



Annual Report

2016

Communicating - Listening - Encouraging - Advising - Renewing

Introduction

Churches Together in Devon brings together the main Christian churches with a county wide presence in Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay). It aims to facilitate common witness to the Christian faith, encouraging consultation and co-ordination between member churches and working and praying for Christian unity.

The main contact point is the County Ecumenical Officer. Email churchestogetherdevon@gmail.com, or see website for current details: <http://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/devon/>

Governance

The charity is run by an Enabling Group (trustees), who are either appointed by member Churches or co-opted to provide additional skills and knowledge. In 2016 these were:

Church leaders (Presidents of Churches Together in Devon)

The Divisional Commander of the South Western Division of the Salvation Army, Major Jean Harris (Chair to May 2016). Major Stephen White and Major Amanda White (from Sept 2016).

The Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter District of the Methodist Church, Rev Graham Thompson (CTD Chair from May 2016)

The Anglican Bishop of Exeter, Rt Rev Robert Atwell

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth, Rt Rev Mark O'Toole

The Moderator of the South Western Synod of the United Reformed Church, Rev Ruth Whitehead

A Regional Minister of the South West Baptist Association: Rev Carl Smethurst

Denominational Ecumenical Officers

Rev Michelle Parkman - Baptist

The Ven. Dr Mark Butchers – Church of England

Mrs Christine Harbottle - Methodist

Mrs Mary Ann James - Roman Catholic

Major Sue Camp-Richards - Salvation Army

Rev Dr Tom Bush – United Reformed Church (from May 2016)

Others

Mr Hugh Rodway - Hon Treasurer

Mr Bruce Govett - co-opted

Main activities in 2016:

Churches Together in Devon enabled leaders from different Churches to share their vision and approach to sustaining faith and mission in both rural and urban parts of the county, and to learn from the experience of diverse traditions.

Through shared information and planning, visible Christian presence in areas of new housing in Devon, was encouraged, as was the growth of chaplaincy in a range of public settings.

Local joint working by churches in cities, towns and villages was supported through providing advice and information to local Churches Together groups.

In its role as sponsoring body for Local Ecumenical Partnerships in the County, Churches Together in Devon undertakes periodic reviews of local churches in which two or more denominations are joined. In 2016 these were reported for Christ Church- Barnstaple, Lakeway Church - North Tawton, and Fairplace Church - Okehampton.

Through regular news bulletins, the website and Facebook group, churches were made aware of resources to enable them to work together effectively on both growth in faith and social action in the community. The website also acts as an information point for the public.

The experience and insights of churches in Devon contributed to the development of national policy by Churches Together in England, for example on new forms of governance to fit the variety of ways in which local churches are joining in initiatives relevant to their communities.

The County Ecumenical Officer, Rev Sue Macbeth, was instrumental in this work, providing advice to Churches Together groups and Local Ecumenical Partnerships through visits and ad hoc contacts; linking to wider networks, and sharing news through a range of channels.

These activities achieved public benefit through the charitable objective of promoting the Christian religion; through encouraging effective partnerships between different churches for public benefit in particular localities; and through signposting ways in which Christians can respond to issues ranging from climate change to dementia.

Financial summary

Income in 2016 was £13,257, from church subscriptions and bank interest. (2015 £12,519)

Expenditure in 2016 was £16,565, on staff, governance and administrative costs. (2015 £14,720)

Balance held £21,533 (2015 £24,841), of which £3,204 is in restricted or designated funds.

Churches Together in Devon does not undertake any public fundraising. It has one part-time member of staff and does not own or occupy any premises. Other activities were undertaken on a volunteer basis, mainly by members of the Enabling Group.

Approved 20th September 2017