



The Church of England
around Staffordshire, northern
Shropshire and the Black Country

**TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES
TOGETHER** 
CUF & LICHFIELD DIOCESE

news

“We are in the business of transforming communities together”

Churches across the diocese work together with people living with poverty and other forms of vulnerability. Transforming Communities Together is a Joint Venture with the Church Urban Fund seeking to encourage and support this ministry.



Good Stoke: Local people can be empowered when they discuss the values which underpin a good society and what needs to change for that to happen. Sarah Watson works part-time facilitating such discussions. We are now exploring the initiatives of Places of Welcome, End Hunger UK and Church of the Poor.



For Richer, For Poorer: Shared learning and encouragement emerges when churches from different backgrounds form a relationship of mutual respect. Ruth Clay is our part-time Church Partnership officer, working with 80 churches, of whom 16 are in partnerships, and a further 16 pending.



Near Neighbours: Community cohesion is built up when people of different faiths and ethnicity come together to develop positive relationships and work together on initiatives which improve their local neighbourhood. Ruth Burgess works for Near Neighbours across the Black Country, supporting such projects with small grants, and encouraging networking and good relationships amongst faith-based groups.



Sandwell Church Links: Churches and local organisations are working together to reduce poverty in Sandwell. Laura Nott serves as SCL's director, connecting and equipping churches. The current focus is on reversing the vicious cycle of food poverty, improving access to financial services for all, and empowering town-based local networks.



Places of Welcome: is a growing network of hospitality run by churches & local community groups so that everyone in their area has a place to go for a friendly face, a cup of tea and a conversation if and when they need it. Sue Ball works part-time across Birmingham and the Black Country supporting existing Places of Welcome and establishing new ones.



bcuim Basic Budgeting: Everyone can benefit from learning simple, practical money & budgeting skills. TCT and BCUIM equip people to deliver Basic Budgeting Courses, or to be a Budgeting Buddy. The fun and interactive half day session covers: 1) How to build a budget from scratch; 2) Money saving tips and ideas; 3) Awareness of basic financial jargon; 4) Exploration of credit/debt. Mike Batchelor is BCUIM's trainer.



POVERTY TRUTH

WOLVERHAMPTON

Wolverhampton Poverty Truth Commission: People who live with poverty develop an experience-based understanding of the underlying issues and a wide range of coping strategies. Over a two-year period, Wolverhampton Poverty Truth Commission will enable a small group, who can testify to their experience of poverty, to share their knowledge and insights with a similar group of decision-makers within the city through on-going relationships of mutual respect. James Henderson is seconded one day/week to help establish WPTC.

Dementia friendly church



Dementia Friendly Churches: help those living with dementia and their carers to be valued members of the church family. Sarah Thorpe has pioneered the development of this ministry around Shropshire, and two more dementia friendly church enablers are being recruited to cover the whole diocese.

Transforming Talk: supports ministers providing One to One conversations around

- managing transitions
- problem solving
- redirecting energy
- focus on vision
- clarify thinking
- put thinking into practice

The minister chooses the focus for an intentional conversation that works towards bringing about tangible change.



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Development Work: Churches and other community groups want to see the people in their parish flourish, but many people are struggling. It can be difficult to know how best to respond to this.



Our Development Worker, James Henderson, is able to come alongside the local church to provide this support and advice, taking in to account the assets in the parish and helping churches access networks of information and support.

This might include helping churches support refugees, through Walsall Borough City of Sanctuary, or training a Families Champion in a church; raising awareness about the changes Universal Credit will make in partnership with City of Wolverhampton council, or working with the police and other agencies to tackle Modern Slavery. We are also involved with issues such as supporting ex-offenders, the homeless, and those with mental health issues.

Many of the projects listed on this document are also supported by TCT. Sign up for our regular e-newsletter.

Together Grants: Many churches and groups have great ideas to support their community, but lack the funds to do this. Transforming Communities Together helps churches and other faith groups apply for start-up funding of up to £5,000 to tackle poverty in their area, or for them to extend the existing work they do. Since April last year over £66,000 has been brought into communities in the Diocese.



Next year TCT will have an additional focus on supporting parishes

- Listening to their communities
- Recognising the resources of local people and networks
- Identifying possible partners to effect change

For further details on all these projects, initial contact details are below.

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