3 pubs, a Post Office and the old Band room. **The church of St Mary** is a Grade II listed building, which had suffered from neglect resulting in the need for considerable restoration work. The church was dark, draughty and not a very pleasant place at all.

By 2009 the village had lost its Post Office but a new shop has opened, one of the pubs has closed and a new Village Hall has opened.

The project was

- o To remove all of the pews and replace them with new chairs
- o To lay a new floor
- o To install a heating system
- o To upgrade the lighting
- o To screen off the west end of the nave to accommodate kitchen and toilet facilities.

A restoration project was undertaken at the same time.

To enable

- o Brass band practice and concerts
- o Drama rehearsals and performance
- o School use for curriculum studies and performance
- o Youth music group
- o Elderly people's drop-in.

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the planned activities had happened with the exception of the Drop-in for elderly people. In place of the planned "Drop-in" there was a monthly coffee morning at which non-church organisations are invited to have stalls, for example, the Mother and Toddler group may have a Craft stall and Cake stall one month, the School supporters group a Tombola and Brick-a-brac stall the next. The coffee morning is well attended especially by elderly people, for whom there are also 2 whist drives per month.

By 2009 the brass band had moved out and the drama group ceased altogether. However there is now a drop-in for older people, a new group – the Mobile home residents' association – use the church for meetings and the monthly coffee mornings have gone from strength to strength since bacon butties have been served.

Interestingly when the PO closed the church made enquiries at diocesan level regarding opening one in church but no support or information was offered and the idea got no further.

Impact on church and community

The community is benefiting from the community activities. Although the congregation is small, about 10 for the weekly service, since the arrival of the new vicar there are different services – Family service, Iona community, evensong – and there is a separate Children’s service. The church now enjoys the support of the village even if these folk do not attend church services and many now refer to it as "a Community church".

Church finances are much improved, the extended use has brought in an income and has made fundraising easier. The church now has enough money to refurbish the windows. Interestingly the new Village Hall is having trouble attracting enough users to “make ends meet”

“The church would not have survived without this project”

149: A church in Oxford

A small but lively village, it has a village hall, which is well used by the playgroup, village clubs, WI and for sports. The church of **All Saints** was completed in 1826 and is listed Grade II*.

The project was

- o To reinstate the organ gallery at the west end
- o To create a meeting room beneath the gallery
- o To provide toilets and a kitchen adjacent to the meeting room.

To accommodate

- o Plays and pageants
- o Concerts
- o Lectures
- o A Youth drama group for both rehearsals and productions
- o The local primary school for national curriculum subjects and performance
- o The Kingham Choral Society for rehearsals and performance.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the proposed activities had happened with the exception of the lectures, these were in the plan for the future. In addition to the original proposals, a Mothers and Toddlers group had been set up and a monthly Pensioners Luncheon Club. The All Saints Churchill Activities Group had been formed for the purpose of increasing activities both in and outside the church.

A serious fire in August 2007 meant that restoration work had to be carried out on the meeting room, which was out of action until November 2008. This has led to the cessation of the Mother and Toddler group and the Youth drama. The school no longer uses the church since the construction of a new school hall and cultural performances have also moved there. The remaining activities are:

- o Concerts twice a year
- o Kingham Choral Society occasional rehearsals
- o Luncheon club once a month.

The major use of the facilities is for church activities.

Impact on church and community

Although initially the project had some impact on the community, with the demise of the Mother and Toddler group the impact is now very small. The village already had a well used village hall and the current management committee has been promoting the village hall quite aggressively.

The church has seen an increase in the congregation especially young families who find the facilities very "user friendly" and like the crèche at family services.

150: A church in Peterborough

A village with a population of 4,000. **St Botolph's** church has been on its present site since the thirteenth century; it is listed Grade I. A large extension to the church, to house these many activities, was planned; this project was phase I of the larger scheme.

The project was

- o To build an extension on the south side of the church, "the Cloister Room"

To enable

- o Meetings
- o Playgroup
- o Keep Fit
- o Mums and Toddlers group

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities were taking place and the room was also used by:

- o Longthorpe History Society
- o Flower arranging group
- o The Dorcas group
- o Coffee mornings

Since 2003 an extension to the vestry has been built providing:

- o Kitchen
- o Office
- o 2 toilets.

The Playgroup and Mother and Toddler group moved out when the vestry work was being undertaken. The remaining activities reported in 2003 are still using the facility plus:

- o Cloister lunches once a month
- o Youth group once a month
- o Cursillo once a month
- o Coffee mornings every Thursday to coincide with the Mobile library visit
- o Alpha groups
- o Polling station.

Impact on church and community

It has benefited many members of the community through the provision of a small meeting space and through the activities supported. The church has seen an increase in the number of children attending because of the facilities. Alpha and Cursillo groups are now well attended because they meet in the Cloister room, which is much more suitable than the body of the church. There is a small rental income.

152: A church in Kent

A small village situated in Romney Marsh. **The church** is one of the most attractive and interesting in Romney Marsh built on an artificial mound to raise it above flood water level. The bell tower is a separate structure adjacent to the church. The church was erected around 1250 although it is likely that a Norman church existed here in earlier times; it is listed Grade I.

The project was

- o To provide toilet and kitchenette facilities within the Tithe Pen, situated at the west end of the south aisle, it is an enclosure with an interesting example of rural screen work of the seventeenth century. This was used to accommodate the project to ensure minimal visual impact.

To support

- o Mother and Toddler group
- o Concerts
- o School use for curriculum studies and meetings
- o Teas for parties of visitors
- o Teenage drop-in
- o Young Mothers group
- o Visitors / tourists with better facilities.

What was achieved

In 2003 some of the proposed activities started but the Mother and Toddler group had moved out as the group got too big for the chapel and it was too cold in the winter months. The teenage drop-in never happened.

By 2009 the Young Mothers' group had moved to the village hall as it is warmer. The church is still used for an annual concert, by schools for study and for services, teas for visitors on guided tours and funeral teas.

Impact on church and community

Concert goes on and elderly people visiting the church appreciate the new facilities. The church facilitated the setting up of the Mother and Toddler group and the Young Mothers' group, even though they no longer meet in church both have an impact on village life. Only one NSM who serves several parishes and has another job!

153: A church in Gloucestershire

A scattered rural parish of about 1,500 people. Apart from the primary school, there is no other public building except the church. It is thought that this site has been a place of worship since the 5th century and the first stone church was built here in about 1086; the church of **St Mary the Virgin** was enlarged to a cruciform shape in the 12th century and is listed Grade I.

The project was

- o To provide disabled access to the church by opening up the North door and building a new path
- o To provide kitchen and toilet facilities
- o To convert the south transept into a meeting room.

To enable

- o Concerts and performance
- o Youth groups
- o School use for curriculum studies, concerts and services

What was achieved

By 2003 apart from a few concerts, the facilities appeared to be used exclusively by church members.

In 2009 it was reported that

"The church is primarily a place of worship...the PCC is presently exploring ways for the community to make use of the building"

Impact on community and church

Apart from concertgoers, the impact on the wider community is minimal. Indeed the respondent thought that the money had been given to

"modernise a medieval grade I listed building"

He regards the project a great success because

"It has benefited all who use the church".

Here is a case of the vision being lost – completely.

156: A church in Warwickshire

A small village of less than 500 residents; it has a Church of England school and a Parish Hall but no shops and no pub. The church of All Saints dates from the 13th century and is listed grade II*. The village is best known for its concerts, which have taken place in the church for the past forty years, when artists of international renown fill the church to capacity.

The project was

- o To provide kitchen facilities at the west end of the south aisle
- o To install toilet facilities at the west end of the north aisle
- o To create a carpeted "social area" at the west end of the nave
- o To create a new ringing chamber at a higher level within the tower
- o To provide a meeting room in the base of the tower.

In order to

Enhance the use of the church for concerts and art and photographic exhibitions

- o Make the church a more welcoming place for visitors and ramblers
- o Greatly improve the facilities offered to school groups who use the church for curriculum studies
- o Offer better facilities to those who travel from urban areas to attend "Quiet days" in the church
- o Provide a very useful meeting room, which the village lacked.

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have happened and more. The church has hosted charity markets and regular lunch clubs.

The church has recently raised £100,000 to repair and maintain the tower.

Impact on church and community

Local community has benefited greatly from the provision of a village meeting room. The concert going community is delighted that there are good facilities available - at last. The church has benefited greatly, the facilities are especially useful at christenings, weddings and funerals. This is a church of choice for weddings and funerals. The regular congregation has not increased.

Comment

This church was already very actively involved in staging concerts prior to the work being undertaken although many of the helpers are not members of the church – there are many who wish to see the church succeed *because of* the concerts and they are prepared to raise money for the church.

177: A church in Cornwall

A village of 1,500 people. At one time it had shops, a railway station and a cinema due to the Delabole slate quarry, which used to provide employment for the whole village. Although the quarry is still in operation it employs only a handful of people and the village now has high unemployment. **The church of St John**, which is listed grade II, was built in 1881.

The project was

- o To re-order the church to embrace both worship and community activities. Regular worship is now held in the Chancel, which is separated from the nave by a moveable screen
- o To create two large community rooms in the nave
- o To provide WC's, a kitchen and storage space
- o To provide full disabled access to the whole building via a new path .

To enable

- o After school club
- o Youth group
- o Sewing group
- o Meetings of local organisations
- o Fundraising events
- o Social functions (lunches, discos, children's parties, dances)
- o Concerts
- o School use for worship and curriculum studies.

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the above was happening plus kick boxing!

By 2009 the After school club, Youth group and Sewing group had ceased mainly due to lack of volunteers. Martial arts has replaced kick boxing. There is a new user, the Camel Club, which is a lunch club for mental health survivors.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community is considerable. There was considerable community involvement from the early days of this project and the minister put her trust in the community to deliver the planned activities. The local authority took note of what had been achieved and welcomed the church as a serious regeneration partner.

The success of this project was due to the vicar who was brilliant at communicating with and involving people from the wider community. The community use continues to be significant but the current incumbent feels that the church is not sustainable due to the lack of an organist, declining numbers and fabric repairs being necessary, he did not recognise the community use as beneficial to the church:

"People go into the church because it's not church" Revd. Jim Benton-Evans.

181: A church in Derbyshire

A small village, surrounded by mixed farming land; it has a population of 550. The village has a pub and a village school, which has no hall; the church is the only other public building. Built in 1859, **Christ Church** is a simple, uncluttered and airy building with attractive leaded windows that flood the church with light; it is a Grade II listed building.

The project was

- o To build an extension on the north side of the church, to accommodate a small meeting room and toilet facilities
- o To re-order the body of the church, removing the pews and providing chairs
- o To provide kitchen facilities at the west end of the nave
- o To provide disabled access to the whole building by a new path and the entrance into the extension.

Subsequently the windows and heating have been upgraded.

To enable

- o Concerts and performance
- o School use for curriculum studies, services and performance
- o Meetings, including the Parish Council meetings.

What was achieved

In 2003 the school use and meetings had been achieved and the building was being used for other activities – keep fit classes, bingo and social events.

By 2009 keep fit and bingo had ceased but concerts and performance had started.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities have made a great deal of difference to the school and those attending meetings of local organisations - there is a new WI. The size of congregation has remained constant whilst the church has been through one interregnum resulting in a reorganisation into another Team ministry and another 2 interregna since then.

The church is now more sustainable due to the income from room hire and the comparative ease of fundraising. The new incumbent has used the recent 150th anniversary of the church to raise the profile of the church and its facilities by:

- o A service of renewal of wedding vows for those who had been married there
- o A special lunch for senior citizens.

182: A church in Cheshire

A small, scattered farming community with no public facilities other than the church. **St David's** is a small redbrick building and is not listed.

The project was

- o To build a small extension at the north west corner of the church to accommodate a kitchen and disabled access WC
- o To remove five rows of pews at the west end of the nave to give flexible space. The remainder of the pews were removed subsequently

To enable

- o A Mother and Toddler group
- o An adult keep fit group
- o Brownies and Guides
- o Meetings of the Farmers Forum and Co-operative
- o School use
- o Meetings, including the Parish Council meetings

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the proposed uses had happened except for the keep fit group plus a new initiative for the over 50's - cards, board games, table tennis - and the building had been used for parties and social events.

By 2009 the Farmers Forum and the over-50's activities had ceased but addition uses are:

- o As a Polling station
- o Church lunches and suppers
- o Musical concerts
- o Use by other churches for meetings.

Impact on church and community

The community has benefited from the new activities. The church congregation has increased across all age groups due to the friendly and welcoming environment and the variety of services offered. The facilities have enabled catering for the church's regular functions - Lent lunch, harvest supper, concerts, confirmations - attracting record numbers including many newcomers.

Comment

The ministry team has *increased* since the work was undertaken which, I am sure has had a positive effect on the church.

195: A church in North Yorkshire

A very small village, which has neither a village hall nor public toilets; many of the population are elderly and on fixed incomes. **St Oswald's** is a delightful grade I listed building that dates from the 12th century.

The project was

- o To provide kitchen and toilet facilities at the west end of the north aisle; this necessitated the re-siting of the vestry to the east end of the north aisle
- o To re-floor the whole nave using York stone
- o To make the pews free standing and moveable
- o To create social space by clearing the west end of the nave
- o To provide wheelchair access to both the churchyard and church.

To accommodate

- o Music concerts
- o Flower festivals
- o Parish Council meetings and community meetings
- o Tourism.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the proposed uses have happened and tourism had increased following the erection of a brown tourism sign from the main road!

In 2009 things were much the same. The harvest supper and the annual village luncheon really do attract the whole village as evidenced on the village website.

Impact on church and community

The congregation, most of whom are elderly, has benefited from the facilities and the much improved access through the churchyard. Whilst numbers have not increased

"...they would probably have fallen had we not made the changes"

The whole community appears to attend any social event that is held in church, the facilities do appear to have made the church the heart of the village.

Comment

The project co-ordinator for the work is still actively involved in the church and the community.

196: A church in Nottinghamshire

Village had a population of about 1,500 in 1998 but has grown considerably since then. The village has shops, 3 pubs, a school and a village hall. **St Swithun's** is a Grade I listed building on the outskirts of the village adjacent to the site of a Cistercian Priory founded around 1150.

The project was

- o To provide a mezzanine room in the bell tower, accessed by a new staircase and to be used as a small meeting room
- o To provide kitchen, disabled access toilet and baby changing facilities in the base of the tower
- o To replace the curtain, which screened off the tower, with a full height glass screen.

To enable

- o Enhanced use of the church for the existing activities -concerts, educational purposes (music, drama, and nature projects) and tourism
- o Use of the church by more community organisations.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the existing activities had continued and, in addition, the History society, New Generation Youth and a Sewing Circle also use the room.

In 2009 the Sewing circle had ceased and New Generation Youth happens as part of church on Sunday.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities have benefited concertgoers and the school, who can use it more now. The churchyard contains a conservation garden as part of the *Caring for God's Acre* scheme; those who visit it use the facilities. It is difficult to attract more community users as the church is cold and situated out of the village centre compared to the excellent, modern Village Hall which is at the centre of the village on the main road through it.

The church has benefited from the facilities for church meetings, fellowship after services and the church is used for deanery services because of the facilities.

203: A church in Cambridgeshire

Village has a village hall, a pub and the primary school, which is used for martial arts and by the WI. **St Mary's** church is a Grade II listed building that has had significant restoration with the help of monies from the Joint Heritage fund. St Mary's serves two villages which straggle a four mile stretch of fenland road.

The project was

- o To re-order the west end of the South aisle
- o To provide a coffee point
- o To install a full disabled access WC
- o To create a small meeting room.

To enable

- o A Youth club
- o Meetings of uniformed organisations
- o School projects
- o Music lessons
- o Meetings of local organisations
- o Use by the Community Health services.

What was achieved

By 2003 none of the community activities had got established. The project was developed during an interregnum and when the new incumbent took post the churchwarden who had seen the project through to completion was asked to step down.

By 2009 there was no demand for the facilities from community organisations following the building of a somewhat superior community room and playgroup room at the school.

Impact on church and community

There has been no impact on the community because none of the activities were developed. The church has benefited from the new facilities, especially for funerals, and church meetings and a Sunday club for children are now held in the new meeting room. There has been an increase of congregation as special services (Harvest Festival, Carol Service) but no significant increase in church membership despite a new housing development of 80 dwellings.

Comment

This project suffered from the moment it was completed from a new incumbent who clearly was not in favour of community use of church buildings, hence there was no active promotion of the facility.

207: A church in Kent

Village is a conservation area that has a population of 750 adults and 250 children, many of whom attend the village school. There are no shops or a village hall. The church of **St Peter and St Paul** probably dates from 1180. The church is constructed of flint and stone but has been much restored over the years using a variety of materials. The church contains some of the finest memorials outside Canterbury cathedral and is listed Grade I.

The project was

- o To enclose the west end of the nave and south aisle with a folding screen to create a meeting room
- o To upgrade the existing kitchen
- o To convert the existing toilet facilities to meet disabled access requirements.

Since 2003 the upper room above the meeting room has been completed; this was Phase 2 of the millennium plan.

To enable the church to be used

- o For concerts
- o As a Heritage Visitors centre
- o As a resource for the local school. The school performed their Nativity play in church in December 2000 for the first time in many years
- o As a meeting room for local village organisations
- o As a venue for Christening parties, wedding breakfasts and wakes.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities have happened with the exception of wedding breakfasts and wakes. The church was well used for meetings and new users included a Youth group and a Gospel Band.

In 2009 the range of the community activities is the same as 2003. The new upper room is used by the youth group (secondary school age) who also use the rest of the church.

Impact on church and community

The community benefit by using the room for meetings of community organisations and the Parish Council. The Youth group has made a significant difference.

The church congregation has not increased despite the introduction of a youth service. The facilities have enabled the building to be used for Bible study for the whole cluster, group meetings and occasional deanery use.

228: A church in Yorkshire

The village has a population of about 3,000, a well used village hall, a licensed club and a sports field. The village supports a lot of community groups including play school, Mother and Toddler group, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Martial Arts, Luncheon club and the Byram Entertainers. For years the church had been used as an overflow area for the village hall, for concerts (brass band and organ recitals), for flower festivals and for teaching young organists. The church is listed Grade II, can accommodate an audience of 400 for concerts.

The project was

- o To convert the ringing chamber in the base of the tower into a kitchen
- o To re-instate the first floor of the bell tower to provide a new ringing chamber
- o To convert the west end of each gallery to form two rooms - a choir robing room and a small meeting room / office
- o To remove the back row of pews to form a "social area" outside the kitchen
- o To make the entrance and approach to the church more accessible for disabled people
- o To make the choir stalls moveable to enable more flexible use of this area.

To enable

- o Refreshments at concerts and social events
- o Use of church for recording sessions by Brass Bands and Choirs
- o Fairs and Festivals
- o Adult literacy classes

What was achieved

By 2003 there had been no take up for Adult Literacy classes but the other proposals had all happened; the social events included, fashion shows, cookery demonstrations, sales and a rock concert.

2009 sees the continuation of these events except the recording sessions. Also the building is now being used quite regularly for meetings.

Impact on church and community

The church is well used by the wider community and the new facilities have increased the use of the church - disabled access was very difficult before the works and the kitchen has been a great asset. Whilst the new housing has led to an increase in population and especially families, village is now really a dormitory and the congregation has not grown but it has remained the same.

233: A church in Cornwall

A small village which has a school, a pub and a shop. The church of **St Mawgan-in-Pydar** is listed Grade I. Many features of the mediaeval building were lost in the Victorian restoration.

The project was

- o To move the organ from the depths of the north transept to under the arch of the transept
- o To convert the "cleared" area in the north transept into a meeting room
- o To build a small extension to accommodate kitchen and toilet facilities
- o To provide disabled access to the new facilities via a new tarmac path and a ramp entrance into the extension.

To accommodate

- o WI
- o The Flower Club
- o The Cabaret Club
- o Youth groups for drama
- o The school for curriculum studies
- o Social events for elderly people
- o Concerts
- o Flower festivals
- o Tourism.

What was achieved

Most of the planned activities began but some fell by the wayside during the 2003 interregnum. The Youth drama groups, school use - both pre-school and primary, socials for elderly people, Flower festivals and tourism have all continued.

By 2009 the Youth drama is much less, there are 3 concerts/year, an annual Flower Festival and the school continue to use the church for history studies. Social events for elderly people still happen every week. The Parish News Group, which covers 3 parishes, now meets in church twice a month.

Impact on church and community

The benefice has gained an extra parish and the priest-in-charge has moved there at a time when the church congregation is dwindling. However being in a tourist area, summer services attract visitors and the congregation hits 50 per week. The new facilities have had no effect on the church's finances because no rental income is collected.

The new facilities are enjoyed by the elderly people in the community and

"Concerts, Flower festivals and school events also draw the crowds but a general apathy among the young leaves little hope for the future"

273: A church in Cornwall

Village had 3 public houses, a social club, a Community hall used for badminton and discos. **St Andrew's**, a 14/15th century Grade I listed building, it was extensively restored in 1888. Since completion of the project Stratton has seen new housing, an increase in holiday homes and less "locals". In the same period it has lost 1 pub, a shop and a PO.

The project was

- o To provide a small extension to accommodate a disabled access toilet
- o To create kitchen facilities at the west end of the north aisle
- o To create a small vestry in the west corner of the north aisle
- o To convert the existing vestry into a meeting room.

Subsequently the heating was upgraded.

To accommodate

- o Visitors to the church. These include holiday makers, those with historical and archaeological interest in the church and those with family connections
- o Concerts
- o Lectures
- o Educational use.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities have happened plus frequent use for meetings. In 2009 all of those activities still happen. The church is now able to host diocesan meeting and training because it can offer hospitality. Due to increased contact with local schools by the vicar the schools now use the church for carol services and curriculum studies – this would not be possible without toilet provision.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities are well used by the wider community who use the meeting room or attend events such as concerts and lectures, and by those who visit the church as tourists.

The church building is more sustainable because the extended use has attracted more helpers and the fabric is kept cleaner, warmer and in better condition; fundraising is also easier. But

"...the project should have been bigger and better. It was all a useful improvement but already we see ways of improving on what we have."

Comment

I feel that this project has benefited from having the same vicar still in post and the Friends of St Andrews church who are constantly fundraising.

284: A church in Cumbria

At the time of this project, the village was an area of high unemployment and deprivation and fell within a European Objective 2 programme and the Cumbria Rural Development area. **St Paul's** church is Victorian and not listed.

The project was to re-order the whole church

- o To create a modern discrete area for worship
- o To create a Community café, with a full catering kitchen
- o To provide toilet facilities
- o To provide a large meeting room at first floor level
- o To provide office space at first floor level
- o To provide disabled access throughout via a new entrance and lobby area with a lift

To enable

- o Provision of nutritious, affordable meals twice a week at lunchtimes
- o A Job club for unemployed people
- o IT skills training
- o Training courses for Health and Hygiene (for catering)
- o Recreational activities

What was achieved

The IT skills training course was never implemented because by the time that the centre was open, another organisation was providing this service.

By 2003 the meeting room was being well used for training courses with subjects as far reaching as anger management, nursery nursing and by the Connexions (Youth employment) service. A lot of local organisations use the Centre for meetings - Hospice at Home, Alzheimer's support group, West Cumbria CVS to name but a few. The centre was also popular for social gatherings where catering is required. The most successful venture was the Community Café, which was opening 6 days per week. In addition to serving meals at the Centre, the kitchen was providing a mobile meals luncheon delivery service for elderly people.

By 2009 the church had handed the running of the centre over to a sole trader, who takes any bookings and runs the café Tuesday to Friday and Sunday lunchtimes.

Impact on church and community

In 2003 the meeting facilities were attracting community groups from within and beyond the village and the impact of the Community café in particular was tremendous. Whilst the café continues to be an important part of life in Frizington, the meeting facilities are not as well used.

The church has benefited from the facilities for its meetings and for fellowship but there has been no increase in congregation. The centre is used by the whole deanery for quiet days and retreats.

Comment

The church has handed over the running of the centre to one woman for whom the café is a business, literally her bread and butter. She serves a choice of meals for under £5 but apart from Tuesdays when she serves 30- 40, the take-up is about 20-30 per day; she has grave concerns about sustainability.

The café was a victim of its own success, originally planned for 2 days per week it leapt to 6 days per week. Although a cook was employed, the café relied heavily on volunteers to help cook and serve and clear up. The volunteers just found it all too much especially when the church went into interregnum following the untimely death of the incumbent.

286: A church in Oxford

Village has a population of about 800. There is a village hall which is a wooden hut built in 1927, although it is in a poor state of repair, it is used by the playgroup and the Brownies and for band practice, jumble sales, whist drives etc. There is a pub but it has no rooms for community use; the sports pavilion is for the use of members only. **St Giles** is about 1 mile from the village and listed Grade II*. The building was begun in the 13th century and the South window in the chancel survives from that time.

The project was

- o To create a meeting room in the base of the Tower
- o To provide basic kitchen facilities
- o To install a disabled access toilet

To enable

- o Concerts with refreshments
- o School use by village primary school
- o Band practice, suitable because of its distance from the village
- o Young people's group
- o Meetings of local organisations
- o Teas for tourists.

What was achieved

Against the odds the dilapidated village hall is still standing and so band practice has remained there out of loyalty. Similarly local organisations that used the village hall have remained there and the only people who use the church for meetings are church based groups - Deanery synod, PCC, bell ringers meetings. The remaining proposals have gone ahead.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community has been small due in part to the wish to see the village hall survive. The church members appreciate the facilities, especially the WC as the church is a long way from the village. Church life has been enhanced by the kitchen facilities. There is now an evening service once a month with a "bring and share" supper. Serving coffee after services enables people to stay and meet others. Being able to offer hospitality means that the church hosts meetings and services such as the Deanery synod and the Archdeacon's visitation.

The project has made the church more sustainable due to:

- o Increased income from tourist teas, the Flower festival and concerts
- o More weddings because of WC facilities and ease of car parking.

The church congregation has remained about the same, but there is the feeling that it would have declined without the new facilities.

"Advice to others – make the kitchen and serving area as big as possible to avoid congestion during busy times"

307: Mission Room in North Yorkshire

A village of 150 people, mostly elderly, four miles from both Kirbymoorside and Pickering; there are only two buses a week from the village which makes it an isolated existence for those who do not drive. The Post Office has just closed and the pub is about to close. The **Mission Room**, which is the focal point of this tiny village, was licensed as a place of worship and a school by the Archbishop of York in 1853 and subsequently built with material and labour provided by the villagers. The school closed in 1970 but the building has continued to be used for worship. The Mission Room is a Grade II listed building.

The project was

- o To refurbish the Mission Room
- o To provide a disabled access toilet
- o To provide disabled access to the building by means of an external hydraulic lift.

To accommodate

- o Continued use by the WI, for evening classes and for Parish meetings
- o For "Village Mornings" and "Village Afternoons". These attract people who wish to meet informally to chat and have coffee and listen to talks. The disabled access facilities enable wheelchair bound and frail people to attend.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activity was achieved. Since then "Marton Afternoons" have ceased but the "Mornings" now include a Computer club. Local authority classes have ceased due to cuts in funding but there are now privately run Art classes.

Impact on church and community

The refurbishment meant that the Mission Room stayed open – as it might otherwise have had to close for safety reasons – and it is valued by the community. Although (younger) newcomers do not seem to want to take part in activities they do support fundraising events generously. Village Mornings has meant more support for individuals and undoubtedly contributes to village life.

Attendance at church has fallen as people die or move away but financially the church is more sustainable as the income from lettings covers the main expenses.

Comment

This project has benefited from having the original project co-ordinator still on board.

310: A church in Devon

Village had a population of 1370 at the time the project was undertaken, this has increased slightly due to new housing; this is not an affluent community. The church of **St John the Baptist** is listed grade I and located on the village square.

The project was

- o To install a screen to the tower to accommodate a disabled access WC and a meeting room with kitchenette
- o To remove 4 rows of pews at the back of the nave to give flexible space.

To accommodate

- o A drop in centre
- o A Mother and Toddler group
- o Concerts
- o The school for curriculum studies
- o The village fair, craft fairs and charity events.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities had been achieved and the meeting room was well used for committee meetings of village organisations.

In 2009 the drop-in centre had evolved into the church being open every day and a "make your own" policy for drinks. This has proved very popular with the many visitors to this part of Devon, who often picnic in the churchyard or, in inclement weather, in the church. This church is on 2 church trails which were organised by the Reader at Witheridge.

The Mother and Toddler group has ceased due to the poor heating but a new heating system is to be installed imminently.

Whilst local organisations still use the meeting room occasionally, there are other meeting places in the village and the church respects "the competition"

Impact on church and community

The local community has benefited from the church now being a useful building for concerts and fairs. The tourist community has benefited from the kitchen and WC facilities in a church that is open every day in a tourist area.

The new facilities encouraged more families with young children to attend and this has been sustained; there is a thriving Explorers club (Sunday School). The facilities have enabled different kinds of service to be held – café services, fellowship after every service, "bring and share" meals after some services, such as "Back to church Sunday" and baptisms with baptism parties in church.

There is a Methodist church and a Congregationalist church in Witheridge and they join St John's for a joint service every 5th Sunday; they also work together on things like the Women's day of prayer.

The church does not charge for the use of the meeting room but has increased income due to the concerts held there.

314: A church in Suffolk

A small village with no facilities other than a run-down Village Hall. **All Saints** is a grade II* listed building with flint walls and a brick tower built in 1694; the churchyard is part of a churchyard conservation scheme.

The project was

- o To move the ringing chamber to the first floor level of the tower
- o To install toilet facilities and a vestry in the base of the tower
- o To provide a "social area" at the west end of the Nave, by removing some of the pews
- o To install a kitchenette at the west end of the North aisle
- o To provide a good heating system and improved lighting.

To enable

- o Meetings
- o Educational courses
- o Musical and poetry evenings
- o Art exhibitions
- o Art classes.

What was achieved

In 2003 it was reported that concerts and musicals had been well attended and some meetings were held in church but the other proposed uses have not been achieved.

In 2009 there had been no increase in community use with meetings and classes favouring the upgraded Village Hall, which is warmer, less draughty and closer to the main village.

Impact on church and community

The musical events are well received by the local community and visitors to the church, which is always open, appreciate the new facilities. The Probation Service place people on Community Service orders to maintain the churchyard, this could not have happened without the WC facilities being available.

A Sunday School was developed and parents were more willing to bring young children to services, due to the heating and provision of toilet facilities. This project was planned during an interregnum and was in progress when the new incumbent was appointed. The initial good start did not last and this had a negative effect on all activities in the church. The number in the congregation declined, as did the work with young people and generally people want to have less to do with the church. It is not that the incumbent has done anything seriously wrong just the wrong guy in the wrong place. However a new, active incumbent was appointed in 2006 and the church is making good use of the facilities with the main growth area for the church being children's events, often involving families and fellowship after services.

317: A church in Lancashire

A small village in an area of tourism. It has changed very little in 200 years and there is no new building work planned. The village has a primary school and village hall which is well used but expensive to hire. The population is quite scattered; half live in the village, the remainder on farms or isolated cottages. The church of **St Peter and St Paul** is on the site of a church built in 1190, but has been rebuilt several times; it is listed Grade I listed. Since 2003 the village has lost its shop and the numbers attending the village school have declined. With decline in farming there has been a loss of "locals" as property has been bought by outsiders and used at weekends only.

The project was

- o To install a disabled access WC in the NW corner of the nave
- o To install a kitchenette in the base of the tower
- o To refurnish the Lady Chapel to make it more comfortable for community use.

To enable

- o Enhanced facilities for existing users-Mother and Toddler group, Summer concerts and exhibitions, Medieval fair and tourism
- o Elderly people's groups
- o Parish council meetings
- o Youth holiday projects
- o Friends of Bolton by Bowland school
- o The Hungrill Trust
- o The drama group.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the proposed activities had happened plus an After school club.

In 2009 the only user to disappear from the list is the Mother and Toddler group which now meets in the Village Hall where there is more space and more storage space. The church is also used for talks and refreshments are served.

Impact on the church and community

The Lady Chapel is well used by village organisations. Village people who would not go into church for an act of worship go there for other activities; barriers have been broken down.

The church has benefited because it is more inviting – people stay after worship and talk over coffee. Children's activities have flourished because of the facilities and families attend church services. The church is used for quiet days and clergy training, this would have not been possible before the project was undertaken.

"This project fulfilled my wish as the parish priest to use our building and help to put it into the centre of the village community – we are a rural church in community service!"

318: A church in Worcestershire

Most of the population work out of the village. Whitbourne had 1,100 residents, a primary school, a village hall, a Post Office and shop and two pubs. Since then one pub, the PO and shop have closed down, but a voluntary, community shop opened in 2007. The church of **St John the Baptist** dates from about 1180 and is listed Grade II*.

The project **was**

- o To reorder the north aisle to provide a meeting / social area in the north aisle
- o To provide kitchen and toilet accommodation at the west end of the north aisle with a small first floor meeting room above.

To accommodate

- o Existing community events - Concerts, Flower festivals and exhibitions
- o Rehearsal and performance by the local drama club
- o An Art club
- o A teenage discussion group
- o Riding for the Disabled committee meetings
- o A drop-in for members of the Ramblers Association.

What was achieved

In 2003 it was reported that all of the planned activities except the use by the local drama club had happened. Since this project was completed a new village hall was built and most village activities take place there.

By 2009 the community use of the church is just concerts, the annual Flower show and the odd exhibition, all of which happened before the work was undertaken.

Impact on church and community

The church has had little lasting impact on the wider community but this is partly due to its location – the church is on the edge of the village, the new village hall is in the centre of the village.

The church has benefited from the project using the kitchen for coffee after services, for refreshments at the Flower show and summer fete and for a Lent lunch. The upper room is the choir robing room and used for church meetings.

320: A church in Yorkshire

An attractive village with a population of 1,700; it has a pub, a primary school and a village hall. The village hall underwent a substantial refurbishment; the large hall has regular booking for "physical activities" and the small room is used exclusively by the playgroup –there is nowhere for small meetings. **Holy Trinity** church is built of coarse grit sandstone and is not listed, its only claim to fame is that of being filmed for funerals in a well-known TV programme.

The project was

- o To reorder the whole church
- o To remodel the east end of the nave to incorporate the Lady Chapel and vestry into the nave providing a flexible space that can be used for worship and performing arts
- o To create two meeting rooms in the west end of the nave
- o To install toilet and kitchen facilities adjacent to the meeting rooms.

To enable

- o Meetings
- o Coffee mornings
- o Fundraising events
- o Concerts and performance.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities had happened except for the coffee mornings. There were a lot of concerts than planned, and Art exhibitions were regularly staged in the church. There were also school visits to the church.

In 2009 none of the activities reported in 2003 had ceased and the ministry team now use the building for training and study days. The church is now open every day attracting local people, visitors to the area and walkers, who find the WC facilities useful. The annual garden party is now held in the churchyard, this is made possible by the catering facilities in the church.

Impact on church and community

The wider community has benefited greatly from the concerts and exhibitions. The tourist community has benefited from the open church and its facilities.

The church finds fundraising much easier and the building is in very good condition as there is now a large number of community supporters helping to keep the church open and well-maintained.

"One of the most significant developments has been the success of our 'open church' policy – we allow people into our building unsupervised and this is evidently very much appreciated by many."

329: A church in Derbyshire

Not typical of the RCCS programme having a population of about 8,000. There are a number of community facilities including the Civic centre, several public houses and a church hall, which is remote from the church. The church of **St Peter and St Paul** dates from 1100; it is listed grade I and, according to Pevsner, "A church of exceptional architectural interest for its contribution to the 12th and 13th century styles in Derbyshire".

The project was

- o To create a meeting room in the base of the tower
- o To provide a kitchen and a WC in the adjacent boiler room area
- o To install a first floor ringing platform.

To enable

- o Use by the local schools for curriculum studies, drama and festivals
- o Meetings of local organisations
- o Tourism
- o Refreshments at concerts and performances
- o Exhibitions
- o Activities for frail elderly and disabled people.

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the planned activities had happened with the exception of meetings of local organisations - but there are other venues available.

By 2009 the activities for elderly people had ceased but there were several new uses:

- o In 2003 as a direct result of the project a bell-ringing training centre was established, one of the 40 nationwide. This is in use at least once a weekly and often more attracting ringers from Derbyshire, South Yorkshire and beyond
- o JAM (Jesus And Me youth group) meets fortnightly
- o An Art Group uses the meeting room.

Impact on church and community

The local community has benefited from the kitchen and toilet facilities at concerts, as have school visits and tourists. The bell-ringing fraternity have certainly benefited with the setting up of the Training Centre – this would not have been possible had not good facilities existed.

By 2003 the church had seen an increase in the number of children and parents since it was able to hold Sunday School in the tower room at the same time as the morning service. This trend towards younger families has continued with the introduction of JAM.

Whilst congregation numbers have not increased significantly, the project has stopped the decline in people using the building.

331: A church in Yorkshire

A small village, population of about 1,000 and close to a RAF base. The RAF families rely heavily on the base for social activity and, without a village hall, there was nothing in the way of community activities for the remainder of the population – this project was to address this need. **St Augustine's** is a small red brick building, which was built about 100 years ago, it is not listed.

The project was

- o To remove the pews, the font and the pulpit
- o To install a toilet and kitchen at the rear of the church
- o To create a new doorway and entrance lobby

To enable

- o Meetings
- o Social events
- o Mother and Toddler group
- o Bingo
- o Family games nights.

What was achieved

By 2003 the bingo and family games nights had started, become less popular and had stopped. Meetings of the Parish Council and local charities were held in the church. The major success was the Pre and After school club which meets 5 days a week and throughout school holidays; this met a real community need.

By 2009 all community activities had ceased and the Pre and After school club had been wound up with financial difficulties owing the church a considerable amount of rent.

At the moment the building is being used once a fortnight by a prayer group from the parish of Leeming. Although the future is being discussed with the diocese it is unlikely that any decision will be made before the appointment of a new incumbent for the Bedale and Leeming benefice.

Impact on church and community

All community benefit has ceased.

Despite a letter from the Archdeacon in 1998 stating that the church was sustainable, by 2003 the tiny congregation has ceased to meet and the only services held were festival services. Some of the congregation had moved to the mother church at Leeming to be part of a larger church community, one or two felt that St Augustine's was not really a church after the re-ordering. This church is neither pretty nor historic and clearly the local congregation, which was very small in 1998, has voted with its feet.

334: A church in Lancashire

Adelightful village with a population of 250. The Old School, which was owned by the church and used by local organisations, was sold, leaving the pub as the only other public space in the village besides the church. **All Hallows** church was started in 1270 and was built in the early English Gothic style with thick walls and lancet windows; it is listed grade I. Although the church is a fine building, the west end was not remarkable. When a gallery was installed in 1820, the tower arch was filled in and all of the light from the great tower window was lost.

The project was

- o To remove the in-fill to the arch between the nave and the tower, restoring it to its pre – 1820 condition
- o To remove the organ from the gallery
- o To rebuild the gallery replacing the stepped floor with a flat floor
- o To create meeting rooms in the tower room and the gallery accessible by a new stair case with chair lift
- o To provide a kitchen facility and disabled access WC in the base of the tower
- o To provide a meeting area under the gallery
- o To open up the West door to enable good disabled access to the community facilities.

To enable

- o Better facilities for tourists (3,000 + visitors per year before this project)
- o Meeting facilities for organisations previously accommodated in the Old School
- o Women's Institute
- o Historical Society
- o Mothers and Toddlers group
- o Activities for the elderly and infirm
- o As a venue for 'quiet days' and conferences.

What was achieved

In 2003 all of the planned activities had been achieved.

By 2009 activities for elderly people had ceased but new activities started:

- o Concerts are regularly held
- o Exhibitions
- o Local history lectures
- o The Mitton singers use the church as a rehearsal space.

Impact on church and community

As a replacement for the Old School, the meeting facilities provided by the church are superior with the added advantage of good disabled access. Tourism increased because of the publicity given to the project. The increased tourism encouraged members of the church to attend a tourism course and this in turn has made them more aware and enthusiastic about the need to maintain and

preserve ancient monuments - this church has some fine alabaster monuments. The tourist community is much better served than it was.

There has been a dramatic increase in weddings from 2 / year to 20 /year as visitors find what a lovely setting it is and that it has facilities! This in turn has lead to an increase in baptisms and in regular congregation. The church is well-used for quiet days and conferences and there is a regular monthly healing service.

The vicar, who has arrived since the work was completed, says that she cannot believe her luck and that Mitton has "*incredible facilities*"

337: A church in Derbyshire

A small market town with a population of about 7,000. **St John's** church has a fascinating history, built in 1873 by Francis Wright, who built large railway stations. Following a disagreement with the vicar of the parish church, Francis Wright built St John's as an evangelical Church of England church. The church is not listed. Both the church and the schoolroom, which is situated behind the church, were embraced by this project. The schoolroom was well used by community organisations but most of these activities were in the late afternoon and evening and it stood unused for the remainder of the time.

The project was

- o A major refurbishment of the schoolrooms, including upgrading the kitchen to catering standard and installing new WC's
- o To clear the chancel of the choir pews to provide a large performance area
- o To link the church and the schoolroom via ramps in the churchyard
- o To landscape the churchyard.

To enable

- o Existing community use to continue
- o Community care services -mental health care and day-care for the elderly, to use the refurbished schoolroom and landscaped churchyard
- o Concerts and exhibitions in the church.

What was achieved

The first Town Arts Festival held in July 2000 used the church as an exhibition and concert venue, and the church continues to be regularly used in this way. The community care services ran for three years but folded due to falling numbers and cuts in funding. After school and evening use of the schoolroom was flourishing in 2003.

By 2009 the school room was still being well used by local groups including Pilates and Physiotherapy classes and a Rangers group. Town Arts, which had its tenth anniversary this year, use office space in the school as well as using it for workshops. Ashbourne Singers use the church for rehearsals and performance.

Impact on church and community

Prior to the conversion of the church, the town had no concert or exhibition venue of any size so this has made a big difference. The wider use of the church building has made people aware of a beautiful building in their midst. The community groups, which draw people from the town and surrounding villages, continue to flourish in much pleasanter surroundings,

"there is still a good community life at St Johns"

The church membership remains the same, but it must be remembered that this is not the parish church it is "the other church" and only attracts a certain sector of the population.

Financially the church has benefited from increased rental income and easier fund raising, both of which has enabled further upgrading of the school with a new floor and all new windows.

342: A church in County Durham

Village had a population of 8,500. It was an area of social and economic decline due to the closure of the pits, with a high proportion of lone parent families and a drug problem amongst young people. Village has a Miners Welfare (now known simply as "the Welfare"), which is well used but with dated and dilapidated facilities; the pubs and clubs rent rooms. There were no indoor sports halls. There is a church hall, which is old and its relatively secluded position makes it a target for vandalism; despite this several community groups use the hall, as there is nowhere else to go. **Holy Trinity** church was built in 1877 and is a Grade II listed building.

Since 2003 new housing has replaced council housing and a retail park has been built providing 200 jobs.

The project was

- o To remove the chancel screen, choir stalls and pews to provide space for modern worship, concerts and drama
- o To convert the west end of the nave into two storey accommodation housing 3 meeting rooms, toilet and kitchen facilities.

To enable

- o Concerts
- o Mothers and Toddlers group
- o Community Action group meetings
- o Job clubs
- o Community Link, a social outreach project focused on the needs of families
- o Expansion of the work done with young people in the community through the Groundwork project to include drug awareness and contraceptive advice
- o A Play scheme
- o After school care
- o School visits for RE and History projects
- o Rehearsals of the junior Brass band.

What was achieved

By 2003 the outcome of this project in terms of community use was disappointing given the ambitious plans. About half of the planned activities had started. The reasons for the poor take-up included

- o The failure to include a lift to the first floor
- o Contemporaneous refurbishments, which took place in geographically better - placed venues in the village. Due to Coalfields money and ERDF grant available every venue was upgraded.

By 2009 none of the activities had ceased and the building was also being used for community meetings. A new venture started in September 2009 – supplementary school for children with challenging behaviour, sponsored by Civitas.

Impact on church and community

The impact of this project on the community has not been as great as was hoped but the community is now well served by good quality accommodation.

The church uses the building for Alpha courses, baptism preparation, prayer breakfasts and deanery services. The whole project has been "a blessing to the church"; it has made the church sustainable and fundraising much easier.

345: A church in Cumbria

Village is located at the heart of the Lake District. Famous person buried in the churchyard in 1900 at his own request instead of Westminster Abbey. There are many visitors to the village and to the grave. Church was consecrated in 1891 and has changed very little; it is a Grade II listed building.

The demographics of the village have changed since 2003 with more of the dwellings becoming holiday homes. With the school roll decreasing, the village is looking at affordable housing as a means to keep the village alive.

The project was

- o To create a meeting room / exhibition area under the gallery
- o To install a disabled access WC
- o To upgrade the existing kitchen.

To accommodate

- o A new display relating to famous person
- o Existing groups of users (Toddler group, church groups, community fundraising events, school projects)
- o Meetings of village organisations (Children's sports committee, Community Care scheme, Old People's Welfare group, Village Youth group)
- o Tourists and visiting musicians.

What was achieved

By 2003 the new display had been mounted and existing groups were continuing to use the church. It was being used for meetings of the Village Planning Committee, Churches Together and Christians Together. Also several exhibitions had been held in the church.

By 2009 the level of community activity had increased to include meetings of the Parish Council and a weekly Fairtrade coffee morning. The famous person display is being widened on the theme of *Heroes* to include another famous person and Christ and to link with other churches in the group.

Impact on church and community

Whilst the project was appreciated by the existing groups, attracting new users continues to be difficult as other organisations are marketing their own facilities aggressively.

The church is "more friendly" due to the toilet facilities and being able to provide refreshments after services, but the size of congregation has not grown. The new room has proved very useful for holding small services as it is much warmer than the church.

353: A church in Lincolnshire

The church is a Grade I listed building and is situated in the oldest part of the village. There has been a place of worship on this site for 1,000 years and the Church is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. A general restoration took place in the 1880.

The project was

- o To replace the current entrance lobby in the West tower to provide better disabled access
- o To install a disabled WC and a kitchen in the new lobby
- o To redecorate the church.

To enable the church to be used more effectively for

- o Social events
- o School activities
- o Concerts and drama
- o Exhibitions and Flower festivals.

What was achieved

By 2003 the church achieved exactly what it set out to do, no more, no less. Immediately following the completion of the work, the Millennium celebration and Flower festival attracted 10,000 people over 5 days to the village.

By 2009 school activities had ceased as the church is now considered too far to go. The church hosts car boot sales in the car park and serves ploughman's lunches and refreshments. This is highlighted the small size of the kitchen, which will be re-sited and enlarged when the new heating boiler is installed.

Impact on church and community

Impact on the village community is low but the facilities are appreciated by visitors to concerts and the flower festival.

Church attendance has remained the same and both Sunday school and training courses are held elsewhere in the benefice.

355: A church in Northamptonshire

A population of 1,100. There is a village hall, at the opposite end of the village to the church, the Reading room - a small room with no facilities and book-able in 2 hour blocks- the Congregational church, which is sometimes used for coffee mornings, and a pub which has no function room. **All Saints** church is a grade I listed building; it is a very wide building having a nave, north aisle, south aisle and an outer south aisle.

The project was

- o To build a new ringing floor at first floor level of the tower
- o To install a disabled access toilet in the base of the tower
- o To convert the outer South aisle into a meeting room with kitchen facility.

To provide

- o A rehearsal and concert venue
- o Exhibition space
- o School use for both curriculum and music/drama
- o For social events by elderly people.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities had been achieved.

In 2009 all of these activities were still happening plus increased use of the meeting room by non-church organisations

Impact on church and community

The new facilities have enabled the school, the WEA and meetings of elderly people to use the church.

The church attracts young families to services now that toilet facilities are available and a child-orientated service has been introduced. Financially the church has not benefited.

358: A church in Cambridgeshire

A high percentage of the economically active population travel to Cambridge to work. It is a long straggly village with a population of 3000+ and rising. The village is well served for shops; it has a doctor's surgery, a primary school, a Community Centre and a recreation ground with cricket and football pitches and tennis courts. There is a pub and a working man's club. **Holy Trinity** church is late thirteenth and fourteenth century with a major restoration in 1876 by R R Rowe, it is a Grade I listed building.

The project was

- o To provide a new meeting room with kitchen facilities in the north aisle – a “glass box” structure to avoid covering up the many monuments
- o To provide a fully disabled access WC in the base of the tower
- o To provide disabled access throughout the building.

The pews in the south aisle were subsequently removed to allow more space for the holiday club.

To enable

- o Serving refreshments at the concerts and performance events, which are held regularly
- o Meetings of community groups.

What was achieved

By 2003 the room was well used for drama and concert rehearsals, although it had proved too small for some groups. It was also the base for the village nativity play. However the most successful use of the church was been for children's holiday clubs- a use that was not originally envisaged. A youth group had also been set up.

By 2009 community activity had increased with the church being used by children's activity clubs, for the community art exhibition and for a local history day.

Impact on church and community

There has been a significant impact on the young people of the village through the Youth group and children's clubs.

Whilst congregation numbers for regular services have not increased, the current incumbent says that more families feel “attached” to the church through the children taking part in activities. There is fellowship after services and a monthly playschool service

The current vicar has plans for further re-ordering as she thinks that both the meeting room and the kitchen are too small.

361: A church in Staffordshire

A sizeable village of 4,000 people. Its position on two popular trails means that the church attracts a great number of visitors throughout the summer months. The church is listed grade I and stands on a site that has been a sacred spot since St Chad came here around AD 670. Extensive alterations to the interior took place between 1827 and 1830, followed by restoration in 1879.

The project was

- o To provide a kitchenette in the existing vestry
- o To install a disabled access WC
- o To remove the pews at the west end of the nave to provide "social space"
- o To provide storage for staging and chairs
- o To upgrade the sound system.

To enable

- o Enhanced use of the church by both performers and visitors
- o To enable wider performance and exhibition use.

What was achieved

By 2003 the wider and enhanced use of the church for concerts and exhibitions has been achieved plus school use for performance. In 2003 the church took part in Heritage Open Days, accommodating exhibitions of children's art, a display by the Civic Society and providing refreshments for visitors; the church will take part again in 2004.

By 2009 this level of activity had been sustained and school use has increased for festival services and prize-giving.

Impact on church and community

The concert going community, which includes a lot of children and families due to the high school use for concerts, greatly appreciate the refreshments served at intervals and the other facilities. The church is more sustainable due to the facilities which have encouraged fellowship, made the church financially secure and fund raising is easier. The congregation remained static.

This project was made extremely difficult by a single family, who objected to the whole concept and many details of the project, and the proposal had to go before a consistory court. The protestor is now helping to raise funds for the organ restoration.

362: A church in Lancashire

A village of 2,800 residents. It has several shops, a Church of England Primary School, two pubs and a village hall. The village hall is well used for sporting activities, leisure pursuits and entertainment; it is often difficult to book space for meetings. The church of **St Mary the Virgin** was built in the 1800's and is in good condition due to renovation and reordering over the last few years.

The project was

- o To convert the area under the gallery to create a meeting room
- o To install a kitchen.

To enable

- o Meetings off local organisations (Men's society, Youth football club, Horticultural society)
- o Parish council meetings.

What was achieved

In 2003 it was clear that the room was used for church meetings only but was used for other activities - Coffee Drop-in every Tuesday morning, "Little Angels" Mother and Toddler group (monthly), Young people's group(monthly), concert and choir practices.

By 2009 nothing had changed, no activities had ceased but no new ones had been started.

Impact on church and community

The Coffee Drop-in is much appreciated by elderly people. "Little Angels" is of benefit to mothers with young children and the youth group serves young people between the ages of 14 and 18 years.

The church finds the greatest benefit is having coffee after church once a month as people stay and chat, however there has been no increase in numbers attending services.

366: A church in Derbyshire

A population of about 5,000 and, because of its location within commuting distance of Manchester, split about 50: 50 between the stable indigenous population and the more fluid commuter population. Has two primary schools, the Mechanics Institute, used for dances and public functions, a Youth club, a Scout hut, a Sports pavilion and several hostels. **Holy Trinity** church was built around 1900 and is not listed. There was a church hall that needed considerable work; it was sold to fund this project.

The project was to create a two storey narthex at the west end of the church to accommodate

- o A ground floor meeting room
- o Kitchen
- o Disabled access WC
- o Parish office / interview room
- o Large hall at first floor level.

To accommodate the users of the church hall, namely

- o Mums and Toddlers
- o Dance classes
- o Alcoholics Anonymous
- o Brownies
- o Private parties
- o Electoral Polling station
- o Charitable organisations.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the above users were accommodated in the church except the Mums and Toddlers who found other premises with more storage for their equipment. There were other users - St John Ambulance, weekly Post-natal clinic and local organisations.

2009 sees all of the above continuing with increased use for children's parties and occasional users, such as by a photographer as a studio.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community has been positive, the users of the old church hall now have much better facilities, and the church provides a useful extra venue as demonstrated by the new users above. The old church hall has been converted into affordable dwellings. Church organisations enjoy the facilities and church attendance has remained constant.

The church is in interregnum, the second since the project was completed, so whilst the original project co-ordinator is still involved, he is now a Reader and busy just keeping the church going.

383: A church in Yorkshire

A population of 700. There is a football pitch and cricket pitch, a post office, a general store, 2 public houses and a village hall, which is situated on the outskirts of the village about ½ mile from the church. The church of **St Mary the Virgin** stands on the highest ground in the village, at the centre of the village. It dates from the 12th century and is listed Grade II.

The project was

- o To remove the rear pews at the west end of the nave to give “social space”
- o To re-site the organ from the south chapel
- o To convert the south chapel into a meeting room
- o To install a disabled access WC in the old vestry
- o To fit a kitchen in the small room adjacent to the tower.

To enable

- o Small meetings
- o Better facilities for visitors, of which there are a considerable number as the church is open every day
- o Better facilities for concert goers.

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities had happened.

In 2009 the above events still happen and the meeting room, now known as “The Chapel of the Resurrection”, is used for church meetings and the former WI, now known as the Ouseburn Ladies.

Impact on church and community

New facilities appreciated by concert goers and those who attend meetings. The meeting room is not advertised as available to all on the website but heralded as “The Chapel of the Resurrection” – which does not exactly shout “this is a community facility”!

388: A church in Derbyshire

A village of about 1,000 residents. It has a Village Hall, a school, a pub and a couple of shops. The Church of **St Laurence** is listed grade II*. The nave is Norman; the south aisle was added between 1190 and 1200. The building fell into a sad state of decay and was restored about 100 years ago under the guidance of the architect, George Edmund Street, when Frederick Fisher was Rector. Fisher's son was Rector from 1900 to 1940 and to him must be given the credit for the appearance of the church today, most of the carving in the church is his handiwork; this modern woodcarving is unique and attracts a lot of visitors.

The project was

- o To provide kitchen and toilet facilities in the vestry
- o To provide an effective heating system without which the use of the church as a meeting place is impossible.

To enable

- o Concerts (choirs, brass bands, orchestras)
- o Drama productions
- o Art exhibitions and flower festivals
- o School visits for curriculum studies by all three schools in the benefice
- o Fund raising events for charities from the villages in the benefice
- o Tourist use
- o Meetings for parents.

What was achieved

By 2003 all planned activities has happened.

2009 saw all of the above activities still continuing with the addition of cream teas for visitors in the summer months.

Impact on church and community

Prior to the work being done the church was not used as a community resource at all - it now adds value to life of the community.

The church is attracting young families to the monthly all age service and it is now the church of choice for baptisms and weddings. Since the arrival of a new husband and wife ministry team the church has made excellent use of the facilities which enable all age services with activities, such as banner making and an Easter workshop building an Easter garden. The building is used for alpha courses, Bible study and the Passover supper. Congregation numbers have increased as has the income to the church.

This church really needs a catering kitchen to fulfil its ambitions.

390: A church in Yorkshire

Village made famous by a television programme receives thousands of visitors every year. **Holy Trinity** church is a Grade II listed building. Its architecture is typical of this area and it looks more like a mill than a church. The converted gallery of the church is already used by the Mother and Toddler group, the National Childbirth Council and the Choral Society. An ecumenical youth project was been piloted in the village; this project was in response to the wishes of those young people for a drop-in centre.

The project was

- o To re-wire to put in a three-phase electricity supply
- o To convert the choir vestry into a cybercafé
- o To replace the WC with a fully disabled access WC
- o To provide a discrete, "disabled friendly" access from the street.

To provide

- o A much needed social centre for young people
- o A place to meet informally to chat
- o Access the Internet
- o Advice on drugs, contraception, alcohol and relationships.

What was achieved

By 2003 the project had achieved its aims but not without a lot of hard work. The computers and software had been donated and were not "state of the art", once they were upgraded the project had more impact. There were problems initially getting the trust of young people and overcoming the stigma attached to being a Christian organisation - this was the most difficult hurdle to overcome. Initially it was difficult to attract adult volunteers but by 2003 there are 5 volunteers and 2 paid part-time staff due to interest and support of local government and other funders.

By 2009 the project had broken away from the church and become a registered charity. The room has been further developed to provide a mezzanine floor. Café 100 continues to be successful and well used.

Impact on church and community

The project was designed to be accessed directly from the street with its own entrance. By keeping its distance from the church it has been successful and is seen totally as a community project, well supported by the community and statutory funders.

Café 100 has no impact on the church at all. There are plans to get a new member of the ministry team linking in with Café 100 to provide some Christian input.

397: A church in Rutland

A small village with a population of 600. It has a village sports centre, which accommodates indoor bowls and archery with cricket, football, tennis and bowls out of doors; the hall is also used for annual dinners. There is a pub but no school. The church of **St Mary the Virgin** is most imposing with a very tall tower; there has been a church here since Norman times. In 1897 the church was restored; it is listed Grade I.

The project was

- o To install a kitchen and fully disabled access WC in the old vestry at the west end of the north aisle; this aisle had already been reordered with chairs replacing the fixed pews.

In 2008 the heating system was replaced and half of the pews removed giving a much more useable building.

To enable

- o Concerts, performance and rehearsals
- o Children's activity days and holiday clubs
- o Tourism to the church and village
- o Teas on open days, flower festivals and during the annual village open gardens scheme

What was achieved

By 2003 all of the planned activities have happened except for the holiday club. Tourism has increased now that the church is open every day. Funeral teas are provided in church.

In 2009 it is reported that concerts and performance happen 1-2 per month, the open church continues to attract tourists and teas are provided weekly during the summer months.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities have made a big difference to concert goers and to the many visitors to the church.

By 2003 a Sunday School for the under 10's had been started – this has now ceased due to the lack of children - plus a Family service once a month; these changes led to an increased congregation.

In 2009 the '4ALL' service is held monthly and now includes much more outreach to families and is followed by refreshments.

399: A church in Sussex

A small village with a population of about 750, is situated near a famous castle and hence there are a lot of visitors to the parish church. **St John the Baptist** church, which is listed grade II*, was built in 1859 and is a fine example of restrained Gothic architecture. By the early 1980's the church was in such a severe state of decay that a restoration scheme, scheduled to run from 1987 to 2010, was drawn up and swiftly put into action after the 1987 hurricane damage. This project was stage 5, facilities to enable the wider community use of the church.

The project was

- o To enlarge and convert the vestry into a vestry / small meeting room
- o To install a kitchenette and disabled access WC
- o To create a multi-purpose "social space" in the north aisle and across the west end of the nave by moving the pews.

To enable

- o Used for clubs, meetings, concerts, and exhibitions
- o Better facilities for tourists to the area.

What was achieved

The 2003 review reported that all planned activities were achieved.

By 2009 use of the church by local clubs had ceased, they all use the Village Hall. The major use of the facilities is for fundraising events (about 10/year) for the church to complete the restoration programme.

Impact on church and community

There is limited impact on the local community although concert goers and people who attend exhibitions benefit from the facilities.

The project was conceived under the leadership of a dynamic vicar, under whose leadership congregation numbers had increased. By 2003 she had been promoted and replaced by a NSM (non-stipendiary minister); the congregation had dwindled.

By 2009 Family service has become a monthly fixture and refreshments are served afterwards.

The biggest impact of the project to the church appears to be making fundraising events easier.

Poor design and quality of kitchen units make this project less than perfect.

Appendix B: Results in tabular format

Appendix C: Questionnaire