

A REVIEW OF
THE RURAL CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE
PROGRAMME



(Interior of a church in North Yorkshire)

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A REVIEW OF THE RURAL CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMME



(The extension at a church in East Sussex)

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1. SUMMARY

- ❖ 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. The scope of this review is limited to projects developed *within* Anglican churches in England.
- ❖ 66 projects have been reviewed. The study looked at the success of the community projects against their original aims, to establish who has benefited from the new facilities, what is the impact on the church congregation, how had the church finances been affected and what lessons can be learned from these projects.
- ❖ The results are very encouraging. 92% of the churches reviewed are successfully running community activities. 79% of the churches report a positive effect on the congregation. There is a lot of good practice to be gleaned from these projects that should be used to inform potential community project developers.
- ❖ Where loans were taken out to fund the capital development, only one church reported a problem in repaying the outstanding amount, with most loans either repaid or being repaid to the agreed schedule. Very little regular giving was diverted during the fundraising stage of the project and several churches reported increased regular giving following the completion of their new facilities.
- ❖ The study has highlighted some of the problems within the Church of England and the effect on parishes who are trying to develop community projects. The study shows just how much clergy move around with 63% of the parishes reviewed having been in interregnum since the completion of their building works; it also paints a very clear picture of the strain placed upon very small parishes during interregnums.
- ❖ Various personnel issues have emerged through the implementation of community projects, underlining the importance of getting the right people at all levels. Whilst good facilities are important, able people working in harmony are equally important to the success of community projects.
- ❖ The RCCS programme was very successful with most projects meeting their aims and some achieving far more than planned. It demonstrates that churches are quite capable of managing sizeable capital developments, that many churches are very outward looking and that the church and the wider community *can* work in partnership to add value to community life and to individual lives within the community.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Rural Churches in Community Service Limited

In 1997 the National Rural Officer of the Church of England, the Reverend Jeremy Martineau, along with the Church and Community Trust (now Living Stones), applied to the Millennium Commission for funding of £12.5m to enable rural churches to convert their buildings for community use in addition to worship. In November 1997 the **Millennium Commission gave conditional approval for a grant of £2.5million** to convert 100 church buildings. 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 demonstrating 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.

Rural Churches in Community Service Limited (RCCS) was set up to distribute and manage the Millennium Commission funding. RCCS was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in April 1998 and achieved Charity Registration in August 1998.

2.2 The RCCS remit from the Millennium Commission

The remit given to RCCS by the Millennium Commission 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 insisted that 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.

The invitation to apply closed at the end of September 1998 by which time 400 applications for funding had been received. Some of the applications did not meet the criteria agreed with the Millennium Commission and were rejected. Others were doubtful that they could complete within the deadline of December 2000 and did not go ahead as part of the RCCS programme.

By the end of 2000 a total of 99 projects reached completion. The community activities accommodated include

- ❖ Mother and Toddler groups
- ❖ Playgroups
- ❖ After school clubs
- ❖ Holiday clubs
- ❖ Youth drop-ins
- ❖ Cybercafés
- ❖ Drop-ins for elderly people
- ❖ Luncheon clubs
- ❖ Day care centres (for frail elderly people)
- ❖ Afternoon teas for visitors / tourists
- ❖ Alcoholics Anonymous and other self help groups
- ❖ Employment and training advice
- ❖ Vocational training
- ❖ Non-vocational training
- ❖ School use for curriculum studies, music, performance, PE
- ❖ By local interest groups of every kind
- ❖ For concerts and drama
- ❖ As rehearsal space for musical societies and brass bands
- ❖ For art exhibitions
- ❖ For quiet days
- ❖ To provide a "Meals on Wheels" service
- ❖ As a tourist resource.

2.3 The RCCS Process

It is worth looking at the RCCS application process as the adherence (or otherwise) to it affected the success of some projects.

Following the submission of an outline application (2 pages of A4) or an exploratory telephone call, a full application form was sent to potential applicants. Any obvious "no hopers" (repairs following a quinquennial inspection, restoration of works of art, no community use etc) were weeded out at this stage.

The application form attempted to establish

- ❖ That this church was sustainable in its own right for at least the next 10 years
- ❖ The need for the project (i.e. that a desire / need existed within the community for the proposed activities that this church was going to support)
- ❖ What other facilities exist in the locality (e.g. village hall, school hall, WI hut etc) and the effect of the proposals on them
- ❖ How the proposal would increase the use of the church by visitors and the community
- ❖ The applicant's fundraising strategy

- ❖ The feasibility of the proposal as a building project (sensitivity of design, functionality, sustainability, value for money)

In addition to the questions on the application form, the following evidence was required

- ❖ Plans and drawings of the proposal
- ❖ Documentation of funds already raised (e.g. bank statements)
- ❖ Letter from the Church Council detailing
 - Financial contribution
 - Statement of support for the project
 - Statement of willingness to accept Lottery funding
- ❖ Evidence of partnership funding
- ❖ Copies of any contracts already entered into
- ❖ Letter from the regional church authority (e.g. diocese) confirming sustainability
- ❖ Documentation of community support (both potential users and "competitor" venues)
- ❖ Documentation of structural soundness
- ❖ Copy of relevant planning permissions
- ❖ Full accounts of last 2 years
- ❖ Any other relevant letters or documents (e.g. guidebooks, leaflets)
- ❖ Photographs of the church
- ❖ Any Tenders and Estimates.

Many of the questions arising from a completed application form were dealt with over the 'phone and, if a proposal appeared to meet the criteria, a visit to the applicant was undertaken. The purpose of the visit was to check that

- ❖ The building was as it appeared from the photographs submitted
- ❖ The capability to manage the proposed project existed within the project group
- ❖ Talks had been held / were planned with all relevant parties (DAC or equivalent, English Heritage, the amenity societies, "competitors" (e.g. Village Hall Management committee)
- ❖ A needs survey of some description had been undertaken
- ❖ The funding strategy was suitable to raise the outstanding funding in the time available
- ❖ The applicant understood the conditions of the grant (acknowledgement of Millennium Commission on site boards, installation of Millennium Commission plaque etc).

Following the visit, the application form plus attachments and the visit report were presented to the RCCS Board and the Design Quality Panel (DQP) for their decision as to whether this was a project worthy of support and likely to succeed. Only after agreement from both Board and DQP had been received were applications recommended to the Millennium Commission for funding.

It should be noted that the DQP was set up as a requirement of the contract with the Millennium Commission. The role of the DQP was to ensure that all projects were

sensitive adaptations of heritage buildings and comprised of architects, surveyors and historians, all of whom were experts on heritage buildings and on churches in particular. The DQP involvement not only questioned some of the less sensitive proposals but also made suggestions for better design from aesthetic, practical and value for money viewpoints. Although the DQP involvement slowed down the process for some projects, many projects were better for their involvement and, in some cases, smoothed the way with the amenity societies and English Heritage.

Given the in-depth appraisal of the RCCS process, very few of the recommendations for funding were turned down by the Millennium Commission. Those that were rejected were on the grounds of insufficient impact on the community or the Millennium Commission grant being only a small percentage of the total project cost (the Millennium Commission liked to be the major grant giver!).

With this level of scrutiny it is difficult to believe that some proposals went through the whole process and the Millennium Commission conditionally approved grant aid but still the projects did not go ahead. The main reasons for this were

- ❖ Faculties not being given
- ❖ The remainder of the funding not being available
- ❖ The likelihood of the project not being able to meet the Millennium Commission deadline for completion (31 December 2000).

2.4 The remit of this review

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

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

From this data to report any common themes or patterns, causes of success and failure and what lessons can be learned from this exercise.

3. REVIEW FEEDBACK

There were 70 projects that met the following criteria:

- ❖ Developments within church buildings
- ❖ Anglican churches
- ❖ Located in England.

All 70 projects were contacted by letter in December 2003 and, after many telephone calls, contact was established with 66; each project has been written up in Appendix A. For ease of data handling the projects have retained the numbers originally allocated for the RCCS programme. The feedback has been presented under the following categories:

- ❖ The application process
- ❖ Consistory Courts
- ❖ Developing the design
- ❖ Design problems
- ❖ Getting community activities up and running
- ❖ What makes a successful project
- ❖ What does NOT work
- ❖ When a leader leaves
- ❖ Impact on the church

The feedback is drawn together in *Section 4: Lessons learned* as to guide to good practice.

3.1 The Application Process

Several Project Co-ordinators admitted to feeling under a lot of pressure due to the Millennium Commission funding being time limited. Parishes had to turn round planning permissions (ecclesiastical and, in some cases, secular) far more quickly than they would normally have done. The author noted that there was a general reluctance to be assertive with the diocese and other bodies, such as English Heritage, as parishes felt it would affect long term relationships. Also getting the matched funding together quickly presented some parishes with difficulties.

In discussing this with one Rural dean, he made the point that because the funding was only available for a short time parishes were galvanised into action and achieved projects that would otherwise have dragged on for years. He regarded time limited funding as a way to make things happen. The author agrees with this view and has experienced the same reaction to government funded urban regeneration schemes.

A few applicants felt that their designs would have been better had more time been given.

(See projects O14, 148, 177, 318, 399)

3.2 Consistory Courts

Two of the projects were subject to hearings at Consistory Courts. Although both had positive outcomes, they are included here because of the different way in which they were handled by their respective dioceses.

A church in Yorkshire reported their experience as a very positive one; it allowed the vicar to distance himself from the objectors, who felt that they were given a fair hearing. Although the objectors lost, the hearing "cleared the air", the objectors accepted the verdict and have remained active members of the church; the diocese paid the legal fees.

A church in Staffordshire found that although the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches) supported the overall concept and the parish "won", they had to amend their design *and* find £25,000 for the legal fees. The objector has since left the church. It has taken this church 3 years to get their finances back on an even keel. This parish believes that they did the right thing - they believed wholeheartedly in the concept of the project and would not be deflected from their course of action by even the most vociferous objector. Would they have felt the same if they had lost their case? Could a smaller, less wealthy church have risked this action?

(See projects 021, 361)

3.3 Developing the design

One group felt that they would have been helped if they had had an "expert" on their team; the vicar, who had no building expertise, dealt with the architects alone and the group felt that he agreed to things rather than show his ignorance.

Two parishes felt that they had benefited from the insistence of their respective DAC's to think beyond this project to future developments and to design for possible expansion in the future. At the time, both parishes thought that this was unnecessary but agreed to it in order to get a faculty. In both cases a phase II, upper storey, is now being considered and is possible because, in each case, the "ceilings" were built as load bearing structures.

(See projects 098, 207, 320)

3.4 Design Problems

The most frequently cited problems are:

- ❖ Insufficient storage space
- ❖ Insufficient space for activities
- ❖ Inadequate heating systems

3.4.1 Insufficient storage space

Most of the projects under review used space *within* the church building. Indeed, in many cases, re-ordering meant extensive clearing of dark corners, hidey-holes and assorted flower arrangers' stores to provide the space necessary for the new facilities.

New activities bring with them a storage requirement; the more successful the project, the bigger the storage requirement and the flower arrangers still want their own space! Unfortunately this problem has got so acute that some users have had to move elsewhere.

(See projects 068, 154, 286, 318, 366)

3.4.2 Insufficient space for activities

Where the space for activities has been found insufficient, it is due to either the success of the project or where the activities have evolved since conception. In some cases this shortage has been resolved by using parts of the church that were not originally included in the scheme – for example, clearing another aisle of pews or moving large meetings from meeting rooms into the nave of the church.

(See projects 147, 152, 181, 284, 286, 306, 355, 358, 390)

3.4.3 Inadequate heating

Many churches suffer from inadequate heating but the congregation puts up with this for worship – like cleanliness, coldness appears to be next to godliness in some people's minds! However, some parishes seemed to overlook the difference between an hour's worship with plenty of hearty singing and the use of the same accommodation for meetings of several hours' duration or for children's activities. Cold premises are not acceptable to the wider public especially if they are paying £5 per hour for the pleasure! Several parishes have already addressed this problem.

(See projects 014, 126, 152, 181, 286, 366, 367, 379, 386)

3.4.4 Other design problems

"One-off" design problems include

- ❖ In order to get the Millennium Commission funding, one church applied for funding for re-ordering only, but the increased activity has highlighted the need for re-wiring, new lighting and re-flooring.
- ❖ Inadequate electrical supply has been reported as a problem.
- ❖ One church, which underwent a major re-ordering, reports that the hall, previously the nave, is now "a bit too beautiful" and limits the sort of activities held there – no uniformed or energetic youth organisations! Interestingly the RCCS Design Quality Panel (DQP) remarked on the durability of their design for youth work right from the outset.
- ❖ A church that wanted to have a teenager "den" in the bell tower were unable to proceed as the bell ropes were considered to be a safety hazard.

(See projects 035, 068, 329, 399)

3.5 Getting community activities up and running

The publication *Open All Hours*¹ stresses the importance of developing a management team to run the “community resource” at the same time as the building project is being planned and certainly no later than during the construction phase. If this is not done, the re-ordering can be completed but there are no community activities ready to run. This has been a problem for several parishes.

3.5.1 Developing leaders

When there are very few people involved in the project, the “Building project” is given priority over developing leaders to take the “Community project” forward. If leaders have not been developed, it is difficult to get community activities running as soon as the facilities are available.

(See project O17)

3.5.2 Developing volunteers for youth work

Two parishes have reported problems around volunteers for youth work relating to the need for CRB² clearance in order to work with children. One parish stated that potential volunteers feel a need for a trial period to establish that this work is for them *before* making a commitment, but even this requires clearance to be gained first. Another parish is waiting for the diocesan policy to be agreed.

This is not a problem peculiar to church projects but one that is affecting the whole voluntary sector where children, young people and vulnerable adults are involved.

(See projects O17, 154)

3.5.3 Developments during interregnums

In very small parishes, populations of less than 300, an interregnum during *any* phase of a project, including immediately after the construction phase, can make things very difficult. An interregnum places a great burden on the PCC, who probably form a large part of the project “team”. Remove the PCC from the project and the depleted pool of volunteers is a very small number of people to take things forward. Although this problem is particularly acute in very small parishes, interregnums have had the same effect on larger parishes.

(See projects 195, 233, 345, 379, 387)

Nonetheless there are examples of projects being developed successfully during an interregnum. These are where there is a strong PCC and volunteers drawn from both church and community. Unfortunately not all of these projects have continued to be successful when a new incumbent has been appointed – this is discussed in more detail under “*Change of leader*”, paragraph 3.8.

(See projects O27, 181, 314)

¹ *Open All Hours - A way forward for Church buildings in the 21st century*, by S Rowe, published by ACORA

² Criminal Records Bureau

Ensuring that the Management team draws from both church and community would help most of the above problems. This gives a wider pool of people, wider skill base and more "useful contacts" but the author acknowledges the special problems faced by very small parishes.

3.5.4 Developing partnerships with other organisations

Very few projects have actually entered into partnerships with other organisations. Where this has happened, the church has found that it has required more work than anticipated. Working with providers of adult education means that projects suffer from the constraints placed upon those organisations – the necessity to meet minimum numbers for courses and the ever-changing priorities of central government funded training. Ensuring the minimum number for a course can be a real problem in a remote small rural parish. The changing priorities of central government funding means that whilst your location may make you "flavour of the month" for the duration of one training course, altered priorities can mean that you cannot achieve an on-going supply of training courses without changing supplier, this in turn makes a lot of work for those trying to arrange courses.

(See projects O21, O35, O85)

The problems experienced with adult education, do not appear to affect schools that are regularly using church premises, long term agreements have been made and are working. An excellent example of this is a church in Yorkshire, which uses the church as its school hall – assemblies, music, PE, dance and drama. When a fire rendered one classroom unusable, that class was moved into church until repair work was completed – a church providing a real community service.

(See project O98)

A church in Lincolnshire developed their project in partnership with the Methodist church; the Methodist church sold their building to part fund the re-ordering of the Anglican church. The church supports both Anglican and Methodist services and the community project has the support of the whole village.

(See project O67)

3.5.5 Recruiting staff

One church in Cumbria recruited two members of staff, one to run the Centre and one to run the Community café. As both were recruited from the catering industry, the centre management committee felt that the staff were well qualified to make the decisions regarding equipping the kitchen and café. Unfortunately these people had not understood "the vision" – they thought that they were setting up a commercial operation to make money whilst "the vision" was to provide good, nutritious food at an affordable price. The equipment ordered bankrupted the project and the knee jerk reaction of the management committee was to sack both members of staff. Luckily, due to outside intervention, both finance and personnel issues were resolved. This incident demonstrated two big weaknesses:

- ❖ The failure to communicate “the vision” to people who had become involved in the project at a very late stage compared to the management committee
- ❖ The need to direct staff, however competent that they may seem
- ❖ The need to have someone available with knowledge of Employment law if the project becomes an employer.

(See project 284)

3.6 What makes a successful project

3.6.1 Good research

Whether the research was carried out formally through a Parish Appraisal or just through good local knowledge, where there was a clearly defined need and a project was developed in response to it, then there is usually success.

Particularly good examples are:

- ❖ The project to accommodate school use in Yorkshire , described in paragraph 3.5.4
- ❖ A parish in Hertfordshire, where the project was the response to a village consultation undertaken by the church
- ❖ A project in an Essex parish, which has several care homes for the elderly. These elderly people had no contact with the local community until the church started entertaining them at regular social events run by local volunteers.
- ❖ A deprived Cumbrian village, which had lost both its employment and its spirit, has been brought back to life through the community café set up in the church.

(See projects 065, 068, 098, 126, 150, 154, 156, 177, 182, 184, 207, 279, 284, 337, 390)

Research should also include checking out the “competition”. Where another community venue exists, for example, a Village hall, then the church must talk to the Village Hall management groups about their plans. If possible the church must aim to complement what exists in terms of both usage and charging. This should not be a “one-off” discussion during the church’s planning stage but an on-going dialogue when the new facility running to ensure the survival of both venues and fairness in hire charges. One church in Essex and another in Yorkshire have found on-going dialogue a very useful way to keep good relationships.

(See projects 035, 228)

However there are other examples where the research was undertaken but other developments have happened in “the outside world”. Examples of this include

- ❖ A parish near York where the old school building was scheduled for closure and the church was going to accommodate all of the organisations, which met in the old school. The old school was not closed but let out at a peppercorn rent so the organisations using it did not move out. From a community viewpoint this was a good thing, from the church viewpoint it meant that the church was underused for community activities.

- ❖ Since the completion of the project in one Worcestershire church, a new Village Hall has been built (using a massive grant from the Millennium Commission). Whilst some of the activities planned for the church have subsequently moved to the new hall, some of the organisations which met in the old Village Hall have moved into the church. The community has gained through having two complementary venues and the relationship between the Village Hall and church management teams remains good.
- ❖ A church in a very deprived part of County Durham has suffered a drop in the use of their community facilities due to contemporaneous refurbishments that took place in geographically better placed venues.

(See projects 306, 318, 342, 345)

3.6.2 Strong management

The projects with good management committees have a higher chance of success than those where the "leadership" falls on one person. However capable, hard working and charismatic that person is, if he or she leaves then the whole project could come tumbling down. A significant number of the projects reviewed are in churches that have been through an interregnum since the project has been completed. Where community projects have had good management committees they have not suffered, especially where a good proportion of the committee members are "community" rather than "church", because the former are not drawn into the problems of interregnum.

(See projects 040, 065, 067, 068, 098, 150, 177, 181, 184, 284, 334, 366, 367, 390)

There are some projects which were originally lead by one very able leader (clergy or lay) but the success of the venture has encouraged new leaders to emerge and to get involved in the management of the project.

(See projects 126, 284, 307, 334)

3.6.3 Flexibility

As already stated, the "outside world" does not stop changing just because a church is developing a community project. Other facilities may be developed in competition to those being provided by the church or there could be changes in the population, both in numbers and demography, which render a needs analysis useless. Some churches have admitted that they just got it wrong – the planned activities did not attract the expected support. Whatever the reasons, there is a need to rethink. This could mean a re-assessment of need, it could mean negotiation with the competitors but it definitely needs action.

Good examples of flexibility and a willingness to change are

- ❖ When a community project in Wiltshire discovered that an estate of 1,000 dwellings was about to be built and that the development included a new community hall, the management committee made itself known to the estate developers. The management committees of the church project and the community hall are now meeting regularly to ensure that the two facilities complement each other.

- ❖ When a project in Cumbria found that IT classes were being held elsewhere in the village, they did not implement the IT training proposed in their plan so as not to jeopardise the success of the training project.
- ❖ Although the original plan did not include Pre- and After-school clubs, when approached by local parents a church in Yorkshire accommodated them - 5 days per week- and this turned out to be the most successful use of the building.

(See projects 068, 284, 318, 331, 358)

3.6.4 The bigger the need, the more successful the project

There is no doubt that in areas of greater social need a community project stands a good chance of success - as long as it is based on good research, has strong management and is prepared to change. Whereas it is difficult to make such a big impact in a reasonably affluent area where people can afford to travel and therefore have more choice. There are some examples of very ambitious projects in deprived areas and these are worthy of the reader's attention.

(See projects 126, 177, 284)

However it should be noted that in some deprived areas the opposite can happen. High impact can be lost if suddenly there is so much help (e.g. ERDF³ and central government funded regeneration programmes) that each individual project may be unable to fulfil its potential.

(See project 342)

3.6.5 Success begets success - the "can do" attitude

Coping with "the process" and successfully completing a building project - often in less time than previously thought possible - often gives rise to a wonderful "can do" attitude which has led many groups into an enhancement or phase II project. In 2002 the Millennium Commission contacted every RCCS project and invited them to apply for "Enhancement funding", at least 8 projects have successfully applied for this funding. Several churches are planning further enhancements even where the work is not eligible for the Millennium Commission enhancement grants.

But the "can do" attitude stretches far wider than building enhancements and has shown itself in many different ways

- ❖ A successful community project at one church may well inspire another church in the locality, many of the RCCS projects are used as "show projects"
- ❖ Success in applying for capital funding has encouraged some churches to apply for revenue funding for posts and smaller amounts of funding for specific items, in one case instruments to enable a youth music group to be set up
- ❖ One village in Lincolnshire is now undertaking a community heritage project to restore the Village Well

³ European Regional Development Fund

- ❖ A community project in Yorkshire wanted a footpath along a dark and busy country road so they formed an Action group from the users of the community project, raised some funding and achieved their path
- ❖ One Lincolnshire church used their re-ordered church for a Medieval banquet organised by local residents to raise money for urgent roof repairs
- ❖ A church in County Durham undertook a restoration / renewal window project including a new commemorative window for Workers International Day in April 2003 paid for by the congregation.
- ❖ Due to the publicity that surrounded their project, tourism to a church in Lancashire has increased significantly. This has encouraged some of the management group to undertake tourism training to provide a better service
- ❖ Several groups have simply stated that they have more confidence to deal with their interregnum

(See projects 014, 017, 040, 043, 065, 067, 126, 181, 182, 207, 284, 307, 317, 320, 334, 355, 358, 367, 379, 386)

3.6.6 Advertising pays

It is surprising how few churches have actually advertised the availability of community facilities in their church. However those who have advertised have had a good response. Different approaches include

- ❖ One church in Kent advertised in all of the parish magazines over quite a large area
- ❖ A church in Derbyshire with a main road frontage put a large advertisement on their notice board and now have users that they would never have thought to approach
- ❖ One church near Lancaster asked members of the congregation whether their employers would be interested in hiring rooms; Lancashire Police, Lancaster University and the National Trust now use their community facility. This church also advertised via the diocesan mailing and, as a result, host a number of diocesan and deanery meetings and meetings from other parishes.

(See projects 207, 279, 366)

3.6.7 A good booking system/ secretary

This seems such a basic requirement of a good project but it is mentioned because it *is* such a basic requirement, one that can make or break a project. The problem surrounding bookings was raised by a project that has kept the same bookings secretary despite a big increase in bookings since the move from dilapidated church hall to beautifully re-ordered church, which attracts wedding receptions, dinners etc. This person really is not up to the job and is giving this group problems.

With community facilities that attract many and varied bookings, formalised terms and conditions are essential and there should be transparency around hiring charges in particular. One church reports "Problems have been in learning to dovetail business acumen with the perceived 'rights' of the church and the community"

Where the bookings are low, in the absence of a formal booking system it is necessary to have one person as the named contact. One church that has one user every weekday – the local school – has not experienced problems with mid-week funerals because communication is excellent between the church and school.

(See projects 068, 098)

3.7 What does NOT succeed

It is no good developing a good community resource and expecting people to just turn up to use it – they don't!

There are many reasons why projects do not succeed.

3.7.1 Lack of communication with the wider community

Non-church goers need to know that something is going on – this is best done right at the beginning, at the appraisal / consultation stage. If the church tells the wider community of their plans right at the beginning, the wider community can inform the research, help raise money and join the management committee. In this way the resultant project is likely to be better (see paragraph 3.6.1) and grant funding is easier to obtain if it can be shown that the project is not solely a "church project" but has the involvement of "the community". The wider community should include the parish council and any agencies with which it may wish to have as partners (e.g. adult education, primary health providers, local school).

In a similar vein, tourism does not increase just because a church now has good facilities for tourists; the church must promote what it can offer.

(See projects 152, 334)

3.7.2 Lack of communication with the "competitors"

Where another community venue exists – Village hall, WI hut, Scout HQ – then the church must talk to their management groups about their plans and iron out any wrinkles before they become big problems.

Even when there is communication with existing venues it is not always successful. One church in Yorkshire discussed their plans in detail with the management committee of their Village Hall and no problems were raised. The Parish Council meetings moved into church but were then under pressure from the Village Hall who had lost that income.

(See project 383)

When the community use of churches is first discussed, the author suspects that many Village Hall management committees would see no threat of competition, viewing the church as a cold and dark place without any facilities. When the church has facilities to rival or surpass those of the Village Hall there *will* be defections.

3.7.3 Lack of explanation about Church hall replacements

Despite the fact that a church hall, although owned by the church, has been used by the whole village for as long as anyone can remember, non-church members may need reassurance that the community facility in the church will still be available to community groups before they will support the venture.

(See project 068)

3.7.4 Expecting everyone to accept this "new fangled idea"

Churches are more likely to get objections to re-ordering projects from non-churchgoers than from the regular congregation. Objections range from "you can't take the pews out" through to "the use of the church for secular purposes is a profanation of a sacred building". The church must be prepared for this and prepared to explain why it is acceptable in the eyes of the Lord.

(See project 383)

3.7.5 Relying heavily on one person for specialist expertise

In paragraph 3.6.2 emphasis was placed on the need for strong management which involved both church and community people. A similar problem has been reported by projects, where the development of a major part of the community project was in the hands (or the head) of one person, who left the area. In neither case was the work developed because the expertise required was specialised.

- ❖ A church in Nottinghamshire had the development of "a Parenting group, Counselling facility, Cancer Care and other health / social service use " as a major part of their community project. This was being promoted by the vicar's wife who was a health professional. The vicar moved taking his wife with him and no one else knew enough to progress this.
- ❖ A group near York had great plans for a participative Arts programme but the lady who was championing the idea, an Arts educationalist, moved and no-one else felt that they had the skills or the contacts to take the proposal forward.

Whilst there will always be people wishing to pursue their own professional interests through community projects; that in itself is not a bad thing, especially when there is a proven need. However the management group should insist on things being written down and shared with others to prevent the whole thing falling apart if the "professional" leaves.

(See projects 040, 306)

3.8 When a leader leaves

Of the projects reviewed, 63% had been through or were currently in interregnum. Whilst the problems of interregnum have been touched upon already, the feedback covers such a wide range of different experiences that this subject warrants its own section.

The good news is that the majority of parishes have been through an interregnum with no detrimental effect to the community project and little effect on the congregation. In every case this is because the community project had a strong management committee

with enough members to ensure that there were people who were not also involved in getting the church through the interregnum.

(See projects 040, 065, 067, 068, 126, 149, 150, 154, 181, 182, 196, 207, 279, 284, 307, 310, 320, 334, 353, 358, 361, 366, 367, 388)

Others, especially in very small villages, found that everyone involved in the management of the community project were also involved in keeping the church going and so the community activities were shelved for the duration of the interregnum.

(See projects 195, 233, 387, 399)

Given that 65 projects have been reviewed, it would be unrealistic to expect every project to be a success story, there are 3 Projects that have failed as community projects and 2 others that have not achieved their potential. All of these projects have the same problem - a change of incumbent.

- ❖ One project in Northamptonshire was conceived by the vicar, who died unexpectedly, and developed by the PCC and other members of the church during the long interregnum. Not only did this group develop the project, the congregation increased in numbers over this period. The new incumbent appeared to be supportive of community use at his interview but immediately upon taking post he, in effect, dismissed the project team in a very insensitive way. The "team" left this church, the Project Co-ordinator has left the Church altogether and the community activities have never been developed.
- ❖ In Gloucestershire a change of incumbent brought with it a different view of doctrine which has upset so many people that all of the team, who nursed this difficult building project to completion, have left this church and there is no-one who wishes to develop the community use.
- ❖ A church in Cambridgeshire has never used its community facilities for the community because the Project Co-ordinator was asked to resign from her post as Churchwarden as soon as the new incumbent arrived at the end of the construction phase of the project. Because the Project Co-ordinator had been a "one woman band" there was no one to take the community project forward.
- ❖ A project in Suffolk was planned during an interregnum and was under construction when the new incumbent arrived. After a promising start it appears that the incumbent is in the wrong job in the wrong place, which is having a negative effect on the church members, which in turn is affecting the community activities.
- ❖ A project in Cumbria was still under construction when the incumbent left. Although the new facilities are used by the handful of organisations that already met in the church, the proposed activities have not been developed. The respondent stated "It was his (the departed incumbent) vision, the new vicar has different interests".

(See projects 027, 153, 203, 314, 345)

All of these cases illustrate how careful parishes must be when choosing a new incumbent and how the wrong choice can be disastrous, not just for the community project but for the congregation.

In all of the above cases the PCC recruited the incumbent. In a few cases the incumbent leaving has been followed by a reorganisation into an existing ministry team and so there was no choice, churches just got who was available. For two churches this has been difficult because the new person does not share "the vision".

(See projects O98, 181,184)

3.9 Impact on the church

Of the projects reviewed 79% said that the new facilities had had a positive impact on the church. With one exception (see project 331) even where congregations may not have grown, they have not declined and churches are keeping elderly people who would probably have stopped attending church had not toilet facilities been available. In many cases the number of babies and children attending church has increased significantly. This may appear to be a conundrum that none has been lost, more youngsters are attending but numbers remain the same – children are not counted in the attendance returns in most churches!

3.9.1 Increased congregations

There are churches reporting increased congregations. In small villages where there has been no housing development the size of the congregation is unlikely to increase. In a village of 200 people with a regular congregation of 12, an increase of 3 is reported as "about the same" and the author has resisted the temptation of reporting, journalistically, of increases of 25%!

(See projects O65, O68, O75, 126, 147, 148, 152, 317, 318, 320, 367, 379, 383, 397)

3.9.2 Increased number of families with toddlers

Where a Mother and Toddler group has been set up in church, the number of children and families attending church has increased. Although the same facilities that have enabled the Mother and Toddler group have also made the church an easier place to bring children, the feedback tends to suggest that the "new" families would not have attended church services without an introduction to the church through the community activity.

Interestingly one church proposed a Toddler group but found that it was not feasible due to limited storage space. The Toddler group did not go ahead but the parents who had been involved in the discussions started coming to church with their children.

(See projects O21, O43,126,149, 150,154, 156, 182, 310, 355, 388)

3.9.3 Increased number of families through links with schools

With the availability of toilet facilities many churches are being visited by schools, which is good. However just letting the school use the church for curriculum studies or even

for special services is not enough to get children attending church services. A few churches have increased the attendance by school age children and their parents by forging strong links with the local school. Where churches have undertaken sustained outreach work in schools or where the school use of the church is high then families have come to church.

(See projects 014, 021, 067, 098, 184, 196)

3.9.4 Extra services linked to community events

A couple of churches have held extra services to link with community events.

- ❖ One church in Yorkshire celebrated an Arts weekend with a "Songs of Praise" service.
- ❖ A Worcestershire church has run activities for young people on the morning of Good Friday linked to the service at midday.

(See projects 021, 318)

3.9.5 More special services

Two churches have become a "church of choice" for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Both are attractive churches in their own right but it is felt that it is the facilities that they offer that makes them popular.

(See projects 156, 388)

3.9.6 Increased use because of improved environment

Several churches have reported increases in both the regular congregation and for quiet prayer attributable to the church "just being a nice place to be in"

(See projects 075, 147, 148, 310, 320)

3.9.7 Savings on overhead costs

Where community activities have been moved out of a church hall and into church there was an initial cash gain which was ploughed into the re-ordering costs. One church reported the ongoing benefit of reduced costs on things like insurance.

(See project 273)

3.9.10 Easier to raise money for church repairs

Community use increases the "user base" of the church, which means more people with a vested interest in keeping the building up to scratch and more people to raise money for repairs. When a church in Lincolnshire needed urgent repairs to the roof, the local residents organised a Medieval banquet in the re-ordered church to raise the money. Although there is only one example to report it must be borne in mind that a condition of grant aid was that the church building was in a state of good repair.

(See project 065)

3.9.11 Ease of attracting new incumbents

One Rural dean reported that in his deanery a church that is in interregnum, but was significantly re-ordered through the RCCS programme, is attracting more applicants than expected. He feels that this is because of the facilities and the opportunities that they offer for growth.

3.9.12 Underused facilities remain usable

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, see paragraph 3.9.11.

4. Lessons learned

4.1 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.

4.2 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 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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. It is doubtful that outreach to a Mother and Toddler group meeting outside the church building would have resulted in new family services *without* the added benefit of heating and toilet facilities.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 Good people make good projects

Whilst 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.

4.8 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.

4.9 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.

4.10 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.

4.11 Interregnums 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.

4.12 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.

4.13 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.

4.14 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!

Appendix A: Project Descriptions

- 014: Church in Northamptonshire
- 017: Church in Lincolnshire
- 021: Church in Yorkshire
- 027: Church in Northamptonshire
- 035: Church in Essex
- 040: Church in Nottinghamshire
- 043: Church in Essex
- 061: Church in Derbyshire
- 065: Church in Lincolnshire
- 067: Church in Lincolnshire
- 068: Church in Wiltshire
- 075: Church in Somerset
- 085: Church in Norfolk
- 098: Church in Yorkshire
- 111: Church in Nottinghamshire
- 126: Church in County Durham
- 147: Church in Somerset
- 148: Church in Derbyshire
- 149: Church in Oxford
- 150: Church in Peterborough
- 152: Church in Kent
- 153: Church in Gloucestershire
- 154: Church in Hertfordshire
- 156: Church in Warwickshire
- 177: Church in Cornwall
- 181: Church in Derbyshire
- 182: Church in Cheshire
- 184: Church in Essex
- 195: Church in Yorkshire
- 196: Church in Nottinghamshire
- 203: Church in Cambridgeshire
- 207: Church in Kent
- 228: Church in Yorkshire
- 233: Church in Cornwall
- 273: Church in Cornwall
- 279: Church in Lancashire
- 284: Church in Cumbria
- 286: Church in Oxford
- 306: Church in York
- 307: Church in North Yorkshire
- 310: Church in Devon
- 314: Church in Suffolk
- 317: Church in Lancashire
- 318: Church in Worcestershire
- 320: Church in Yorkshire
- 329: Church in Derbyshire

331: Church in Yorkshire
334: Church in Lancashire
337: Church in Derbyshire
342: Church in County Durham
345: Church in Cumbria
353: Church in Lincolnshire
355: Church in Northamptonshire
358: Church in Cambridgeshire
361: Church in Staffordshire
362: Church in Lancashire
366: Church in Derbyshire
367: Church in Northamptonshire
379: Church in Milton Keynes
383: Church in Yorkshire
386: Church in Bedfordshire
387: Church in Shropshire
388: Church in Derbyshire
390: Church in Yorkshire
397: Church in Rutland
399: Church in Sussex

O14: Northamptonshire

This is 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, which cost £54,000, was

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ To remove the pews in the north aisle to create flexible space
- ❖ To opening up the C13 door in the north aisle to provide level access to the church for disabled people.
- ❖ To create a new path from the new entrance to the existing path.

In order to accommodate

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

What was achieved

All of the above plus

- ❖ An advanced Embroidery class
- ❖ A Saturday afternoon Art class
- ❖ School use for End of Term services
- ❖ A club held in school after the school day to encourage and prepare children to take an active part in the monthly Family Service.

Impact on church and community

The facilities at church are enjoyed by a wide cross section of the community but particularly, Mother and Tots and middle-aged to elderly people. Being able to offer good facilities has no doubt helped to forge a strong relationship with the school; previously there was no contact. Nonetheless this was not a case of making facilities available and the school deciding to use them; a considerable amount of outreach has been done with the school. This new relationship has resulted in the school using the church, of the school being used to prepare for the new Family service. Held monthly the Family Service attracts about 50 people including children.

The Project Co-ordinator admitted to feeling under a lot of pressure meeting the timescale for the funding but, like the church members, is extremely pleased with the project,

"..our church has retained its beauty but is now more welcoming and more versatile in use. We are very proud of the result and do not regret the tremendous time and effort required"

Since this project was completed, a new heating and lighting system have been installed, demonstrating a real "can do" attitude.

O17: Lincolnshire

The village has a population of 300, a church, a chapel and a pub and. **The church** is a beautiful early English church, which stands in the middle of the village. The present church dates back to the fifteenth century, although there are remains of an earlier church of the 12th century which can be seen; the church is listed Grade I.

The project, which cost £54,150, was

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

In order to accommodate

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

Of the proposed activities only the luncheon club and the young people's coffee drop-in have not been achieved. However there is a social gathering every Monday afternoon and a junior youth club once a month. The biggest barrier to development is volunteers especially with regard to work with young people where police clearance is required; people want to see whether helping with an activity is really for them before committing to it formally but they cannot without clearance. In all about 120 people per month are using the church for community activities, which is remarkable considering the size of the village.

Impact on church and community

The community has certainly benefited from the community activities in the church but the vicar acknowledges that more effort should have been put into developing community leaders during the development stage of the project. Again the small size of this community means there is a smaller pool from which to find volunteers. It is disappointing that, given the local authority involvement with this project over some years, assistance with developing volunteers was not forthcoming. Money was available in 1992 for a needs survey but no other assistance was available from the local authority (Might not this scenario be repeated with the money currently available from the Countryside Agency for Village Appraisals and Parish Plans?) The community now has a "can do" mentality and is now undertaking the restoration of the village well as a community project. The congregation has not grown, a few have moved away, a few more have come but "the replacements don't have the same dream".

O21: Yorkshire

This village grew dramatically with the coal mining industry and has a population of about 4000. It is 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, which cost £185,128, was part of a major re-ordering of the church and provides

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

In order to accommodate

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

What was achieved

Everything and more! Nonetheless the adult education courses have taken more effort than estimated and this continues to be an area of concern. The tutors are supplied through three different organisations, there is a lack of continuity of tutors and contacts within the educational organisations. As an "off-campus" provider of classes the church has suffered from changing availability of both tutors and laptop computers as government funding priorities change.

However the church's work with children, youth and Mums and Toddlers has expanded considerably now that the building is useful, "And beautiful. And warm. And toilets. And tea and coffee!" Over 200 people per month use the community facilities.

Impact on church and community

Positive impact on both. In order to carry out the re-ordering the PCC had to go to consistory court. This turned out to be a very positive exercise in that it distanced the vicar from the objectors; all parties involved (Chancellor, Archdeacon, DAC) were very helpful but those objecting felt that they had made their feelings known. It "cleared the air" and allowed the project to proceed in a positive and supportive environment. None of the congregation was lost; indeed, the chief objector has become one of the most supportive and active members of the community work.

Church attendance has grown through the Toddler group and the vicar uses the community activities to hook into extra services, such as a "Songs of Praise" service to celebrate an Arts weekend.

O27: Northamptonshire

The 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. There is also a playing field for school and village use. The first church here was built in 1222 close to the Manor House. In late C18th the church was demolished. It was built in July 1807 and restored and enlarged in 1903; it is listed Grade II.

The project, which cost £70,000 was

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ To remove the pews in the south aisle to create "social space".

To enable

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

What was achieved

The capital works were completed on time and to budget but none of the planned community services was developed. The parish had been in interregnum for 18 months at the time that an application for funding was made to RCCS. During the interregnum the PCC had managed the church, increased the number in the congregation and developed this project, which had been conceived by the previous vicar, who died unexpectedly. The new vicar arrived just as the capital works were reaching completion. Despite his answers at his interview it soon became very clear that he was against using the church for community activity and treated the development team very badly. As a result the whole development team, most of whom were also PCC members left this church; the Project Co-ordinator has left the church altogether.

Impact on church and community

There has been no impact on the community other than what they have heard happened. The impact on the church has been devastating; the congregation has been drastically reduced.

This is probably one of the saddest stories that the author has heard but highlights how carefully PCC's must choose a new incumbent. If he/she does not share the vision of the church then it can be a disaster. Although the whole subject of community involvement with the church was raised at interview time, a truthful answer was not given and the results were devastating.

O35: Essex

This village is made up of a scattered community of 850 people. Just outside the village there is a youth sailing centre, an ecumenical community, 2 caravan sites and a marina, and several historical attractions and an area signated as a bird sanctuary. There are numerous visitors including 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, which cost £102,000, was

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

In order to provide

- ❖ A welcoming place and facilities for visitors to the church
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Meetings in the upper room
- ❖ A bell tower room for the exclusive use of younger teenagers.

What was achieved

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

Additional uses are

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

Impact on church and community

The activities accommodated in the church have made a significant difference to the community. The village hall has not suffered as there was negotiation over the hiring charge to ensure that the rates are equitable and there is on-going dialogue to ensure smooth running of both facilities.

The congregation has neither grown nor diminished although the individuals have changed. The village attracts a lot of people as they retire but those same people in their later (non-driving) years find the area is too isolated and move away.

O40: Nottinghamshire

This is a village of 2000 people. It has no village hall and the only affordable meeting place is the 1960's Sports pavilion. **The church** is modest and was 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, which cost £44,000, was

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ To provide a kitchenette in the ground floor room

In order to provide

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

What was achieved

The only services, which have not been achieved, are " *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. There is a Village Hall Committee which "cannot get going" so the church remains the only community facility in a village of 2000 people; almost 1000 people per month use the church.

Impact on church and community

This is a well-used facility that has had a big community impact. Having achieved a two-stage re-ordering project, the same group successfully applied for a further tranche of Millennium Commission grant for a new sound and loop system, demonstrating the "can do" attitude seen in other projects. The numbers in the congregation have not increased but have remained stable through an interregnum, which is an achievement in itself.

O43: Essex

This is a charming little village, with a population of 1300. The church is large, imposing and listed Grade I. It stands on the site of a Priory and some parts of the church, the tower and the porch, date back to the 15th century.

The project, which cost £64,000, was

- ❖ To create "social space" at the west end of the nave by removing some box pews.
- ❖ To provide toilet and kitchen facilities in the base of the tower
- ❖ 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

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

What was achieved?

All of the planned benefits were achieved plus a new Mothers and Toddlers group, the "Church Mice".

Impact on church and community

For this project the "community" was wider than the village as much of the work was to better accommodate school visits and concerts, this has been achieved and has a positive impact on those groups. The new Mother and Toddler group has had an impact on the village community and also on the church as it has led to the introduction of a new monthly Sunday service, focussed on young families, which is very successful.

Moving the rood screen and several rows of box pews substantially changed the nave. However the re-use of the screen and the doors from the box pews has resulted in an extremely sensitive and sympathetic scheme, nothing looks new, just different, and there were no objections from the congregation.

Following on from the success of this project, the church has continued a programme of reordering, which has just been completed. The success of *this* project gave the group the confidence and enthusiasm to embark on the subsequent stages; the whole programme of re-ordering has taken 6 years.

O61: Derbyshire

This is a small town, with a population of 5,600. Its major industry was limestone quarrying, the results of which are still visible. Although the town is slightly outside the main tourist attractions of the Derbyshire Peak District, the church 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 dates from 1270, it is a large cruciform church and listed Grade I.

The project was

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

In order to accommodate

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities are taking place and attracting between 300-400 people per month; this number includes people from local businesses, who are not necessarily local people, benefiting from the drop-in lunches.

Impact on church and community

The "community" for this church is wide, embracing not only the local residents but also a significant number of visitors for the well-dressing and concerts as well as visitors to the Peak District- the new facilities are appreciated by all who visit the church. With hindsight it would have been better to have two WC's for concert use. Despite the very positive impact on the community the church congregation has remained about the same.

O65: Lincolnshire

This is a small village, population of about 200. There are no facilities other than the pub. **The church** 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, which cost £50,150, was

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

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

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

What was achieved

All of the proposed uses have happened plus hiring for children's birthday parties and Old English Country Dances. A Medieval banquet was organised by local residents to raise money for urgent roof repairs. Salsa dancing commences in February 2004 and the Parish Council is considering starting a Youth club.

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 is now well used. Building on this success, when roof repairs were urgently needed the whole community was involved in raising funds.

The church has seen a slight increase in the numbers attending special services – Easter, Harvest and Carol services – but Sunday worship remains about the same.

O67: Lincolnshire

This is a small village, on the Lincolnshire marshland with very few facilities; a Village Appraisal clearly identified the need for improved communal facilities. **The church** was built by James Fowler in 1877 and apparently is an exact copy of the original church but without tower or clerestory; much of the stone from the old church was re-used. The church is now the only place of worship in the village. 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, which cost £25,000, was

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

(The pews had been replaced with chairs before this project. Recently the church has been fully carpeted to make it a more comfortable community space).

To enable

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

What was achieved

The community holds about six suppers through the year, the school use the church and it is used for meetings. Some concerts have been held and work is being undertaken to promote the church more as a concert venue. The Youth club did not happen as there were no volunteers to lead it and very few children – over the last 5 years, the village has become more and more a retirement village and the rising cost of housing makes it difficult for young families to buy homes. The church is used for the village Christmas fair and summer fair. Because of the facilities, the church now accommodates Christening teas and funeral wakes.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities have given the village a pleasant communal social centre and support village activities such as the Harvest supper and the village fairs. Good links have been made with the village school through outreach into the school, which is continuing despite the parish being in interregnum. The result of the outreach is that the school uses the church for services like their Harvest festival and Christingle services. Funding is now being sought to set up a music group for children. This project was well supported by the community from the outset, the funding being raised from the sale of the Methodist chapel and by fundraising events organised by the village millennium committee.

The congregation has remained constant and ecumenical services are held every Sunday, alternating Anglican and Methodist ministers. Despite being faced by a big reorganisation – the vicar is not going to be replaced and the church is being moved under a team ministry – the church has a positive, “can do” attitude.

O68: Wiltshire

The church was built in 1887 and is a pleasing neo-perpendicular building; it is listed Grade II. Faced with the prospect of the church hall coming to the end of its life and wishing to make more use of the church, the hall site was sold for development and the proceeds put towards the cost of converting the church to dual use.

The project, which cost £184,900, was

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

To accommodate

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ School plays and concerts
- ❖ After school club
- ❖ Pre-school group
- ❖ Self help groups
- ❖ Over-60's
- ❖ Drop-in centre
- ❖ Wedding receptions and parties.

What was achieved

Everything bar the Pre-school and After-school groups. It was decided that, as the school was due to move to new premises, these groups would just have got established when they would have had to move. This facility has not only given better premises to the original church hall users, it has provided an excellent social facility for many other people. 1,000 people per month use the hall.

Impact on the church and the community

The community hall is well used, so the lights are on every evening – a sign of life – and the church building has become the centre of village activity again, *“It is a huge success and has generated added life in the community”*. Nonetheless using the hall has highlighted several problems, not enough storage for equipment, perhaps “a bit too beautiful” limiting the sort of activities which can be held there (would not consider Scouts and Guides), the parking that was more than adequate for churchgoers is barely enough for the community users. Although a new estate of 1,000 dwellings is being built and the development includes a new community hall, the two management groups are already communicating to ensure that the facilities complement each other. The size of church congregation has increased slightly now that the church is warmer and has toilets, but the new vicar is having a mixed impact on attendance; he finds some of the agreed arrangements in the hall limiting but this is in some part due to the Bookings secretary.

“Problems have been in learning how to dovetail business acumen with the perceived “rights” of the church and the community.”

O75: Somerset

This is 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.

The project, which cost £ 51,500, was

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

Glazed screens were fitted in each transept arch.

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

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.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community has been moderate, although the computer courses have been well received. Bookings for the village hall are down. 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.

O85: Norfolk

This village has a population of 800 and is an expanding village. It is a dormitory village for Norwich 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. **The church** stands in the churchyard of the parish church. In 1992 work began to convert the 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 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.

The project, which cost £ 68,300, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

Planned activities were achieved with the exception of classes run by the local authority, the minimum numbers of students required could not be achieved. However, the building is frequently used by PCC's throughout Norwich for "Away days" and the Diocesan Board of Education uses it for training days. The building is well used by the local community for private concerts and receptions.

Impact on church and community

The addition of kitchen and toilet facilities has made a good community resource even better and it is appreciated by the local community. Including the use of St Lawrence's by other churches, it serves about 300 people per month. Church use has not increased as the parish church still holds the major services, nonetheless this church is used regularly for group activities and for "ad hoc" services such as a special Mass, specifically written for this church and held in January 2004.

O98: Yorkshire

This is a small village, population 750. It has a village hall –used for dancing, jumble sales, playgroup, WI and polling station – about half a mile from the church and school. **The 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, which cost £83,200, was to reorder the church

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All that was planned has been achieved. The school use is even greater than anticipated, including using the church as a classroom following a fire at the school!

Impact on church and community

The major user of the church is the school and it has made a tremendous difference to the activities in which the children can partake. This has the knock-on effect of bringing into church the parents, grandparents and carers of the children, who then attend other community functions in the church.

Shortly after the project was complete the vicar moved away. The diocese took the opportunity to reorganise and, instead of appointing a new incumbent, this parish has eventually been added to an existing ministry team and this has given them a few problems. In the situation of advertising for a new incumbent, the parish has the opportunity to specify the sort of person they want – someone who shares the “vision” of the church working with the community. By being added to an existing team the parish has been allocated a minister who does not share the vision and does not like the church to look “used”. Despite his protestations there is good communication and respect between the users of the space and there have been no problems with, for example, midweek funerals at a time when normally the school would be in church.

With hindsight the group feels that the project would have progressed more smoothly if

- ❖ There had been different subgroups responsible for different tasks
- ❖ At least two people from church at every meeting with the architects, including someone with sufficient building knowledge/experience
- ❖ More time spent on communicating the ramifications of a large building project to the members of the church.

111: Nottinghamshire

This is a small village with a population of approximately 100; it has no public buildings other than the church and is poorly served by public 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, which cost £55,000, was

- ❖ To build a small extension on the north side of the church, mirroring the south porch
- ❖ To install kitchen and toilet facilities.

To accommodate

- ❖ Social events
- ❖ Village dinners
- ❖ Parish meetings
- ❖ The discussion group

What was achieved

All of the proposed uses now happen. In addition the vestry now houses a small library and video library; all items have been donated by villagers. Like the church the library is always open.

Impact on church and community

The community now has a good meeting place that is regularly used but still has capacity for more activities. Church attendance has remained the same as before. This is a very small village, which had, for its size, a healthy congregation before the works were undertaken, with no new dwellings it should not be a surprise that the size of the congregation has not changed significantly.

126: County Durham

This is a small community in County Durham where the church building is a symbol of continuity in a landscape that has constantly changed due to open cast coal mining. The mine has closed leaving a community of high unemployment and low average wages. 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.

The project, which cost £57,000, was

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

To enable

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

What has been achieved

All the above and more! There is now a Charity Shop; this attracts a steady trickle of people especially mums with young children who use the library in church as a resource for reading to their toddlers. Links have been made with the Arts department of Sunderland University to encourage young artists and to use the gallery as an exhibition space. Through the regional chaplain for art, links have been made with other churches and with the Czech republic, through friends of the project co-ordinator who moved there. Links have been made also to Germany and France.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community has been tremendous because the church has responded to local needs – the charity shop, the coffee drop-in with facilities for toddlers. In addition this little mining village has links to and attracts exhibitors to exhibitions from home and abroad. The success of the original project has inspired this group to more projects

- ❖ A restoration / renewal window project including a commemorative window for Workers International Memorial Day in April 2003- paid for by the community
- ❖ Upgraded heating and lighting and a sound system are in the pipeline, partially funded by a Millennium Commission grant.

There is a wonderful “can do” attitude in this community and leaders have emerged from a community that has suffered greatly from unemployment. Very few people in this community have held leadership roles in the workplace. Both the numbers attending church and the number of services have increased due to the new facilities and to “the luxury of an incumbent with like visions”. The church is part of a group of 6 parishes, the leadership team has increased and this church has a young Australian minister with a great interest in what they wish to achieve.

147: Somerset

This is a lively village with a population of around 1,000. It has a church hall, used for church functions, Brownies and WI and a village hall used for amateur dramatics and the local market. The church is a mainly 14th and 15th century building. In the middle of the 19th century the north aisle was extended westwards as far as the tower and galleries erected at the west ends of both aisles. The building is of random rubble sandstone and is listed Grade I. The church had, for some time, 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 for all especially less able-bodied people.

The project, which cost £50,000, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

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.

Impact on church and community

There is so much activity going on in this church that it has made a significant impact on the local community, with over 600 people per month using the facilities. More people in the local community are now using the church "as a place to visit / retreat to and be in" because it is such a pleasant place to be. There are two extra services per month – a breakfast service that has appealed to a different section of the community, especially families, and a service lead by the group of singers that use the church.

The leader of group of singers is now a prominent member of the PCC and leading the Organ Refurbishment fund.

With regard to the application process

"We felt that our application was dealt with sympathetically. At times we felt that political correctness showed bias against the church in some of the (Millennium Commission) regulations."

148: Derbyshire

This is an expanding village in a rural location in a previous 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. The village has a school, 3 pubs, a Post Office and the old Band room. **The church** is a Grade II listed building, which, in recent years, 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.

The project, which cost £58,500, was

- ❖ To remove all of the pews and replace them with new chairs
- ❖ To lay a new floor
- ❖ To install a heating system
- ❖ To upgrade the lighting
- ❖ 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

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have happened with the exception of the Drop-in for elderly people. The concerts have included wider range of performers and the drama performance has included a special performance of the village pantomime. In place of the planned "Drop-in" there is 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.

Impact on church and community

The community is benefiting from the community activities accommodated in the building as described above and from the extra activities which the church now puts on- Cheese and Wine socials, Harvest supper, a Flower festival as part of the village's Jubilee celebration. The church congregation has increased from a regular congregation of 3 to 30. Whilst the regular congregation is elderly, special services, like harvest and the carol service, attract young families. 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".

This project was carried out using a loan, which has been repaid. Regular giving does not cover costs but the events held in church are keeping it afloat and fundraising never stops. Whilst the Project Co-ordinator (also the PCC treasurer) reports that the church is glad that they undertook the project it took a lot of effort from a few small team (of two) and at the time "the price was high" for the team personally.

149: Oxford

This is 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** was finished in 1826 and is listed Grade II*.

The project, which cost £101,500, was

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

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

All of the proposed activities have happened with the exception of the lectures, these are still planned for the future. In addition to the original proposals, a Mothers and Toddlers group has been set up – this is very successful and well-received – and a monthly Pensioners Luncheon Club, which also provides a hot meal to the housebound. Recently the Church Activities Group has been formed for the purpose of increasing activities both in and outside the church.

Impact on church and community

Although the village already had a well used village hall, the meeting room in the church has given the community extra activities – the Mother and Toddler group and Pensioners Luncheon club have been particularly successful – which have not had a detrimental effect on the village hall. The church has seen a steady increase in the congregation especially young families who find the facilities very “user friendly”. Although it is hard to say that new leaders have emerged there is certainly far more interest in the church because of the community facilities it supports, which may lead on to new leaders in the future.

150: Peterborough

This is a village with a population of 4,000. A Parish Appraisal was undertaken by the church in 1990 from which it was clear that the community would welcome additional facilities in the village especially small meeting rooms - the Memorial Hall in the village has just one large room and caters for dances, village pantomimes and so on. **The 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, is planned; this project was phase I of the larger scheme.

The project, which cost £166,000, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities take place and the room is used by other organisations.

Impact on church and community

It has benefited many members of the community because of the need for meeting places in Longthorpe, about 150 people per month use the Cloister room for community use. The church has seen an increase in the number of children attending because of the additional 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. The church is now in interregnum but everything is continuing as before.

152: Kent

This is a small village. The church is one of the most attractive and interesting in its area, which has 14 churches serving a population of 20,000. Like most of the churches in the area, this church was 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, which cost £16,800, was

- ❖ To provide toilet and kitchenette facilities in the Tithe Pen.

The Tithe Pen, situated at the west end of the south aisle, 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

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

What was achieved

Some of the proposed activities started but the Mother and Toddler group have 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. The number of visitors to the church has not increased but no extra work has been put into promoting this church.

Impact on church and community

Concert goers and elderly people visiting the church appreciate the new facilities. The Mother and Toddler may never have been set up had not the church been available, so facilitating its formation was a positive contribution to the community. The congregation for evensong has increased because the church now attracts people from neighbouring villages, helped greatly by the facilities.

Maybe this group did not think through well enough all of the facilities required for community use, in particular the heating - what people will endure for an hour's service may not be considered adequate for a longer period or for young children.

153: Gloucestershire

This is a is a scattered rural parish of about 1,500 people. Apart from the primary school, there is no other public building except the church, which is opposite the castle. **The church** stands on a very steeply sloping site 650 feet above the river; it is listed Grade I. 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. This church was enlarged to a cruciform shape in the 12th century.

The project, which cost £67,400, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

Apart from a few concerts, the church facilities appear to be used exclusively by church members.

Impact on community and church

Apart from concertgoers, the impact on the wider community is minimal. Despite these facilities the congregation has not grown, indeed most of those who were involved in the project have left due to a disagreement with the vicar. Whilst the cause of the exodus was nothing to do with the project, there now appears to be no one promoting the use of the church to the wider community. This is a very sad case, it was a difficult project made more difficult by the death of the architect during the design stage but the development group pulled together and delivered the project despite increased costs. It is this development group that has now left the church.

154: Hertfordshire

This is a small village; it has one shop, one pub and a village hall; the school closed 20 years ago. The village hall is well used but expensive for small groups to hire. **The church** is small, unremarkable and not listed.

The project, which cost £65,000, was

- ❖ To extend the west end of the church to accommodate a kitchen and a toilet
- ❖ To provide disabled access to the church
- ❖ To create a meeting room.

To accommodate

- ❖ A Mother and Toddler group
- ❖ A Homework club
- ❖ A coffee drop-in for older people during the day
- ❖ A coffee bar in the evening for the young people

What was achieved

The Mother and Toddler group did not go ahead as it was decided that there was not enough storage space for the play equipment. Progress on the proposed youth projects – homework club and coffee drop-in – are “dogged by our involvement in the wider church prevarication on Child Protection Policies – not only at Diocesan level but at the ministry team level”. However the drop-in for elderly people has proved to be a great success especially with the “transport bound”. Buoyed by the success with elderly people, the church is now being used for talks and lectures of interest to that age group in particular.

Impact on church and community

The elderly and transport bound are benefiting particularly from the project. What is disappointing is that all of the proposed activities were in response to a village consultation undertaken by the church and half are still on hold due to the prolonged discussions around child protection issues.

Despite the fact that the Toddler group did not go ahead, those involved in the discussions now attend the family service. For other services there has been a slight increase in attendance.

156: Warwickshire

This is a small village of less than 500 residents. It has a Church of England school and a Parish Hall, with a bowling green and tennis court, no shops and no pub. The church dates from the 13th century, the most note worthy feature is the exceptionally fine north doorway (14th century) with its carved vine spreading across the lintel. The church is listed grade II*.

Although the village is small, because of the beauty of the area and its historical interest, there is a constant stream of visitors and ramblers. However the village is best known for its concerts, which have taken place in the church for the past thirty years, when artists of international renown fill the church to capacity.

The project, which cost £60,000, was

- ❖ To provide kitchen facilities at the west end of the south aisle
- ❖ To install toilet facilities at the west end of the north aisle
- ❖ To create a carpeted "social area" at the west end of the nave
- ❖ To create a new ringing chamber at a higher level within the tower
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Make the church a more welcoming place for visitors and ramblers
- ❖ Greatly improve the facilities offered to school groups who use the church for curriculum studies
- ❖ Offer better facilities to those who travel from urban areas to attend "Quiet days" in the church
- ❖ Provide a very useful meeting room, which the village previously lacked.

What was achieved

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

Impact on church and community

Local community has benefited greatly from the provision of a village meeting room; it is regularly used including recently for protest meetings against the proposed Rugby Airport. 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 now that there is disabled (and pushchair) access, toilets with baby changing facilities, a kitchen for hospitality and a quiet room for crying children. This is a church of choice for weddings and funerals. Whilst regular services and the regular congregation have remained about the same, people do not hesitate to bring babies and young children.

Whilst this church coped with the funding of the re-ordering, they suggest that some up-front, pump-priming money would have been a great help to them – all of the Millennium Commission funding was retrospective.

177: Cornwall

This is a village of 1,500 people. At one time it had shops, a railway station and a cinema due to the 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**, which is listed grade II, was built in 1881 in the centre of the village.

The project, which cost £66,000, was

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ To create two large community rooms in the nave
- ❖ To provide WC's, a kitchen and storage space.
- ❖ To provide full disabled access to the whole building via a new path (this was funded separately by the local quarry).

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the above plus kick boxing!

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community is tremendous. 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. This is such an outstanding community project that it has attracted a lot of media attention, including local television. The local authority has also taken note of what has been achieved and has welcomed the church as a serious regeneration partner. The biggest difference the work has made to the church congregation is that it is now warm encouraging elderly people especially.

This project was lead by the vicar, who has other parishes, and admitted to feeling under great pressure to meet the deadlines placed upon her. This reordering was functional rather than enhancing the look of the church. It is one of the most successful community projects funded by the programme. There are many reasons why this *is* a successful project – a very needy community, a vicar who is brilliant at communicating with and involving people from the wider community. But one has to ask whether this project would have been so successful if the building had been of greater heritage importance. The "can do" feeling has spread outside this parish to neighbouring ones who are now considering this sort of project.

181: Derbyshire

This is 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, **the 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, which cost £60,400, was

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

To enable

- ❖ Concerts and performance
- ❖ School use for curriculum studies, services and performance
- ❖ Keep fit classes
- ❖ Elderly people's social events
- ❖ Bingo
- ❖ Meetings, including the Parish Council meetings.

What was achieved

Of the proposed activities only the school use and meetings have been achieved, but those uses are greater than originally planned, with about 150 people per month using the church for community activities in addition to school use.

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 interregnum which has just ended. When the new minister was interviewed for the post the PCC asked quite specific questions about his views on the use of the church for community activities including fundraising events on Sundays, he appears supportive and no problems are foreseen.

Using the church as a meeting place has been so successful that the larger facility – the nave of the church – has had to be used, highlighting the ill-fitting windows and the inadequacy of the heating in this area. Using an enhancement grant from the Millennium Commission this has now been addressed. This PCC has a wonderful "can do" attitude and their next project – repairs to the roof – is already in planning.

It is worth noting that this group presented the "enhancement project" as part of the original project and, in doing so, managed to get 81% grant aid for this additional work – the churchwarden's husband is an accountant!

182: Cheshire

This is a small, scattered farming community with no public facilities other than the church. The church is a small redbrick building and is not listed.

The project, which cost £34,350, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the proposed uses have happened except for the keep fit group, which lacked support. In addition to the planned activities there is a new initiative for the over 50's – cards, board games, table tennis – and the church has been used for parties and social events.

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. The church now has an additional part-time minister who has brought enthusiasm and new ideas to utilise the open plan layout of the building.

As soon as the original project was complete, the remainder of the pews were removed. It should be noted that when this group originally applied to RCCS they were not going to remove any pews, but agreed to the idea after their eyes were opened to the opportunities that this would afford. The compromise (only 5 rows of pews) was made to quell opposition to the faculty. The money from the sale of the remaining pews was used to fund the installation of street lighting outside the church. Subsequently this group took up the offer of an enhancement grant (from the Millennium Commission) for a new sound system and organ.

(Author's comment: I attended the dedication service for this project and was overwhelmed by the warmth of this congregation, the Spirit is definitely alive in this village)

This village is on a main bus route and is the central point for three villages. It was included within the Tendring Rural Development Area, an area so designated on account of social and economic deprivation. The village has a significant amount of council and social housing, including a development of temporary accommodation for homeless families. **The church** is listed grade I. The original proposal was for an extension to the north side of the church, access via a Norman doorway made this scheme unacceptable to English Heritage. The revised plan moved the extension to the east, parallel to the chancel but accessible from the outside only.

The project, which cost £101,500, was an extension accommodating

- ❖ A meeting room
- ❖ A kitchen
- ❖ Disabled access toilet facilities.

To enable

- ❖ Meetings of local committees
- ❖ Playgroup
- ❖ Counselling
- ❖ Visits from the local old people's home, the residential home near the church has 80 residents
- ❖ As a drop-in facility by Home-Start
- ❖ As a meeting place for the local elderly people.

What was achieved

All of the proposed activities have happened. After operating very successfully for 2 years the Counselling service lost its funding and had to close. There are 4 residential homes now using the room with people from the village helping. In addition to the planned activities there is now a Sunday lunch every 2 months, which is very popular with people living on their own for whom Sunday is "the loneliest day". There is also a Village lunch every 2 months on a weekday - this attracts other people. The school uses the church for project work now that WC facilities are available. A Youth group has started; they have given concerts in church and take the occasional evening service. The room is used for courses and discussion groups.

Impact on church and community

This project has made a tremendous impact on the community it set out to serve and many others, as described above. The work with the elderly people from the residential homes has encouraged volunteers who are not church members. Church numbers have remained about the same but there is now a monthly Sunday School run by parents and attracting a good number of children. Family service attracts more children and young people.

The incumbent who had the vision for this project left in 2002 followed by a reorganisation, which has put this church with 3 others under 1 vicar. This has resulted in less support for the congregation. Nonetheless this group has plans for the future - a drama club- so there is probably enough lay interest to keep this excellent project going.

195: Yorkshire

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

The project, which cost £71,000, was

- ❖ 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
- ❖ To re-floor the whole nave using York stone
- ❖ To make the pews free standing and moveable
- ❖ To create social space by clearing the west end of the nave
- ❖ To provide wheelchair access to both the churchyard and church.

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

All of the proposed uses have happened and tourism has increased – after much asking, the local authority agreed to the erection of a brown tourism sign from the main road!

Impact on church and community

Although there are a few community meetings, the local community benefits most if they attend an event, such as a concert. The congregation, most of whom are elderly, has benefited from the facilities and the much improved access through the churchyard. This parish has only recently got a new rector after a long interregnum. In a small village like this all efforts have gone towards keeping the church going not to developing the community activities.

196: Nottinghamshire

This village is situated just off the A1: it has a population of about 1,500. The village has shops, pubs, a school and a village hall. **The church** 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, which cost, £37,000, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the existing activities have continued and, in addition, the History society, New Generation Youth and a Sewing Circle also use the room.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities have benefited concertgoers, the community organisations who meet in the church and especially the school, who can use it more now. The churchyard contains a conservation garden; those who visit it use the facilities. The new vicar is undertaking more children's work which has increased the number of families attending services – without the facilities this work could not have been undertaken in church. Also there are a few more services outreaching to the community.

203: Cambridgeshire

This village has a village hall, which is well used, a playing field adjacent to the church used by a youth football league and for the church fete, a pub and the primary school, which is used for martial arts and by the WI. **The church** is a Grade II listed building that has recently had significant restoration with the help of monies from the Joint Heritage fund. The church serves the two villages which straggle a four mile stretch of fenland road.

The project, which cost £32,000, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

None of the community activities ever got established. The project was developed during an interregnum by one of the churchwardens. Shortly after the new incumbent arrived, this churchwarden was asked to step down as churchwarden and no-one else tried to develop the community service.

Impact on church and community

There has been no impact on the community because none of the activities were developed. The Village Hall has closed down through lack of use, giving the church an excellent opportunity to fill this gap - sadly nothing has happened. The church has benefited from the new facilities, especially for funerals, and church meetings are now held in the new meeting room.

The displaced churchwarden has returned to this church, considering her faith more important than her position as churchwarden, her husband cannot forgive the way his wife was hurt and has left the church.

207: Kent

This 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 is very large for a small village and 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, which cost £52,600, was

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

To enable the church to be used

- ❖ For concerts
- ❖ As a Heritage Visitors centre
- ❖ 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
- ❖ As a meeting room for local village organisations
- ❖ As a venue for Christening parties, wedding breakfasts and wakes.

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have happened with the exception of wedding breakfasts and wakes. The church is well used for meetings and recent new users include a Youth group and a Gospel Band.

Impact on church and community

The community benefit by using the room for meetings of community organisations and the Parish Council. The youth of the village now have a Youth group. The church has not seen any increase in numbers but have just been through an 18 month interregnum.

The group attribute their success in the high level of bookings to advertising the facilities within and beyond the village.

228: Yorkshire

This village straggles the A1. It 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 has 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, which is listed Grade II, is large due to the addition, in Victorian times, of galleries above the North and South aisles; it can accommodate an audience of 400 for concerts. A toilet was installed in 1996 particularly for the use of concert goers.

The project, which cost £36,000, was

- ❖ To convert the ringing chamber in the base of the tower into a kitchen
- ❖ To re-instate the first floor of the bell tower (this was removed in the 1920's) to provide a new ringing chamber
- ❖ To convert the west end of each gallery to form two rooms – a choir robing room and a small meeting room / office
- ❖ To remove the back row of pews to form a “social area” outside the kitchen
- ❖ To make the entrance and approach to the church more accessible for disabled people
- ❖ To make the choir stalls moveable to enable more flexible use of this area.

To enable

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

What was achieved

There was no take up for Adult Literacy classes but the other proposals have all happened. The social events have included, fashion shows, cookery demonstrations, sales and a rock concert.

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 enthusiasm for using the church remains high, it is a balancing act between the church and other venues to ensure that they all survive. The congregation has not grown but has remained the same in numbers despite several deaths and an interregnum of one year.

Whilst this group managed to fund the project without a loan, they are concerned that the steeply rising contributions to the diocese “for 1/2 a vicar” will affect the long-term viability of the church.

233: Cornwall

This is a small village port; it has a school, a pub and a shop. The area suffers from high unemployment and low wages. The church is listed Grade I. The original 13th century church was cruciform, consisting of the chancel, nave and transepts but in the 15th century the south aisle was added and the south transept disappeared.

The project, which cost £54,000, was

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

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

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

Impact on church and community

The new facilities are enjoyed by the pre-school, the school and the elderly people in the community. The congregation has remained stable through the interregnum but the new incumbent is starting to have an effect and there are now more services. The effect on the church spreads beyond the parish, which is part of a United Benefice. The Benefice is now much closer with the local Methodists using the church for meetings and United Services.

273: Cornwall

This village, has 3 public houses, a social club, a Community hall used for badminton and discos and the Church room opposite the old Church school that is now an Art gallery. **The church**, a 14/15th century Grade I listed building, it was extensively restored in 1888. The interior is striking, warm and welcoming.

The project, which cost £40,000, was

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

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have happened but the biggest use of the church, by far, is for meetings.

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. There has been no change in the numbers attending church services. Finances are an on-going concern but since the project was undertaken the church room has been disposed of and ultimately the church members hope that they will benefit from having only one building to maintain. They are already feeling the financial benefit of having everything happening under one roof, for example, insurance and security issues.

279: Lancashire

This is a small village about a mile from the M6, as the crow flies, it has a pub, a school and a village hall. When the church was built it split the village as half of the parishioners had favoured keeping a older church a mile away, as their parish church. Happily the rift in the village has mended with the years and this church is thriving. **The church** was consecrated in September 1889 by the Lord Bishop of Manchester. This recent project was proposed in response to a benefice reorganisation in which the village lost the vicarage, which has regularly been used for meetings.

The project, which cost £108,000, was

- ❖ To demolish the existing toilet facilities and to extend the church building over two storeys (the sharp fall of the land means that the extension roof lines through with the existing church roof)
- ❖ To provide a parish office
- ❖ To create a ground floor meeting room and a meeting room above the new ground floor rooms
- ❖ To install kitchen and toilet facilities
- ❖ To provide disabled access throughout the new extension and into the church.

To enable

- ❖ Meetings of various groups and organisations including the WI
- ❖ Craft classes
- ❖ Youth group
- ❖ Crèches during meetings and during church services.

What was achieved

Of the proposed activities all happened except the WI, who decided to stay where they were. As a direct result of publicity in the diocesan mailing, groups from other parishes, diocesan committees and the bishops from the NW dioceses use the meeting rooms. By asking everyone in the congregation to promote the facilities, the meeting rooms are also used by the Lancashire Police for training sessions, by Lancaster University for extension courses and by the National Trust for staff meetings.

Impact on the church and community

As described above the wider community, both local and not so local use the meeting rooms. Use by other churches shows to those churches what a small parish can achieve and will hopefully encourage them to think about widening the use of their churches. Although the size of the congregation has changed very little, there are more young families attending; this is due to the Sunday school, which started up when the project was completed, to the crèche and to the availability of toilet facilities.

284: Cumbria

This village is in an area of high unemployment and deprivation and falls within a European Objective 2 programme and the Cumbria Rural Development area. **The church** is Victorian and not listed.

The project, which cost £223,000, was to re-order the whole church

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

To enable

- ❖ Provision of nutritious, affordable meals twice a week at lunchtimes
- ❖ A Jobclub for unemployed people
- ❖ IT skills training
- ❖ Training courses for Health and Hygiene (for catering)
- ❖ 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 and it would have been counterproductive to compete. The meeting room is used a lot 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, Alzheimers support group, West Cumbria CVS to name but a few. The centre is also popular for social gatherings where catering is required. However the most successful venture is the Community Café, which now opens 6 days per week. In addition to serving meals at the Centre, the kitchen also provides a mobile meals luncheon delivery service for elderly people.

Impact on church and community

The meeting facilities attract community groups from within and beyond Frizington. The impact of the Community café in particular has been tremendous after a very shaky start. This is one of the few RCCS projects that employed staff. The Lingla Centre Management Board appointed two members of staff, a Centre manager and a Cook, to develop the centre. As both had catering backgrounds the management committee felt confident that they could be left to ordering the necessary equipment to run a catering kitchen and to develop the service. What the Management Board had not appreciated was the gap between their vision for the Centre and the aspirations of the paid staff. The former wished to use the centre to provide affordable meals for the community and catering related training courses, the latter wished to run a commercial restaurant at commercial prices. The result was a significant overspend on equipment and the Centre facing insolvency before it had even opened. The necessary disciplining of staff also showed a lack of knowledge of employment law which, had the diocesan solicitor not stepped in, could have resulted in a case of unfair dismissal against the management committee.

Happily, with assistance on financial and legal matters from the diocese, the project recovered. Nonetheless it highlighted the following points:

- ❖ Management Board members need training to enable them to understand their responsibilities
- ❖ If people are being employed then it is crucial that the employees understand what they are being asked to deliver. In this case different agendas lead to disaster
- ❖ If the necessary up to date management expertise does not exist on a Management Board, it must be found elsewhere and "tapped into"
- ❖ Very few situations are irretrievable - this project managed to return most of the surplus catering equipment and was reimbursed - but it highlights the need to respond to a disaster situation with speed.

Due to the numbers using the café, building work is currently underway to double the size of the kitchen and to increase the size of the café, which means moving the café to the first floor level. Despite the tremendous success of the community project, the congregation has remained about the same.

The Lingla Centre is a very successful community project with a very strong management committee, which is quite separate from the Church Council. The untimely death of the incumbent, who chaired the Centre management committee, has not affected the running of the centre, whereas the Church Council feels great loss both personally and in management terms.

286: Oxford

The village has a population of about 800. It sits astride the main road that was once the drovers' route from the Cotswolds to Oxford and London. 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. **The church** 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 nave and tower are from the 15th century with additions to the building in the 1800's.

The project, which cost £32,500, was

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

To enable

- ❖ Concerts with refreshments
- ❖ School use by village primary school
- ❖ Band practice, suitable because of its distance from the village
- ❖ Young people's group
- ❖ Meetings of local organisations
- ❖ 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 who 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. School use is only occasional but should increase when the churchyard wildlife area is completed. The remaining proposals have gone ahead.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the community is 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. Even with fairly limited use the following shortcomings have been found

- ❖ The kitchen is too small for more than 2 people to work in it
- ❖ The heating in the meeting room is insufficient
- ❖ There is insufficient storage – a lot of the space previously used for storage was incorporated into the project as non-storage space.

This project was undertaken at the same time as a large restoration project. Maybe if it had been tackled as a stand-alone project some of the shortcomings would have been avoided.

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

306: York

This is a village of 1,300 inhabitants, a mixture of people, those who have always lived there and work locally and the incomers, who work in nearby York or who have retired here. **The Church** is listed Grade II*; it has a medieval tower, the nave and chancel were rebuilt in the 1850's. The chancel was reordered in the 1980's and a meeting room/exhibition area and attendant facilities created at the west end of the nave. These facilities were inadequate for many users and were not accessible by disabled people.

The project, which cost £54,000, was

- ❖ To install a screen in the tower arch. This has cured the heating problem at this end of the church and provided a small meeting room at first floor level in the tower
- ❖ To replace the kitchen and toilets in the base of the tower
- ❖ To provide a comfortable meeting area adjacent to the tower.

The scheme was designed by R G Simms and echoes the reordered east end of the church.

To accommodate

- ❖ Meetings of village organisations
- ❖ WEA classes
- ❖ Funeral teas and wedding pre-receptions
- ❖ Music, drama and arts events.

What was achieved

All of the above have happened to some extent with the exception of use for meetings of village organisations. At the time the church drew up their plans, the old school building was scheduled for imminent closure. In the event it did not close, is now leased by a user group at a peppercorn rent and the meetings, such as the Parish Council meetings, which the church hoped to accommodate, have remained where they were. Although the school uses the church for concerts and drama productions and exhibitions, a large, purpose-built Arts Centre was constructed in nearby Pocklington and a Civic Arts centre was also opened in Pocklington – the church facilities cannot compete with these centres.

Originally there were plans for a participative Arts programme for young people to be run in church but the person who was behind this idea moved and no-one else felt that they had the skills to set it up. This problem of relying on specialised knowledge of one person, who has subsequently moved, has shown itself in other projects.

Impact on the church and the community

As described above, the impact on the community has been much less than anticipated, although the school use and weekly music for toddlers group find the church space of great help – the music for toddlers could not have happened without the facilities. The church has found the facilities invaluable and well used by existing church groups. The church now has a thriving (full with a waiting list) weekly Youth group, attended by many children who are not churchgoers. The Youth group would not have happened without the new facilities in church and although most of the activities are typical youth work, the vicar does "a Christianity slot" and feels that this gives her an excellent opportunity to have contact with the young people of the village. The size of the congregation was and remains very healthy.

307: Yorkshire

This village has a population of 150 people, mostly elderly. There are only two buses a week from the nearest bigger town, which makes it an isolated existence for those who do not drive. There is a Post Office but no shops. **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, which cost £44,300, was

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

To accommodate

- ❖ Continued use by the WI, for evening classes and for Parish meetings.
- ❖ 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

All of the planned activity was achieved. A typical winter or spring month sees 170-180 people using the Room; less people use the facility in the summer when there are no evening classes.

Impact on church and community

Helping to bring the project to fruition brought the community together, using the Room has kept them together. In 2002 "Village Mornings" "girded itself up to campaign for a much needed local footpath and became a charity". £6,000 was raised in 9 months and the footpath was achieved. The confidence to do this came from the success of the refurbishment project - the group understood the process and was supported by a community that now works closely together. Church attendance has remained constant despite a recent 18 month interregnum. This is a very small village, which had, for its size, a healthy congregation before the works were undertaken, with no new dwellings it should not be a surprise that the size of the congregation has not changed significantly.

310: Devon

This village has a population of 1370 of which 300 are young people but many are elderly; this is not an affluent community. The church is listed grade I and located on the village square.

The project, which cost £57,700, was

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

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have been achieved and the meeting room is well used for committee meetings of village organisations.

Impact on church and community

The community makes good use of the church in a way that they did not before the new facilities were available. The impact on the church has been very positive, the elderly people have kept coming to worship and there are more toddlers in church due to the freedom of the space at the back of the church and the WC. Additional evening services are planned due to the ease of providing refreshments. The church has been through an interregnum since the project was completed. During the interregnum church members took an active part in running the church and this has continued since the appointment of a new vicar in the autumn of 2002. Church membership has increased and there are new members on the PCC, due to the church feeling so much more welcoming.

314: Suffolk

This is a small village that lost its Memorial Hall and the pub; the Church of England Primary school closed down and was subsequently sold. **The church** 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, which cost £57,000, was

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

To enable

- ❖ Small meetings
- ❖ Educational courses
- ❖ Musical and poetry evenings
- ❖ Art exhibitions
- ❖ Art classes.

What was achieved

Concerts and musicals have been well attended and some meetings are held in church but the other proposed uses have not been achieved.

Impact on church and community

The musical events have been 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. Immediately after the project was completed there was much interest in the church which resulted in 25% of the adult population signing up to be on the Electoral Roll in 2001. A Sunday School has been developed and parents are more willing to bring young children to services, due to the heating and provision of toilet facilities. Financially the project has enhanced the situation, although running costs are slightly higher the income from events compensate for this.

This project was planned during an interregnum and was in progress when the present incumbent was appointed. Unfortunately the initial good start has not lasted and this has had a negative effect on all activities in the church. The number in the congregation is declining, as is 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.

317: Lancashire

This is a village of 414 residents. 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 is on the site of a church built in 1190, but has been rebuilt several times. The church is listed Grade I listed.

The project, which cost £23,500, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the proposed activities have happened. In addition, an After school club has been set up.

Impact on the church and community

The Lady Chapel is known to be available and so it is well used by village organisations. To maintain the church fabric there is always background heat and so the building is always reasonably warm and accessible, as the church is open from sunrise to sunset. During the Foot and Mouth crisis activities had to stop but the Lady chapel remained open and was used for prayer by those who needed it. The congregation has grown and having successfully undertaken this project, people have raised their sights to new initiatives.

318: Worcestershire

This village has farming as its major industry, although most of the population work out of the village. It has 1,100 residents, a primary school, a village hall, a Post Office and shop and two pubs. The church dates from about 1180 and is listed Grade II*.

The project, which cost £61,600, was

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

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities except the use by the local drama club. Since this project was completed the village has had a new village hall, helped tremendously by a large Millennium Commission grant, and the drama club now meets there. Because there are people on both the Village Hall management committee and the PCC, bookings are split between the church and the village hall, depending on which is the most suitable venue. This has led to the church being used by the WI, the Police Community Consultative group, Age Concern and the Garden Society. The school uses the church regularly since the provision of toilet facilities.

Impact on church and community

The church provides the community with a complementary venue to the new Village Hall and there is sufficient activity for both venues to be successful and well used. Attendance at concerts has increased with the provision of refreshments and the availability of toilet facilities, some of the people attending concerts have now started to attend church services. The provision of kitchen and toilet facilities has made a positive difference to church attendance especially for special services, like the Carol Service, where hot mincepies and mulled wine are now served. The vicar can now undertake work with young people in church and there are special events for young people, for example, young people's activities on the morning of Good Friday linked to the service at midday. Recently a meeting about Drugs was held in church for young people and their parents, a good example of the church connecting with the wider community on important issues in a very caring way.

With the amount of use the church enjoys, lack of storage space has become an issue. The church has been awarded an "enhancement grant" from the Millennium Commission to address the storage problem. The vicar feels that had they not been under the pressure of time-limited funding, things like storage space may have been addressed better in the original plan.

320: Yorkshire

This is 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. **The church** is built of coarse grit sandstone and is not listed.

The project, which cost £53,100, was

- ❖ To reorder the whole church
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ To create two meeting rooms in the west end of the nave
- ❖ To install toilet and kitchen facilities adjacent to the meeting rooms.

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have happened except for the coffee mornings; a regular monthly coffee morning was started by the local school in the village hall as a community contact / fundraising venture and it was thought that competition would not be welcomed. There are a lot of concerts, more than planned, and Art exhibitions are regularly staged in the church. There are also school visits to the church.

Impact on church and community

The wider community has benefited greatly from the concerts, both as performers and as audience. There are plans for an afternoon club and lunches for the elderly in the future. The church has seen an increase in congregation, especially young families, and in the number of services. This is due in part to a new enthusiastic vicar but also because “church is a much nicer place to be”.

This group is now looking at developing the space above the west end development; the original scheme was planned with further development in mind.

329: Derbyshire

This village is not typical of the RCCS programme having a population of about 8,000. It is situated 10 miles from Sheffield in an area of high unemployment. 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 dates from 1100; it is listed grade I.

The project, which cost £62,150, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have happened with the exception of meetings of local organisations – but there are other venues available.

Impact on church and community

The local community has benefited from the kitchen and toilet facilities at concerts, as have school visits and tourists. In 2003 two open weekends were held under the umbrella of Mission to the Community and consisted of activities to get people across the threshold to enjoy “their” church. One weekend was sponsored by Eckington Regeneration, different groups ran exhibitions and the day culminated with a top violinist accompanied by a top pianist– this was much appreciated by the community. The church has seen an increase in the number of toddlers and their parents at Junior Church, which is held in the tower room at the same time as the morning service. Whilst no new leaders have emerged the vicar reports that “...some seem less dependant on the clergy and that’s a bonus”

The only design problem encountered is the electrical supply, which is running at its limit and “trips out” fairly regularly when all facilities are in use.

331: Yorkshire

This is a small village, population of about 1,000, just off the A1. Without a village hall, there was nothing in the way of community activities for the local population – this project was to address this need. **The church** is a small red brick building, which was built about 100 years ago, it is not listed.

The project, which cost £32,150, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

Although bingo and family games nights were run they have become less popular and have now stopped. Meetings of the Parish Council and local charities are held in the church. However the major success has been the Pre and After school club which meets 5 days a week and throughout school holidays; this meets a real community need.

Impact on church and community

The community really values the Pre and After school club. The tiny congregation has ceased to meet here and the only services held are festival services and school assemblies. Some of the congregation have moved to the mother church nearby to be part of a larger church community, one or two felt that the village church was not really a church after the re-ordering.

From the community viewpoint it is a success in that a much needed community service is accommodated in the church building. From the church viewpoint, it has to be asked whether this church would have survived much longer – despite a letter from the Archdeacon in 1998 stating that it was sustainable.

After considerable soul searching, the vicar has arrived at the conclusion that the church is a success because the church is providing a much needed service for the village, this opinion is shared by the Archdeacon. The upkeep of this church is covered by the rental income and as the building is neither ancient nor listed, there are not the problems presented by heritage buildings of great importance. Had the building been a listed, heritage building of note, then the decision to keep the church open may have been considerably more difficult.

334: Lancashire

This is a delightful village situated in the Ribble valley. Today the parish has 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 public space in the village. **The 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 is not remarkable. When a gallery was installed in 1820, the tower arch was filled in thus all of the light from the great tower window was lost.

The project, which cost £166,000, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities have been achieved.

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. The community facilities are also used and appreciated by a wider community who travel to the church for seminars. Whilst there has not been a dramatic increase in the congregation, "it feels better", and it must be noted that this church has been in interregnum for one year. The interregnum has had no impact on the community activities, which are continuing and developing. The number of services held has increased as Compline services are held for groups of visitors.

337: Derbyshire

This is a small market town in the Derbyshire Peak district with a population of about 7,000. The church has a fascinating history, built in 1873 as an evangelical Church of England church following a disagreement with the vicar of the parish 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 used very little by the church but by many community organisations but most of these activities were in the late afternoon and evening and the schoolroom stood unused for the remainder of the time.

The project, which cost £88,250, was

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

To enable

- ❖ Continuing existing community use
- ❖ Community care services –mental health care and day-care for the elderly, using the refurbished schoolroom and landscaped churchyard
- ❖ 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 have now folded due to falling numbers. After school and evening use of the schoolroom is flourishing.

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 community groups, which draw people from the town and surrounding villages, continue to flourish in much pleasanter surroundings. 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.

342: County Durham

This village had a population of 8,500 but this is declining since the closure of the coal mine – the largest pit in the area. It is an area of social and economic decline with a high proportion of lone parent families and a drug problem amongst young people. The 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. **The church** was built in 1877 and is a Grade II listed building.

The project, which cost £ 92,735, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

The outcome of this project in terms of community use is disappointing given the ambitious plans. About half of the planned activities have taken off. The reasons for the poor take-up are

- ❖ The failure to include a lift to the first floor
- ❖ Contemporaneous refurbishments, which took place in geographically better -placed venues in the village.

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 whole project has been “ a blessing to the church”, without it the vicar thinks that the congregation would have declined. The size of the congregation has remained constant and “these days remaining the same is growth!”

345: Cumbria

This village is located in the heart of the Lake District. There are many visitors to the village and to the grave of a well-known Victorian individual who is buried in the graveyard. **The church** was consecrated in 1891 and has changed very little; it is a Grade II listed building.

The project, which cost £37,500, was

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

To accommodate

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

What was achieved

The new display was mounted and existing groups continue to use the church. It is used for meetings of the Village Planning Committee, and at least two other Christian groups. Also several exhibitions have been held in the church.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the local community is not as great as hoped, existing users appreciate the new facilities very much as do visitors to the church. Attracting new users is proving difficult as both schools 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 remains the same. Interestingly giving has increased since the project was completed. The vicar who started the project left during construction and "it was his vision" - the new vicar has different interests.

353: Lincolnshire

This village is situated south of Boston and straggles a trunk road. **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. A general restoration took place in the 1880.

The project, which cost £21,300, was

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

To enable the church to be used more effectively for

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

What was achieved

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.

Impact on church and community

Everyone who uses the church appreciates the new facilities. Church attendance has remained the same although the leadership of the church, both lay and clergy, has changed.

355: Northamptonshire

This village has a population of 1,100; there are a fair number of elderly people despite a demographic shift due to the new housing attracting young families. 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. **The 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, which cost £51,500, was

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

To provide

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

What was achieved

All of the planned activities happen but not very often.

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 more young families to services now that toilet facilities are available. The church is about to go into interregnum, nonetheless the membership are looking to improve access from the road and a further phase of work to make the space adjoining the meeting room more useful for large gatherings, such as concerts.

358: Cambridgeshire

This village is situated about 12 miles from Cambridge and a high percentage of the economically active population travel to Cambridge to work. It is a long straggly village with a population of about 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. **The church** is late thirteenth and fourteenth century with a major restoration. It is a Grade I listed building.

The project, which cost £80,300, was

- ❖ To provide a new meeting room with kitchen facilities in the north aisle
- ❖ To provide a fully disabled access WC in the base of the tower
- ❖ To provide disabled access throughout the building.

To enable

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

What was achieved

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

Impact on church and community

There has been a significant impact on the young people of the village through the Youth group, holiday clubs and school use of the church. Church attendance has fallen but this is not as a direct result of the project. The new vicar who has been there for 3 years, is keen to get young people involved in the church and has introduced "modern" services, whereas the elderly members of the congregation prefer more traditional worship. As yet the youth work has not resulted in an increase in the size of the congregation.

Having realised that the new room is too small for some activities, the pews in the south aisle were removed - this is what helped the success of the holiday clubs.

361: Staffordshire

This is a sizeable village of 4,000 people situated about 6 miles from Wolverhampton. Its position on the Staffordshire Way and the Shropshire Union Canal 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 the saint, it is named after, came here around AD 670. The oldest part of the church is the chancel, which was built about 1250 in the Early English style.

The project, which cost £ 93,000, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

The wider and enhanced use of the church for concerts and exhibitions has been achieved. 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.

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. For the church the facilities mean that the congregation stays after services engendering a greater "church family" spirit. The congregation remained static through the 12 month interregnum but the arrival of a new, younger vicar in autumn 2003 has had a positive effect on the congregation and numbers are starting to increase.

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. Whilst the DAC supported the overall concept, there were considerable difficulties relating to the design and one feature of the scheme had to be dropped. Having "won" their case, the church was very disappointed that they had to stand the whole of the Court Costs, which were considerable - £25,000. Despite this the church still considers the end result to be well worth the cost incurred. This church's view is that "if the members of a Parish believe wholeheartedly in the concept of their project they should not be deflected from their course of action by even the most vociferous and virulent objections". One wonders whether they would have felt the same if they had lost their case.

362: Lancashire

This is a village of 2,800 residents, west of Blackburn. 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 was built in the 1800's and is in good condition due to renovation and reordering over the last few years.

The project, which cost £42,000, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

The room is used for very few meetings but is regularly used for other activities - Coffee Drop-in every Tuesday morning, "Little Angels" Mother and Toddler group, Young people's group, Concert and Choir practices.

Impact on church and community

The Coffee Drop-in is a new activity and much appreciated by elderly people. "Little Angels" is of great 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 as people stay and chat, however there has been no increase in numbers attending services.

366: Derbyshire

This village has 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. It 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. **The church** was built around 1900 and is not listed. The church hall needed a lot of money spending on it and was sold to fund this project.

The project, which cost £93,000, was to create a two storey narthex at the west end of the church to accommodate

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

To accommodate the users of the church hall, namely

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

What was achieved

All of the above users moved into the church but the Mums and Toddlers have found other premises, as there was insufficient storage for all of their equipment. However there are others users - St John Ambulance use the church for training courses and administration purposes, weekly Post-natal clinic and local organisations - all of which saw the advertisement on the Church Notice Board.

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, the church provides a useful extra venue as demonstrated by the new users above and the old church hall has been converted into affordable dwellings. Church organisations enjoy the facilities and church attendance has remained constant throughout the recent 18 month interregnum.

There have been significant problems with the heating system, which have taken a long time to remedy. Throughout the construction period there were difficulties with the architect who was unable to give the project the attention that the group considered adequate and who appeared to have little control over the activities of the contractor.

Because of the heating problems the management team have not promoted the facilities too strongly and they feel that the church, as a community resource, has yet to meet its full potential.

367: Northamptonshire

This is a very small village with a population of less than 300, it has no community centre or meeting room and there is no longer a school. The church dates from 1280 and is constructed of local ironstone and lime stone under a leaded roof. The church has never been patronised by wealthy landowners as shown by the lack of internal ornamentation. In 1969 the church building was deemed unsafe and was closed. It was re-opened on 27 January 1991 due to the hard work of the villagers. The building is listed Grade II*.

The project, which cost £40,250, was

- ❖ To install a performance platform in front of the rood screen
- ❖ To create a meeting room at the west end of the south aisle
- ❖ To install kitchen and toilet facilities at the west end of the north aisle.

To enhance the existing uses of the church,

- ❖ Concerts
- ❖ Fetes
- ❖ Exhibitions
- ❖ Parish Council Meetings

To enable

- ❖ Mother and Toddler group
- ❖ Senior citizens social activities
- ❖ Youth group
- ❖ Music and drama performances by local people
- ❖ Film shows.

What was achieved

All of the existing activities continue to thrive. Of the new activities, the film shows were unable to go ahead because of perceived licensing problems and the senior citizens' social activities have not happened. The Mother and Toddler group is about to start now there are enough toddlers. The Youth group is proving a big success, operating on alternate weeks in two different villages and drawing young people from both. One of the schools in one of these villages, which has no hall, used the church for a play at Easter and would like continued use of the church.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities are particularly appreciated by concert goers, drama enthusiasts and young people and the school have a new resource. The project has "resulted in dialogue which has emphasised the church at the centre of the community". Church numbers have increased slightly despite the recent 18 month interregnum. Buoyed by the success of this project, the group successfully applied for an enhancement grant from the Millennium Commission to install new heating and lighting systems.

379: Milton Keynes

This is a sizeable village of 1,000 dwellings and a population of 2,500, outside Milton Keynes. There is a good mix of age groups including a lot of elderly people in purpose built flats and bungalows. There are 2 pubs, a village hall, a playing field and sports pavilion, the Scout and Guide HQ and a Working Men's club. The church was built in 1120 and the magnificent west Tower, with its crocketed spire, pinnacles and flying buttresses, was added in 1414. The church is listed grade I. In recent years the church has been re-ordered, to place the altar centrally in the Nave and to install a kitchen in the south porch.

The project, which cost £64,300, was to develop the tower to provide

- ❖ A disabled access WC and vestry in the base of the tower
- ❖ A meeting room at first floor level in the bell tower, with a gallery at first floor level to allow re-location of the organ at a later date.

To enable

- ❖ Meetings for local organisations
- ❖ Having the church open and manned more than the present arrangement of Wednesday and Saturday afternoons in the summer
- ❖ Use by the school and other study groups as a teaching resource
- ❖ Concerts and drama performances
- ❖ A summer play scheme
- ❖ Better attendance at the annual open weekend when local charities and community groups are encouraged to have stands.

What was achieved

All of the planned activities were achieved except for increasing the opening of the church; this was due to a lack of volunteers and a long interregnum when people were being called upon to do other things. The summer play scheme and annual open weekend were both incredibly successful in 2003. In addition to the planned activities a weekly Toddler group has been set up.

Impact on church and community

The church has proved to be a good meeting place for village events, regularly used by the school and by toddlers, children and young people - "it really has made a difference". The congregation is growing due to the new young vicar and the availability of toilet facilities.

The group successfully applied for an enhancement grant for more heating.

383: Yorkshire

This church has a population of 700, and is situated on the edge of the Vale of York. 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 1/2 mile from the church. The church stands on the highest ground in the village, at the centre of the village. It dates from the 12th century. The most interesting features are the unbuttressed tower with round headed slit windows in the lower stages and the Norman arch. The church is a Grade II listed building.

The project, which cost £50,900, was

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

To enable

- ❖ Small meetings
- ❖ Better facilities for visitors, of which there are a considerable number as the church is open every day
- ❖ Better facilities for concert goers. This church already hosts several concerts per year and is one of the venues for The Northern Aldborough Festival.

What was achieved

All of the planned activities happened. However pressure from the village hall, which was losing income, has meant that the Parish Council meetings have moved back there.

Impact on church and community

New facilities appreciated by concert goers and those who attend meetings. The church has experienced an increase in morale and congregations have increased.

However "there is some feeling *among those who never come to church* that the use of the chapel for secular purposes was a profanation of a sacred building. No churchgoers felt this way!"

386: Bedfordshire

This village has 1600 residents. There is a post office and general store, two pubs, a primary school, a Village Hall, a Church Hall and a Methodist Hall. The Church Hall was erected in 1942 as an emergency building and is in a state of disrepair; it is used as a charity shop. The church stands approximately one mile from the centre of the village, where the original centre of the village was before houses were built on the Common at the time of the Enclosures in the 18th century. The church is Norman, the nave being constructed around 1150; the tower was added to the west end of the nave in the 15th century. The church is listed grade I.

The project, which cost £98,700, was

- ❖ To build a porch-like extension to accommodate kitchen and toilet facilities
- ❖ To provide disabled access to the facilities from the outside of the building via a new path. Able-bodied people have access via a medieval doorway. This doorway, because of its historic importance, could not be made wider hence the disabled access from outside only
- ❖ To remove some pews to give a "social area" at the west end of the nave
- ❖ To create a small meeting room in the base of the tower.

To enable

- ❖ Concerts
- ❖ Exhibitions
- ❖ Lectures
- ❖ School visits for curriculum studies
- ❖ Art Classes
- ❖ Band practice
- ❖ Meetings.

What was achieved

Concerts, school visits, band practice and meetings have taken place. The other planned activities have not happened because the heating in the church is inadequate - this is being addressed.

Impact on church and community

Those who use the church appreciate the new facilities. Plans to introduce more services for children, now feasible due to the new facilities, had to be suspended when the vicar retired unexpectedly. The congregation has remained constant throughout the interregnum.

An enhancement grant was successfully applied for to address the heating problem.

387: Shropshire

This village has a dilapidated Village Hall, a pub, a small primary school and a post office/general store. The population numbers about 250, the majority are retired but there has been a recent influx of young families following the building of a small development of social housing. Standing in the foothills of the South Shropshire border with the Welsh Marches, **the church**, has been of great importance both religiously and historically from the 8th century. The church is an edifice of stone and cream roughcast in the Norman and Early English style with modern additions; it is listed Grade I.

The project, which cost £19,000, was

- ❖ To put kitchen and toilet facilities in the base of the tower
- ❖ To remove the fixed pews from the chapel to give a versatile space.

To enable

- ❖ More concerts to be held
- ❖ More sessions of the after school club
- ❖ Drop-in coffee mornings for elderly people, for whom there is currently nothing in the village
- ❖ Drop-in meeting space for parents prior to collecting their children from school, there are no activities for young families
- ❖ Exhibitions
- ❖ Lectures and talks for small interest groups.

What was achieved

Some concerts have been held and a series of four lectures per year has been established but that is all. However this church has gone through two periods of interregnum since the works were completed in autumn 2000 and all efforts have been used to keep the church going rather than to develop new community activities.

Impact on church and community

The impact on the wider community to date has been small but nonetheless worthwhile – the lecture series drawing an audience of 35 people for quite serious subjects. The flexible space afforded by the converted chapel has proved to be invaluable for funerals as the chairs can be arranged to incorporate the space into the main body of the church; funerals tend to be well-attended and a very important part of village life. Although the congregation has not increased for weekly services, all of the “special services” (Carol service, Crib service, Harvest Festival) are now drawing in all of the young families in the village; this is largely due to the availability of toilet facilities. A new young vicar has been appointed very recently and he is working closely with the school; it is hoped that the proposed activities that targeted young people and their families will now be developed.

In a village of this size the pool of volunteers is small hence an interregnum has a greater effect than in a larger parish. Nonetheless having the excellent facilities enjoyed by this church means that when the personnel are available to develop new ideas, the physical resources already exist.

388: Derbyshire

This is a village of about 1,000 residents. It has a Village Hall, a school, a pub and a couple of shops. The church 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.

The project, which cost £40,250, was

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

To enable

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

What was achieved

All planned activities has happened.

Impact on church and community

Prior to the work being done the church was not used as a community resource, 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.

390: Yorkshire

This village made famous by a television programme receives thousands of visitors every year.

The 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 being piloted in the village; this project was in response to the wishes of those young people for a drop-in centre.

The project, which cost £62,000, was

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

To provide

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

What was achieved

All of the proposed activities have been achieved but it has been hard work. The computers and software were donated and were not "state of the art", since these have been upgraded the project has had more impact. There were problems initially getting the trust of young people and overcoming the stigma attached to being a Christian organisation – this has been the most difficult hurdle to overcome. Initially it was difficult to attract adult volunteers but now there are 5 volunteers and 2 paid part-time staff due to interest and support of local government and other funders.

Impact on church and community

After a slow start the project has taken off and now has a real impact on young people in the area. Although church attendance has increased this is not due to the project. The minister who set this project up would like to get greater Christian input into the project.

This project is now so popular that the premises are not big enough and they are looking for new premises.

397: Rutland

This is 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 is most imposing with a very tall tower; there has been a church here since Norman times. The names of the Vicars since 1237 are known and records of baptisms, marriages and burials have been kept since 1576. In 1897 the church was restored. It is listed Grade I.

The project, which cost £27,500, was

- ❖ 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.

To enable

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

What was achieved

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.

Impact on church and community

The new facilities have made a big difference to concert goers and to the many visitors to the church. The church, having secured the services of a "curate with great enthusiasm", has made great changes with the introduction of Sunday School for the under 10's, Youth club for the over 12's and a Family service once a month; these changes have led to an increased congregation.

This small village with a population of about 750, is situated near Battle and hence there are a lot of visitors to the village and its main attraction, the parish church. **The 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 its survival was threatened. A restoration scheme was drawn up in 1984 and swiftly put into action after the 1987 hurricane damage. The programme of works, scheduled to run from 1987 to 2010, covers the restoration of the church, its development for wider activities and improvements to the churchyard. This project was stage 5, facilities to enable the wider community use of the church.

The project, which cost £44,000, was

- ❖ To enlarge and convert the vestry into a vestry / small meeting room
- ❖ To install a kitchenette and disabled access WC
- ❖ 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

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

What was achieved

The planned activities were achieved.

Impact on church and community

Concert goers and people who attend exhibitions are drawn from farther than the local community, the church is providing an extra arts venue. Children and young people appear to enjoy the activities designed for them but show little or no initiative in organising or assisting, similarly parents enjoy their children's participation but very few offer to help. To give an example, "the local school held its nativity play and carol service in the church, the cost of heating the church for the rehearsal and performance cost the church £20. In addition the church was asked to contribute £50 towards the hire of a coach to transport the children the 1/2 mile from school...It was a good service and the Church was full with a large number of parents - the collection plate yielded a mere £11.61."

The project was conceived under the leadership of a dynamic vicar, under whose leadership congregation numbers had increased. She was promoted 18 months ago and has been replaced by a NSM (non-stipendary minister); the congregation has dwindled back to 18 again. Only one of the team who took this project forward is still around, there are no new volunteers and there is still a £4,000 loan to repay.

By using the church for community activities, other shortcomings of the building have been highlighted- the need for rewiring, new lighting, re-flooring. The respondent feels that the scheme would have been more thoroughly thought through had there not been so much pressure to meet the Millennium Commission's deadline.

Appendix B: Review feedback in tabular format

