

Go and do likewise

Impacting upon our
local communities

David McClay



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1 Introduction

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS booklet is to provide parishes, clergy, parish groups and individuals with resources that will stimulate and encourage us to engage in social action and outreach to those around us in our local communities.

It is hoped that this material will provide you with ideas and resources to help you make real in your situation the words of Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.

They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations' (Isaiah 61: 1-4).

'For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them' (Isaiah 61: 8).

All of the biblical quotations in this booklet are taken from: *The Holy Bible. New International Version* (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, London, 1992). These together with the contents of the booklet can be applied and adapted to your local situation.

I am grateful to all those who have added to my material by making such valuable contributions to this booklet allowing

all of us to avail of the resource of their experiences and ideas.

I am deeply indebted to Susan Hood for editing and designing the layout of all the material in this booklet, and to all in Church of Ireland Publishing and the RCB Library for making this material available to the wider church.

May lives and communities be transformed through our parishes and our people.

David McClay
Rector of Willowfield, Diocese of Down
May, 2005

2 *Go and Do Likewise*

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IN THE IDYLIC VILLAGE of Strangford, county Down, is a gracious, if over large, old rectory which was at least up until recently on the market. Set in a generous screening of trees and an elegant garden, it was at the turn of the nineteenth century the home of the Revd Edward Ryan. There are not many of his effects in existence today, but a brief creedal poem, dating from the nineteenth century, in what may well have been his own handwriting, has been worked into a small tapestry by his granddaughter. The last line reads, 'Where there is God, there is no need'.

Even in those days, 'need' was a significant word and the Christian church made the meeting of the needs of parishioners a major part of its task. Indeed, the creation of the civilisation usually known as 'western' owes much more to the exertions of the church than is generally understood. It may be that the modern welfare state has blunted this perception of Christianity today and we have reduced our understanding of church to a teaching and worshipping role, which contributes only to the lives of those who choose to attend and listen. The needs of the vast majority of the population are not really considered. Yet the basic impulses which promoted the existence of education, health, justice and even such financial institutions as pensions and insurance, are generated by Christian principles and energies. The Christian understanding of the sanctity of the individual under-girds everything.

When Jesus told the questioning lawyer about the man who 'fell among thieves', he was not teaching that Samaritans were good people, as so many people outside the church seem to think, but that the needs of any person are the concern of everyone else even if they are racially, culturally and even religiously opposed. The parable ends with an explicit instruction which forms the title of this booklet and which the church has always recognised as binding.

Bringing God's grace and goodness to the marginalized is our calling, our responsibility and our privilege.

Of course, the question from the lawyer arose out of the difficulty he found in applying the law, 'love your neighbour as yourself'. If the lawyer was serious, and Luke hints that he wasn't really, he found himself unable to plot a course through the various regulations and prejudices which hemmed him in and restricted his activities in the field of loving his neighbour. Many Christian leaders today find themselves equally perplexed. What exactly can they do when other groups seem better equipped and informed to respond to people's needs? What is the role of the church with regard to social action and social outreach today?

Christ himself broke out from the boundaries which confined him in his day. Possessed by the Holy Spirit of compassion he went everywhere healing all manner of sickness and diseases and teaching the gospel of the Kingdom. He sent his disciples out on the same mission. When he was tired he rested, though much of the refreshment he received came from prayer. He accepted no man-made restrictions, teaching priceless truths with the relentless power of love, being a good shepherd to all who would hear his voice. He came to seek and to save the lost. When the risks that he took brought him to the Cross, the Resurrection and the Ascension followed, and the Holy Spirit anointed the church with power from on high to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus – a mission and ministry always orientated towards outsiders, the marginalized and the poor.

The history of the church is punctuated with similar exploits. What made St Patrick such an effective missionary? How did the Wesleys revive the dying church of their day? Mother Theresa caught the imagination of the world by dedicating herself to the squalid poor of Calcutta. Many,

many examples could be given of those who have gone where Christ has called them to go, in his Name, by his Spirit, and with his compassion in their hearts.

In his autobiography *Steps along hope street. My life in cricket, the church and the inner city* (London, 2002), the former bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Revd David Sheppard, tells of a change which came over him as a result of his curacy in Islington, north London: 'There were large-scale preaching moments. Reflecting on them, the evidence seemed to show that people like those I met out visiting in Islington were not present at these meetings any more than at 'ordinary' church services. Living in inner London, becoming concerned in such areas ... there was only one thing I wanted to do – to serve in an inner-city area'.

Later he was to discover that many, if not most of the people who inhabited the flats and houses of London's East End did not read books. They read the headlines of the daily tabloids and enjoyed the pictures but they were scarcely open to persuasion by argument. One local said that he had enjoyed Sheppard's article in 'my wife's book', but this turned out to be *Woman's Own*. There was not another book in the house. This is not to say they could not read or they could not think. But it is not their usual way and they tend to suppose that what they cannot see and touch is not really valid. They need to meet people who contribute more than ideas or words and whose concern and compassion are almost visible and tangible. The Christian must minister to their needs out of just such a heartfelt love.

A clergyman in London once asked the Most Revd Michael Ramsey, former archbishop of Canterbury, when the church would be reclaiming the working classes. Ramsey replied: 'We've never had them'.

Perhaps this is why so many efforts, God-given and God-blessed, have ended by withdrawing from the traditional church. The Methodist societies are the proto-type of this. Growing much wider than the working classes by the end of John Wesley's life, the movement of revival had started among the miners in Somerset and the crowds who gathered in Whitechapel in East London. The undoubted cause of the spread was the love generated by the Spirit and not only the truth which was preached.

But it is not only the working classes who are divorced from the Christian religion. Another archbishop once said: 'We have the poor poor and the rich poor'. There are of course the minority of the well-to-do who go to church and always have done, but the major proportion would seem to have wandered off into unfounded speculation, turning their education into the means by which they indulge in endless debate and disputation. Only a few sense that inner vacuum for a meaning and a purpose in life which leads them to give careful consideration to the claims which the church makes. Many today believe that Christianity is simply untrue or at best irrelevant. Is this because of our failure to connect in meaningful ways with the uncommitted and unconvinced?

Not for nothing has Christ chosen to reveal himself by truth and by love – by Word and by Spirit. It is in and by the Body of Christ that the Word is proclaimed and demonstrated, and unless the Word is supported by acts of love which show the church's determination as best it can to meet the needs of society in city and countryside, the Word will seldom be heard.

A church without a programme of social action, is a contradiction in terms. James, the brother of our Lord and presiding bishop of the early church, seems to agree with this. In spite of suggestions that he is correcting Paul in his

emphasis upon faith, his epistle is clearly confirming it in the opening verses and asks for greater consistency afterwards with a faith that works. 'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world' (James 1:27). Luke reported Jesus saying: 'When you give a banquet invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed' (Luke 14:13). Matthew reported that Jesus said: 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me' (Matthew 25:40).

The Old Testament is no less explicit. Isaiah prophesies:

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen; to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry, and to provide the poor homeless with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?...If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday (Isaiah 58:6-7, 9-10).

There used to be in some sections of the church a rejection of what was called 'the social gospel'. This was in order to rediscover the purity of the 'gospel of salvation' and that was a worthy and vital motive. But was the price too high and has the church found itself to be perverting the biblical revelation which was and always has been the foundation of its life? Salvation is not only the gateway to heaven, but also a commission to reach out with the compassion which Jesus demonstrated so poignantly.

We need to discover ways of fulfilling the great commandment to love God and to love our neighbour. It is hoped

that this booklet will make some contribution to that goal and that you will find it a practical helpful resource.

3 Getting Started

WE PROBABLY NEED TO begin by acknowledging that most local communities can have the perspective that their local church or churches are uninterested in and irrelevant to the needs, hopes and aspirations of those outside the church. This can be true in any community, rural, city or town. The gap between those inside our churches who find comfort from our religious traditions, and those outside who find church largely irrelevant is ever widening.

Inner city congregations are often made up of people that commute from 'nicer' suburbs and have few natural contacts with the hundreds (more often thousands) of people who live in the streets around the church building. Many of those people face daily issues such as unemployment, teenage pregnancies, debt, broken relationships, intimidation from paramilitary groups, and the effects of local children growing up without respect for people or property.

Many communities can often feel that those who attend their local churches are removed from, and uninterested in their life struggles. Ways need to be found to bring churchgoers in touch with local non-churchgoers who can be among the most socially deprived in our communities. The image that the church is only interested in taking people's money and has little to offer needs to be broken. Ways in which churches already serve their communities through groups like 'mothers and toddlers' after school clubs, children's and youth organisations, need to be celebrated and such groups empowered and envisioned for outreach and practical ways of connecting individuals in churches with local communities explored imaginatively.

For example, a lone parent - herself a victim of sexual abuse and her child the result of rape - burst into tears of joy when some people from a local church decided to give away very nice pot plants to every family in the block of

high street flats where she lived. No one had ever given this lone parent flowers in her life. This initial contact led to her looking to this church for help at a later stage in her life and that local church had the privilege of loving and ministering to this lady.

An alcoholic couple - husband and wife - were brought in contact with their local church through a series of contacts that included someone from the church giving them a house plant to welcome them to their new home. Another person giving ice creams away made contact with them again few days later. Both contacts eventually led to this couple to do an Alpha Course, seek ongoing help to overcome their alcoholic addiction, and they have now completely transformed lives through involvement in their local church.

These are real life examples of people who were impacted upon by the love of God through the action of their local Church of Ireland church.

Every church needs to find ways of connecting with the residents of their local community in ways that are culturally relevant. Here are some ideas that have worked in other settings which could well prove helpful in your setting:

- Providing meals for homeless people
- Giving house plants to those in high rise flats or in homes without gardens
- Clearing litter from local streets
- Church work parties removing graffiti (local councils will sometimes provide detergents and equipment if churches or community groups will provide workers). Local sensitivities need to be considered before undertaking this kind of project.

- Door-to-door surveys where parishes are genuinely wanting to find out more about local needs and are willing to put in place programmes to help meet those needs. (For an example of such a survey, see Appendix 1).
- Checking smoke alarms and providing batteries for smoke alarms – this is particularly helpful in communities that have a high percentage of older residents.
- Street BBQs are proving to be very effective in building friendships between those in churches and those who are non-churchgoers in at least one inner city parish. A home group or a group of individuals first of all do a leaflet drop in a street or a group of streets to let local residents know that a street BBQ will take place on a certain evening. On the appointed evening BBQs are set up, food cooked and given away while there is perhaps face painting for children, music, and any number of other fun activities. This simply makes people aware that the local parish church is there to serve them and their community.
- Giving away sweets or chocolate bars. Home-made chocolates can even be packaged nicely. An ideal time to do this could be the Saturday before Mother's Day or at some other time with a special focus. This simple act simply raises awareness of the church's commitment to family life.
- Holy Week provides an opportunity for imaginative 'give-aways'. It can be very powerful and invites many questions if churches are seen to be out of their church buildings perhaps giving away simple crosses (St Bridget crosses are ideal) in the week when our focus is on God giving His Son.
- Free car washes provide a way of bringing people into a church car park who have perhaps never been anywhere near a church. While cars are being washed why not provide free tea or coffee in your church building for the drivers and passengers? Shock your community

into reassessing their perception of church.

- Arranging with your local ice-cream shop to give away free ice creams for perhaps a two-hour period some Saturday afternoon. With the free ice cream give invitations to a free fun event in your church at some future date. Your local ice-cream shop will be happy. Lots of families will begin to ask questions about the local church and see this church is different. Those people are interested in their local community.
- Giving away hot dogs at some large community event that involves people waiting around. One parish near to an interface area in inner-city Belfast gave away over 1000 hot dogs on the 1st July 'Battle of the Somme' parade where thousands of people lined the streets to watch this annual parade. This brought people of the local parish in touch with people who would normally consider church to be irrelevant to them in this highly politicised working class community.

Other ideas include:

- Umbrella escorts – escorting elderly to doctor's clinics etc.
- Windscreen washing
- Gift wrapping at Christmas
- Public toilet cleaning
- Bag packing at supermarkets
- Shopping trolley return at supermarkets
- Give away cokes/coffee/cheap sun glasses, etc at sporting events
- Oil change in cars owned by lone parents
- Washer fluid fill/ tire pressure check/ oil / filter change etc. for cars owned by the elderly
- Interior vacuuming of cars/ bulb replacement/ car wash etc.
- Free fragrance cards

- In cold weather offer windscreen scrape/ice removal
- Parking meter feed and helping people park their cars
- In parks provision of dog poop clean-up/helium balloons to kids
- Community picnics in the local parks
- Give away flower seed packets
- Offer free face painting to local kids
- Pen/pencil giveaway at start of new school term
- Cleaning up autumn leaves from around the homes of elderly people
- Lawn mowing/grass edging/ general garden clean-up
- Door-to-door plant giveaway
- Gutter cleaning
- Footpath sweeping
- Snow removal from paths and drives
- Window washing
- Free meals for the community
- Light bulb replacement
- Weed spraying/pulling
- Replacing smoke-detector batteries, especially in homes for elderly
- Mother's Day gift giveaway
- Food delivery to the housebound
- Free bird feeders and refills to nursing homes
- Collect trees after Christmas for disposal

There are other ways that parishes can provide social events for outreach to local people, so that they increasingly see the church as both interested in, and relevant to them. **People in communities will be more likely to turn to their local church for support and help after such initial contacts.**

Church can also support families moving house and with decorating etc. I can think of several families intimidated

out of their homes being cared for by a home group in the local parish. This group have found alternative accommodation for the families, physically helping them to move, and decorating their new homes for them.

Major Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas provide opportunities for parishes to engage with their communities by doing things like bringing families outside of our churches together with church-going families for parties, where friendships are made. These ensure that at least some with real emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs can have those needs met through new contacts with people in our churches.

4 Having a Strategic Plan 19

HAVING CONDUCTED SURVEYS INTO what the needs are in a local community, by interviewing local doctors, police, teachers and others, as well as extensive listening to local residents, a plan of action can be drawn up. This exercise needs to involve a number of people (probably between six and 18) meeting prayerfully to pray, plan and map out together a way forward.

One parish's plan to impact six areas of particular concern follows. It is hoped that this plan may help you draw up a plan of action to impact and to serve your community, bearing in mind funders will always look for evidence of strategic planning. See Appendix 2 for a sample plan.

Going and doing in tougher housing estates: examples of strategic plans

Housing estates are often regarded as difficult places for the church to minister. The Church of Ireland is privileged to have the opportunity of ministering in tough housing estates in our towns and cities. Our parishes include these housing estates and in some instances we have church buildings and halls in the middle of these estates and developments. The levels of social depravation are often high and the opportunities and challenges presented to our parishes are great. In the article that follows the Revd Jan Hales, until recently curate at St. Andrew's church, Coleraine - a daughter church of the town centre church of St. Patrick's, Coleraine - tells of some of the ways the local church of St. Andrew's has been engaging with residents in Ballysally Estate.

**Ministering the gospel
in Ballysally Estate,
Coleraine,
Revd Jan Hales**

Ballysally is a challenging place to be the body of Christ. There are many social problems and an ever widening gap between church culture and where many people find themselves. Some of the St. Andrew's congregation believe God has called them to be a light in Ballysally, but it is not easy

to reach out and keep reaching out to folk who have major issues.

Below are some of the things we have tried that have worked, by sowing a seed into an area which has not heard the gospel and does not have a good expectation of church:

- We have had a fun day with free bouncy castle, face painting, BBQ, entertainment. A great community day but a large drain on our resources.
- We run a holiday club for children each summer and this is a great outreach to kids and parents.
- We ran summer events for teenagers and have started a youth club and other teenage midweek events. God has provided the funding for a full time youth and children's worker to live on the estate and do detached youth work.
- For the keen and committed we have a childminding morning while parents do their 'Santa' shopping. This really blessed the mums who availed of the service.
- We run bicycle workshops where kids bring their bikes and we service them for free. A great outreach because you can talk to the parents while they wait and play games with the kids – you do need a second team to do this.
- We offer to do whatever the pensioners want done in their gardens. We also give them free harvest gifts from the two churches on the estate.
- We invite pensioners to a free Christmas dinner and try to encourage them to come to midweek over 60s meeting.
- We have used Alpha courses and have also written a course for an estate group. People's literacy can be very poor.

All of these acts of service have begun to reverse the feeling that 'the church is only interested in our money'. We want the people on the estate to know that Jesus loves them and so do the Christians in St Andrew's church. We want them to know that they can come to us and be loved and accepted.

Vital to all of these initiatives are our relationships with all the other agencies that work on the estate and with the Presbyterian Church. We see ourselves as having a long-term commitment to improving the lives of the people in Ballysally. The curate-in-charge of St Andrew's also lives on the estate, seen frequently at the local shops and in the Community Centre, and eats dinner in the Community House.

Ballysally has all the difficulties of social deprivation and paramilitary activity typical of many housing estates in Northern Ireland yet much that is good is happening and the church here is impacting upon its local community with the love of God.

Moving from our church to the communities of our towns

From Ballysally in Coleraine, one of Northern Ireland's toughest housing estates, we move on to Lurgan - one of its largest market towns. Lurgan, like many towns in Northern Ireland, has felt the effects of the trauma of 30 years of violence and sectarian division. Yet with strong Christian conviction and courage, Shankill parish has, in a focussed way during the 1990's and into a new millennium, promoted reconciliation, and put in place a strong and imaginative programme of social action that has impacted upon hundreds of lives of people from every section of society in Lurgan. The present rector of Lurgan, the Revd Maurice Elliott, has kindly submitted this report on the

work of Shankill Parish Caring Association (SPCA).

**Shankill Parish Caring
Association,
Revd Maurice Elliott**

SPCA was formally constituted, with charitable status, on 15 June 1993. At the beginning of April 1996 it became a company limited by guarantee, which meant that it acquired an independent identity. Within this structure there is provision for a board of directors on which the select vestry of the parish retains a majority interest, yet also with allowance for representation from either the constituent organisations or the wider community.

Having been originally conceived in order to provide an umbrella management group for both the youth work and seniors' ministry of Shankill parish, SPCA's memorandum of association states that 'the company's objects are to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish of Shankill and accustomed members of Shankill parish church, without distinction of age, sex, race, political, religious or other opinion, by associating with the statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for the protection of health and for recreation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants and of promoting the Christian faith among them'.

Over the past ten years SPCA has demonstrated rigour in the pursuit of these aims, and currently its range of activities is such that there are waiting lists for people to join. In addition to all the regular parish organisations, which are held as being open to everyone in the local community and not only to church members, the association operates a community-focussed parent and toddler group, a teenage 'Max' youth club, a breakfast club for school children presently based at King's Park Primary School and known as 'Kidz patch', and an impressive programme for senior citizens under the banner names of 'Cedars' and 'Palms'.

The 'Cedars' programme consists of an array of classes, for which only nominal subscription is required, and including old-time dancing, art and painting, patchwork, Bible study, choral singing and the friendship centre which meets every Monday afternoon as a social gathering geared around indoor bowls, a speaker and light refreshments. In the course of its annual cycle the friendship centre also lays on a number of bus outings and a residential holiday. In turn, some of these are directly affiliated to the Upper Bann Institute of Further and Higher Education. Alongside this, 'Palms' is designed for elderly, mentally infirm individuals, and owes its continuance to substantial and recurrent funding from the Banbridge and Craigavon Health and Social Services Trust. In order to facilitate both activities, part-time staff are employed, and other church members also help out on a voluntary basis, either with the provision of lunches, or by providing minibus driving for transportation.

The activities of SPCA have been at the heart of Shankill parish's desire to serve the local community, and they have been strategic in terms of fostering healthy and normal cross-community relations. The 'Cedars' choir, the members of which are both Protestant and Roman Catholic, has performed locally and at church services elsewhere in both Sligo and Dublin. In addition, SPCA was instrumental in the creation of 'Parents and kids together', a cross-community development for younger children and their parents, and it is a constituent member of the Lurgan Community Bridges Project.

Given certain difficulties with the present building (known as the Brownlow Hall) over the past number of years, SPCA sought a major funding package to provide a completely new, purpose-built facility known as the Jethro Centre. The International Fund for Ireland committed £600,000, the Community Relations Council £250,000, and

For further information
about SPCA contact:

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Church Walk,
Lurgan,
County Armagh BT67 9AA
Email: [contact@shankill-
parish.org](mailto:contact@shankill-parish.org)

Shankill parish £300,000 in addition to the site. Protracted negotiations with central government have resulted in a further grant of £1 million, together with £75,000 from the local Craigavon Borough Council.

Without doubt SPCA has proved its worth both in strong Christian witness, and by contributing to a much more positive sense of community life in Lurgan as a whole. We have every reason to think that it could be a model for similar developments elsewhere in the Church of Ireland, and indeed beyond.

From the tough housing estate of Ballysally and the large market town of Lurgan, we continue on the move, this time to the story of East Belfast Mission on the Newtownards Road in Belfast.

New ways of impacting upon and providing practical care for local communities will require imagination, courage, vision, patience and an ongoing long term commitment to being outwardly focussed as opposed to catering solely for the needs of our own church-going members. EBM has maintained such an outward focus for almost 20 years.

One model of ministry in the inner city: people helping people

East Belfast Mission

East Belfast Mission (EBM) was founded in 1985 to engage in community development and service in the Newtownards Road, Ballymacarrett district of Belfast. It grew out of the work of Newtownards Road Methodist church, which has a history of community service stretching back to 1826. It is the oldest, and one of the largest community organisations in the area, mobilising a staff team of 50 and a volunteer team of a further 50 people in the service of the community.

The organisation has a track record of strategic partnership in social care, including a long-standing relationship with Oaklee Housing Association and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in work with homeless people; the Training & Employment Agency in work with the unemployed; and the South & East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust in work with the elderly.

The Mission operates in an area of considerable deprivation. Under Professor Noble's Multiple Deprivation Measure Index, the electoral ward of Ballymacarrett is the fifth most deprived out of the 566 wards in Northern Ireland. The ward has the fourth worst record on unemployment and on health related issues. 86% of the population live in accommodation rented from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

In response to such need, EBM has developed a range of services helping to meet the needs of children, young people, people who are homeless and/or unemployed, the elderly and families. The various services and programmes offered include:

Hosford House: a hostel for the homeless

In 1990, EBM entered a joint management agreement with the Oaklee Housing Association to build a 22-bed hostel for homeless people. This is now a major facility for the homeless in Belfast and is managed by a team of dedicated professionals. In addition to the accommodation, Hosford House also provides training on independent living and re-settlement skills to prepare clients for self-reliance. Residents are also encouraged to use the Job Bridge (see below) support facilities as another step towards independent living.

Re-settlement

The aim of the re-settlement service is to help the residents secure long-term accommodation appropriate to their needs. This is determined after meeting with the client and completing an assessment of need and ability to live independently. Progression from the hostel environment to independent living can be very isolating for some people so Hosford offers follow-up visits for up to a year after they move on.

Life skills

The purpose of the life skills service is to identify and build on the skills each resident has or would like to have. An holistic approach is taken to look at independent living skills, literacy and numeracy as well as emotional and physical needs. Social and recreational activities are integral to this programme with the organisation of weekly sessions. With new skills, lives can take a turn for the better.

'Job Bridge'

People who enrol with Job Bridge are offered support and advice on training, education, career choices, employment information and any other help an individual might need to become a skilled and competitive employee. This may range from basic literacy and numeric skills to IT training. Job Bridge also offers the opportunity to attend courses run by a local Open Learning Access Centre that delivers a variety of short workshops and seminars. In addition, training in computer literacy, personal effectiveness and employability skills are also provided. In 2003, some 232 people have availed of the services of Job Bridge with 58% moving on to other outcomes, primarily employment. Job Bridge also encompasses the 'new deal' programme, part of the government's 'welfare to work' programme.

Day Centre

The EBM Day Centre serves approximately 17,500 meals a year, including over 6,000 meals on wheels delivered to the elderly and housebound in the area. The main clientele of the day centre are elderly. The meal they receive at the day centre tends to be the only nourishing food of the day. The centre has also developed a community life of its own. People attend every day and there are always staff and volunteers who will provide human contact. There are daily specials on the menu - and people living nearby are always welcome to call in.

Meals on wheels

Over 6,000 meals on wheels are delivered to the elderly and housebound in the area. That's around 35-40 every day. With an increase in resources EBM estimates it could double this amount - highlighting the need in the local area. A trusty car is showing signs of tiredness and a small delivery van would be a dream come true for the delivery team.

Youth work

A recent research project conducted by the East Belfast Community Development Agency in 14 electoral wards in East Belfast, has found that provision of safe play areas for children and suitable youth facilities is the top priority improvement required by residents. Approximately 400 young people and children per week participate in youth programmes at EBM. This work is led by one staff member and up to twenty volunteers. Work ranges from activity based programmes to personal, emotional, social and spiritual development programmes.

The Fast Lane

This is a Friday-night dance venue event which takes place twice a month at Luk4 on the Lower Newtownards Road (see below), just down from the Mission between Dec Street and Templemore Avenue. Doors open at 9pm, strictly for 13-17 year-olds. There is a non-alcoholic bar and various DJ guests provide music. The aim of the Fast Lane is to reach out to those young people who feel under pressure to take part in street violence and/or drug and alcohol misuse. This event offers them an exciting alternative.

'The Hard Shoulder'

Like the Fast Lane, this event takes place in Luk4 and is a chance to take things easier and think about current issues that affect young people. It is also a chance to introduce some worship and life skills to the young people.

Luk4

In the summer of 2001, along with EBM's partner organisation, the Oaklee Housing Association, a former pub was purchased on the same block as the Mission. This has now been transformed into an exciting youth and family centre. Known as 'Luk4', the centre is run by a staff team and volunteers drawn from the greater East Belfast area, providing the following:

- a centre for life skills training for young people
- an alternative night club / pub with no beer
- a family centre

Influences

It is widely recognised by political and community groups in the area that under-age drinking and drug misuse is a significant local problem, contributing in large part to crime

and vandalism. The Luk4 centre enables the Mission to make a positive contribution to the lives of young and old, and offers an alternative to street violence and anti-social behaviour. Through programmes such as IT and DJ training, it aims to guide young people through difficult years to reach their true potential.

Inner-East Forum

Since May 2001 the Mission has participated in a forum of Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist groups in the inner-east Belfast area. This group was established by the Mission community in response to the inter-community street violence of the previous summer and meets at the Mission once a month. Forum members represent all shades of opinion in the Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist community and was able to re-establish communication with the Nationalist/Republican community of Short Strand, following the breakdown during the summers of 2001 and 2002. These contacts and this work continues to develop right up to the present time.

Community work

For further information about EBM, write to:

East Belfast Mission,
239 Newtownards Road
Belfast, BT4 1AF
Email: info@ebm.org.uk

EBM's youth and community leaders seeks to build bridges into the community by forming relationships with community organisations and individuals, particularly single mothers, and by developing programmes and services for families. The women's group is for all ages and there is a varied programme throughout the year, including social events, educational issues, personal development and general support. The covenant between the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland now provides both churches with a joint impetus to pursue radically an outward focus towards the most disadvantaged people in our communities together. The work of the EBM should not stand in isolation but needs to be mirrored and reflected in imaginative

and appropriate ways by every parish in the country.

5 Just Do Something

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JESUS SAID: ‘THE POOR you will always have with you.’ We can be so overcome by the enormity of the needs around us sometimes, that we don’t know where to begin and as a result could easily end up paralysed rather than mobilized into action.

A minister friend was praying, agonising how he might along with his people, get going with some sort of social action project. As he pondered over all the options, it seemed that God said to him: ‘Just do something!’

Instead of being paralysed by all the situations around us that we might respond to, we probably need to **choose one area and make that our main focus**. Can you imagine how our communities would be impacted upon, our churches empowered, and people encouraged, if every parish or group of parishes in the land were to embark on a chosen project of social action – a project infused with the love, compassion and the radical nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Projects to inspire

I have chosen a few specific projects that provide us with further encouragement to pursue in prayer and also with energy and imagination, an outreach project in our own parish and community. First, ‘Grandma’s Ireland’ is a Dublin based ministry to children affected by HIV. The article is submitted by CORE church, Dublin. Secondly, the ‘Home Alone Project’ is a support ministry of Willowfield parish church to lone parents in inner east Belfast. Thirdly, JIM’s Youth Centre in Killeel is a ministry to help re-focus and re-channel the energies of young people absorbed by sectarianism, solvent abuse, vandalism and other anti social activities and reach them for Jesus Christ. The article is submitted by Revd Gary Millar, Rector of Killeel.

**Grandma's-Ireland:
a service for children
affected by HIV at
CORE Church, Dublin**

UNAIDS has predicted by that by 2010 there will be over 25 million orphans under the age of 15 as a result of HIV (see *UNAIDS report on the global aids epidemic*, United Nations, 2002). 'AIDS is an extraordinary kind of crisis; it is both an emergency *and* a long-term development issue. Despite increased funding, political commitment and progress in expanding access to HIV treatment, the AIDS epidemic continues to outpace the global response. No region of the world has been spared. The epidemic remains extremely dynamic, growing and changing character as the virus exploits new opportunities for transmission', (see *UNAIDS report on the global aids epidemic*, United Nations, 2004).

'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world' (James 1:27).

Grandma's-Ireland is a Christian charity aiming to give practical support to children and families affected by HIV regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, lifestyle or any other factor. Currently we are working in Dublin with a growing number of families and we are also prayerfully exploring the possibility of starting in Cork. Our volunteers come from churches throughout the city.

Grandma's-Ireland began working in Dublin in 1997. CORE church, located in the heart of the inner city, invited Amanda Williams the director of Grandma's in London to come to Dublin to assess the need for such an organisation in Dublin/Ireland. It was felt that there was need and Grandma's -Ireland was birthed.

We believe that the heart of God, as demonstrated in the Bible and through the life of Jesus, is to reach out to people who are suffering and therefore it is the responsibility of the church worldwide to respond to the global issue of

HIV. If Jesus' role on earth was 'to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour' (Luke 4:18), then how much more must that be the mandate for those of us who profess to be his followers?

The support that is offered to families is very simple and practical home-based childcare. Trained Christian volunteers and workers visit a family each week or fortnight for 3-4 hours to spend time with the children and give the parent/carer a break.

Visits may include:

- Collecting children from school or nursery and then giving them quality playtime and attention in the home
- Taking children to the park to play at the weekend
- Offering practical and emotional support at hospital appointments
- Group outings during school holidays

In doing this we aim to be 'the hands and feet of Jesus'. Contact made with families in this way leads to the development of very close relationships. One Mum, speaking three weeks after her volunteer started visiting said: 'She is like the mum I have lost and the grandmother that my son lost'.

In 2002, 364 people tested HIV+ in Ireland (a 22% increase in the number of cases diagnosed in 2001). Many believe that HIV is on the decrease in this country, however the reality is that it continues to grow each year. Regrettably the stigma related to HIV is also very much in evidence. Many of the families will not disclose their diagnosis to immediate family let alone friends for fear of being

For more information on
Grandma's-Ireland please
contact:

Project Coordinator
Grandma's-Ireland PO
Box 7276
Dublin 5
Email: grandmas@iol.ie

rejected. They are living not only in fear for their health and whether they will live to see their children grow up but also in isolation and at times hopelessness.

We passionately believe that Jesus is the answer to the problem of HIV, and that the church as his body on earth today, has a vital role to play by practically showing the mercy of God and the values of His Kingdom to people affected by HIV/AIDS. He alone can bring hope to the hopelessness. Jesus said: 'I was sick and you looked after me ... Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine you did for me' (Matthew 25: 36, 40).

**The Home Alone Project:
supporting lone parents in
East Belfast,
Willowfield Parish
Community Association
Steering Committee**

The breakdown of family relationships in this area in Belfast has left young parents isolated and coping with a great deal of pressure alone. This does not empower them to make positive choices about the future and support their own children fully. It leads to a vicious circle of poor relationships, instability in family life and poor lifestyle choices. Children of each succeeding generation are growing up without any sense of respect for authority, education, property or people. In addition they are prime targets to be swept in as the new generation in criminality.

Who will it benefit?

We have identified that there are things we can do to support and empower some of the many lone parents who live around us, and with whom we have relationship and contact. This includes both women and teenage girls, and the project seeks to address the different issues they face in appropriate ways. We have begun to build relationships with specialist agencies such as Barnados, Sure Start, and Education by Choice. This will enable us to pull in specialists to advise and help out when problems arise.

We have regular contact with many lone parents living in

the immediate area. Here are a few examples:

- A 14-year-old girl who became pregnant by the 15-year-old next-door neighbour – a lad with very limited ability. The young mother lives with her mother and younger siblings. The boy father lives with his widowed mother, sister and her four children.
- A grandmother on her own bringing up her two grandchildren, as the parents are both serving life sentences in prison in England for murder.
- A mother whose marriage broke up last summer, close to the death of one of her five-year old twins. She is struggling to deal with life and grief on her own with the surviving twin and a young teenager.
- A young mother whose premature baby died tragically at home. She is on her own with another child and there are exclusion orders on the father. Two older boys are in care and she fears losing her daughter.

We recognise the social and practical needs that these women face, and the demand there is for programmes (with childcare provision) that will inform, support and empower them in their lone parenting role.

Aims, objectives and evaluation

We aim to befriend lone parents and guardians and provide support, facilities and advice to enable parents in the Willowfield area to achieve an improved quality of family life.

How we will do this?

1. By setting up a pilot scheme for young teenage lone parents.
2. By setting up a pilot parent's support group for lone

parents.

3. By setting up an advice centre offering help with money matters, relationship counselling, etc.

How the project will benefit those who take part

For more information about the Home Alone Project contact:

16 Jocelyn Gardens
Belfast BT6 9BA

The schemes will provide support, training in parenting skills, build confidence, help raise self-esteem, enable lone parents to make better choices for themselves and their children, and encourage some teenage mums to go back into education.

The advice centre will take stress out of people's lives and provide help with relief of poverty, and by providing practical help make a real difference to people's quality of life.

How will we know? The quantifiable objectives

Organisations which might be able to offer help and support in similar initiatives, include:

The Mother's Union
Mary Sumner House
24 Tufton Street
London SW1

Care for the Family
Freepost (CF4636)
Cardiff CF15 7GZ

- Six teenage mothers will join and regularly attend the support group, and half will complete a parenting course. One group member will decide to return to some form of education.
- Six lone parents will join and regularly attend the support group, and half will complete a parenting course. Some group members will help facilitate the group and be a part of shaping the group's focus for the future.
- People will come back for further help, or refer others for advice. In the first year two people will complete a personal money/debt management course, and two people will complete a programme of relationship/family counselling and advice.

JIM'S Youth Project Kilkeel

JIM'S is a youth centre located in the town of Kilkeel, county Down and diocese of Dromore. It was set up by members of Christ Church parish as part of their outreach to, and concern for, the local youth. Kilkeel is a relatively small town comprising of a population that is roughly

50/50 Catholic to Protestant. Both sections of the community live in different areas, socialise in different places and are educated in different schools. As a result there is little or no interaction between the youth or children of different religious backgrounds. Like many other small towns, Kilkeel has also seen its fair share of sectarian and political problems from both sides of the community.

Against this background, the JIM'S vision was birthed and after a very successful pilot project, funding was sought and the JIM'S Drop-In and Junior JIM'S Computer Suite were opened in 2001. The first stage in reaching the youth had thus been accomplished.

The primary goal of JIM'S is to provide a safe and neutral environment where young people can come together to socialise, have fun, learn about God and each other, while experiencing the Holy Spirit in their lives. Scores of young people have left church. Unless the church addresses and reverses this situation there will be no church tomorrow, unless young people belong today. They are crying out for truth and meaning in a world which tells them what to believe and do behave however they want. Many of them are the products of a godless and immoral society. They are hurting, frustrated, confused and angry. They are faced with new temptations with access to the Internet and other means of gratifying desires. Therefore it is vital that the church offers meaning and direction to young people who are desperately seeking. The church's responsibility is to present Jesus to them. JIM'S has taken this as its *raison d'être*.

Traditionally we expected young people to arrive on our doorsteps. That is no longer the case, because at JIMS we go to where they are. Some of our staff go into local schools, others go along to football/hockey matches and build up friendships. For others it involves standing in the pouring rain serving coffee and doughnuts to teenagers

who are either high on drugs or alcohol. On other occasions it has been barbeques at midnight or soup and rolls. It's easy to sit back and think that the youth don't want anything to do with adults, never mind talk to them. The truth is many of our young people act in the way they do because they are crying out for attention - they want someone to notice them. Talking to a 20-year old on the bridge in the pouring rain for two hours as he broke his heart over the fact that I was there because Jesus loved him, will be one of the most humbling experiences of my ministry. We don't completely understand why the youth do what they do, but we do care and love them.

For further information
about JIM'S write to:

44 Manse Road
Kilkeel
Co. Down

Building friendship and trust is the key to all that takes place in JIM'S. When this is established young people are more willing to come along and join in the fun and madness of JIM'S – dance classes, foam parties, discos, computer clubs and music classes. We also run evenings 'Your life – your choice' where we invite Christian speakers to address issues that trouble young people – drugs, alcohol, sex, suicide, sex harm. We try to present Jesus in a way that is real and not threatening. Our policy is not to stand and preach at the youth or heap more guilt onto their already burdened lives. Rather by living the life we try and demonstrate that there is a better way to live, by helping them to make more informed choices about drugs, alcohol, sectarianism etc.

On the last Sunday of the month we have a youth congregation where we disciple and enable our young people to minister to their peers within JIM'S.

6 Learning from the world wide church

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St. Paul's, Ealing
Ridley Avenue
Ealing, W13 9XW
info@stpauls-ealing.org

Trinity Church
Trinity House
100/102 Winchcombe Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL52 2NW
info@trinityuk.org

St. Mary Bredin Church
59 Nunnery Fields
Canterbury, Kent CT1 3JN
vicar@smb.org.uk

St. Boniface Church
Quinton Road West
Quinton,
Birmingham B32 2QD
web@stboniface.org.uk

Willow Creek Community
Church
67 East Algonquin Road
South Barrington,
1 60010 USA
info@willowcreek.org

Desert Vineyard Church
California
44609 N. Division Street
Lancaster, CA 93535
USA
info@desertvineyard.org

Saddleback California
1 Saddleback Parkway
Lake Forest, CA 92630
USA
info@saddleback.com

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND has a significant relationship with the worldwide church. We take great pride in our involvement in mission at home and especially overseas. We are however, not good at receiving from and learning from other churches. I was privileged to attend as a lay youth representative at the Church of Ireland's Partners in Mission Consultation in 1984, some 21 years ago. The challenge was that we would become more outwardly focussed and less inward looking. This is a lesson that is difficult to learn.

Today there are churches in the UK and overseas that have a very deliberate outward focus and who work hard at creating community and engaging in social action. These churches welcome visits and enquiries from those who would like to ask questions and learn from their experiences. They include the churches listed in the margin alongside here.

These are but a few of many churches that will provide resources and ideas. Many churches today run training events and welcome people to come and learn from their successes and their mistakes. Your diocesan bishop may be able to put you in touch with a church that will provide the link and help that you need.

Projects to inspire

One exciting and unique project is The Besom Foundation based in Battersea, London, and now beginning to emerge in cities all over the UK. The Besom just might provide a model for a way forward in many communities. This is what James Ogers of Holy Trinity Brompton has written about 'The Besom'.

The Besom, London
James Ogers, Holy Trinity
Brompton

‘Getting out...reaching out: the Besom helps you make a difference in your communities’ is our positive slogan. ‘I don’t want to just *talk* about doing something. I want to get on and *do* it - and now’ was the message of Jesus Christ. Similar feelings are shared by thousands of Christians who want to be able to get out into their local communities and be involved in activities and actions that will make a real difference to the lives of others in need. Often we see very desperate needs but do not know how to respond or reach out, such as lonely old people, homelessness, young kids on drugs, and single parents struggling to survive in inadequate accommodation. We want to be able to make our faith real by impacting upon others in practical ways.

Sian is a young single mother with a nine-month-old baby living in a Council flat on the 16th floor of a big tower block. When the Besom was first put in touch with her, the baby had no cot or pram – only a pushchair – and there was an ancient mattress on the floor with grey threadbare bedding. The walls were bare, a window was broken and the flat was infested with flies. It was a grim place to be living in – and she was finding life very tough. A group of seven people from a local church (through the Besom) went in one Saturday to paint two of the rooms and clean the bathroom. They gave a day of their time and energies that totally transformed the flat. Sian was so thrilled that she burst into tears and said she did not think that people like that existed. She had not come across them before. Later a van from the Besom delivered a bed, a cot, some linen, a chair and some kitchen equipment – all very good quality things that had been given to the Besom to be passed on to people who really needed them.

Sian’s story is typical of so many people living on the edge. The Besom is one way that works to help us get out and reach out to people like Sian. Set up in 1987 in London, it is concerned with enabling people to take their first steps in

reaching out into their communities and in building bridges between groups of people. It is not just what we do but how we do it. Everyone can get involved and make a difference – whether you are three years old or over 80 years, whether in full-time employment, a student, working part-time, retired, based at home: there are opportunities for everybody. By giving away time, money, skills or things you can make a difference to the lives of others.

Many of us have things we no longer need or use and, by giving them to the Besom, they can be passed on to others who will really appreciate them. Clothes, children's toys and equipment, bedding, lamps, kitchen items, crockery...the list is endless. Other people give a few hours of their time to sort the items given and to ensure they are always good quality – others may give a morning or an afternoon to go out on a van and deliver the things given. The Besom is in contact with social workers and charities and constantly hears of individuals and families in need or crisis. Groups from churches go out every week into their local communities and help out with painting, cleaning or gardening projects for people whose lives can literally be changed through a little practical help. These words from people who have given a few hours of their time away to help, demonstrate the transforming potential reward from doing social action:

'I thought I was going to go out to improve the world but in fact, when I saw the awful conditions people were living in, I myself came home a changed person'.

'It feels like a chance to spread a little of God's kindness and yet, ironically, I always receive far more than I ever give'.

Another man, who had been long-term homeless, benefited from the care of Besom volunteers and commented

after being given some clothing: 'It's the first time since I was 14 that I have had a winter coat – this has made me feel really special. These people from the Besom really care, don't they?'

For more information about
The Besom, see
www.besom.com
or
Email: info@besom.com

Some people want to give some money away. The Besom enables you to give directly to a project that concerns you and ensures that 100% of what you give will go to that need. So far, over 700 projects have been completed. For example, funds for beds and mattresses for an orphanage in Ghana, and purchase of an industrial dishwasher for a homeless drop-in centre in East London, were two recent benefits.

Many churches are now starting up their own Besoms and finding them a very helpful and practical way to reach into their local communities. The Besom in London provides resources and training for those who are interested in setting up a Besom.

It is easier than you might think to make a difference!

7 What about finance?

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FUNDING IS NOT THE most significant factor in taking churches forward in an outward focus. Vision, leadership, and having God's heart for the marginalized are much more essential. Having said that, funding will, at some stage, often become a major factor. Accessing funds from outside sources would require a separate booklet (a resource much needed within the Church of Ireland). However, a few useful hints in getting started included the following ten funding tips:

1. Spend a lot of time planning your project, deciding exactly what you intend to do and who it will benefit, what difference it will make and how you can evaluate it
2. Churches in Northern Ireland can join NICVA who will provide you with a monthly update on funding resources. You can contact NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) at: 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GB. See website: www.nicva.org or email: nicva@nicva.org
3. Purchase a copy of the *Directory of grant making trusts*, published by the Directory of Social Change. This is a valuable tool and the latest edition can be ordered from any good book shop or online: www.dsc.org.uk/acatalog/Grant_making_Trusts.html
4. Identify what skills and resources you already have available
5. List where you can find people to help you in areas where you lack experience or skills
6. Establish links with other organisations or individuals working in your community
7. Put together a realistic and as accurate as possible budget
8. Always check your project fits the funder's criteria
9. Consider setting up a distinct group - legally and financially separate from the church - with its own constitution, elected officers and charitable status. This can open a door to grant making bodies unable to give directly to churches
10. Get committed people to pray for your project on a regular basis

To demonstrate how to put together a fund-raising brochure, the contents of the application for the Kidz Klub Project in inner-city Belfast, as sent to grant-making trusts, are shown in the pages that follow.

Business plan information
available from:

149 My Lady's Road
Belfast BT6 8FE

Note that the larger grant-making trusts and government funding bodies will almost definitely require a business plan in addition to the sort of research and information provided by this sample brochure. Many trusts also have their own grant application form which they will give you on request.

If you wish to talk to someone about how to put together a business plan or discuss the sample below, please contact Mrs. Hilary McClay at the address alongside here.

SAMPLE

The Kidz Klub Project

Working to address the issues of
vulnerable children in
inner-city east Belfast

- **Providing a safe and caring environment**
- **Providing quality learning opportunities**
- **Addressing issues of neglect and abuse**

149 My Lady's Road, Belfast BT6 8FE
Tel 028 9046 0105

Recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue
(reference number: XR64196)

Willowfield Parish Community Association
East Belfast, Northern Ireland

Introduction

Willowfield Parish Community Association in east Belfast was set up at the end of 2002 to try to address some of the many complex social, physical and spiritual needs of the people in the local area. We are a voluntary community association, recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue (reference number XR64196), and operating in association with Willowfield Church of Ireland parish.

Spanning two electoral wards - Woodstock and the Mount - the parish of Willowfield includes many of the most deprived people in Northern Ireland. Research divides the whole of Northern Ireland into 566 wards, has identified the Mount as the ninth most deprived ward in Northern Ireland, while Woodstock is the 26th most deprived. According to the Noble Index and Robson Indicators of deprivation, the Mount has the

worst ranking in the social environment domain, with Woodstock also in the top 10% of the most disadvantaged. There is simply no doubt about the social and economic needs of the area.

About the Willowfield area

Willowfield is a working class area that borders the sectarian flashpoint at Short Strand. It includes many of the streets where the unionist paramilitary feuds are played out. What was once a highly populated community, fully employed at the height of the shipyard years, has become a place of deterioration, facing many of the worst problems of any inner-city area. There have been many serious attacks and two murders in the local streets during the past two years.

Some renovation work has gone on in the local community, with the demolition of some streets of terraced housing. The replacements that have been built are modern but fewer. The new style provides small groups of houses, but the children are left without anywhere but the street to play in, so they congregate in small gangs without any boundaries or purpose. The old folk are often isolated in their homes, kept inside by fear, and have lost the sense of community that existed in the old environment.

What was once an area with the highest proportion of older people, now also includes a growing proportion of lone parent and problem families. One of the local primary schools reports that 50% of its children are on the Special Needs Register. Single mothers, teenagers mothers, children suffering behavioural problems, high unemployment, low income, poor health, low levels of achievement, and a strong paramilitary presence, create an atmosphere of fear, despair and anger. All are symptoms of moral, social, spiritual and personal decay in the area.

The children of each succeeding generation are growing up without any sense of respect for authority, education, property or people, and they are prime targets to be swept in as new recruits for the paramilitary organisations.

Project background

We have embarked upon a programme of research into the needs of the local area, to find out what other agencies are already providing, and what we could do to impact upon the lives of those around. Most importantly, we have talked to many people in the area to seek their perspective on the needs of the area, and how we can make a demonstrable difference to our community.

We have gathered together existing statistics of the area and added to these the results of our own research. Having undertaken door-to-door surveys, interviews with professionals working in the area (including school principals, probation board and community service workers and a local GP) and also conducted informal conversations with those who have lived, worked and worshipped within the Willowfield area for many years, a clear picture has emerged.

Of the hundreds of local households we surveyed, 85% described the existing facilities for children in the area as very poor. They identified that what is most needed for **children** is after-school activities and clubs as well as a drop-in facility open evenings and weekends. An encouraging 75% said that a member of their household would use these facilities if they were available. The same survey identified that what **families** in the area needed most is a pre-school nursery or day care facility for pre-school children. Again, out of those surveyed in households with children, some 75% indicated they would use such a facility.

Our objectives

We aim to create a safe and caring environment that addresses the needs of vulnerable children in the Willowfield area, and work with outside agencies to provide quality learning opportunities and address issues of neglect and abuse.

How will we do this?

Working with other groups as appropriate, we will:

- Run an after school club during two sessions per week, with a target of 20 kids per session
- Run two homework clubs (in two venues on Woodstock Road and Ravenhill Avenue), each offering two sessions per week, with a maximum of ten-12 kids per session
- Run a weekly club and/or sports club for children
- Work with SureStart or another agency to provide a respite crèche facility
- Set up a pre-school play group

What Difference will this make?

Kidz Klub will:

- Provide children with a safe and stimulating environment
- Provide homework supervision and controlled computer assistance, including internet access for project purposes
- Provide children with stimulating play in a safe environment to reach respect, team-work, cooperation and their underlying need for discipline
- Provide temporary child care for parents who are under pressure or have medical appointments, where children are safe, well cared for, and parents and children benefit from excellent care and facilities

- Focus on the personal, spiritual and emotional development of children, covering the seven areas of learning, by building a good foundation in the early years and providing a positive impression of education

How will we know the Kids Klub project is effective?

The quantifiable objectives are:

- Target numbers of children achieved and held, with children regular in attendance
- Children keen to take part, and learning to integrate and develop relationships
- Quantifiable improvement in standards of behaviour and educational achievements
- Positive feedback from primary schools and parents regarding benefits of the programme
- Children playing and competing constructively, responding to team discipline and taking pride in belonging to the club
- Positive feedback from parents who will use the respite crèche facility on a regular basis
- Positive feedback from parents, social services, and nursery schools on previous attendees of the Pre-School Play Group

How can you help us?

In order to develop the work we have outlined above, we need to invest in a building with suitable facilities (including a purpose built nursery, computer suite, classrooms, etc), and employ a Children's Worker on a three-year contract. Capital costs (building and equipment) are set at over £300,000, of which we have raised or been pledged nearly £100,000. Salary, recruitment, and running costs for the project total over £19,000 each year,

a significant amount, but which also represents a significant investment in the lives of really disadvantaged children. The budget is outlined below, and any contribution you can help us with will make a real difference to these children.

What will it cost?

Capital expenditure:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Building work on classrooms, toilets | £175,000 |
| Building nursery facility, changing rooms | £120,000 |
| Computers, printers, software, etc | £ 10, 000 |
| Nursery equipment, cots, toys, play resources | £ 5,600 |
| Desks, chairs, etc for Homework Club | £ 1,500 |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>£312,100</u> |

Annual revenue costs for the initial three-year period:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Salary, recruitment, national insurance | £15, 200 |
| Administration and phone costs | £ 1, 200 |
| Art & craft consumables | £ 500 |
| Homework Club resources | £ 530 |
| Other materials/resources | £ 900 |
| Heat/light | £ 900 |
| Photocopying | £ 500 |
| Training costs | £ 500 |
| Summer scheme trips | £ 400 |
| Technical equipment | £ 250 |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>£20, 880</u> |

How will we get the project off the ground?

A 12-month work plan for Kidz Klub worker follows below:

Month 1

Recruit volunteers and arrange necessary training
Evaluate existing programmes
Develop contacts with children and parents
Start pilot homework club

Month 2

Evaluate and develop home visitation programme
Draw up proposals for developing two sections of Kidz Klub
Develop contacts with local schools
Run programmes

Month 3

Plan fundraising event
Implement plan for 2 sections of Kidz Klub
Run training on Health & Safety for volunteers

Month 4

Implement plans for introducing a simpler version of Kidz Klub into local primary schools, including recruiting and training volunteers

Month 5

Arrange training update for own training needs
Evaluate children's response to programmes in terms of self-esteem etc.

Month 6

Plan pilot weekend activities, such as fun days, workshops etc.
Identify any special needs training as relevant and arrange training

Month 7

Plan second fundraising event

Identify opportunities to take children on excursions and trips

Month 8

Consider volunteer work in reading support programmes in local schools

Implement plans for day trip

Month 9

Recruit volunteers for summer scheme and arrange training update for all volunteers

Month 10

Prepare for special summer scheme.

Evaluate children's response to programmes

Prepare publicity

Month 11

Plan third fundraising event

Implement plans for summer scheme

Evaluate summer scheme

Month 12

Plan the programme of work for the following year

8 What is God Like?

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THIS BOOKLET HAS ENCOURAGED following the clear biblical mandates that exist about going and doing. In Luke chapter 15, Jesus challenges the religious leaders of his day with three pictures of what God is like:

He is like a shepherd who although he has 99 sheep safe in the sheep pen, leaves them in order to go in search of the lost sheep. When he finds this lost sheep he is so overjoyed that he celebrates with his neighbours and friends. He is like a woman who, having lost one of her ten precious coins, turns the house upside down to find the one that she lost. He is like a father whose heart for his reckless and rebellious son who has brought misfortune on himself, is full of love and compassion, care and welcome for his wayward son.

God wants his church to reflect his heart for the weak, the lost, the broken, and the needy. God's heart is a heart of compassion that intentionally is always moving outwards with the transforming gospel of grace that we bring to people by word and deed.

Throughout the island of Ireland we need churches that in the daily outworking of their parish life and witness, believe and act upon the following convictions:

1. People have all sorts of needs – physical needs, financial needs, emotional needs, physiological needs but we all have a basic primary need to be reconnected with God. In a broken world of broken relationships, the primary relationship that all people need is a relationship with God through saving faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus is God's outstretched hand to humanity to reconnect us with God in a right way. Jesus came into this world not just with words but also with sacrifice. The church is called to engage sacrificially with a needy world.

3. The message of the gospel lies at the heart of why we engage with people at their point of need. We have a gospel, we have good news that reconnects people into a right relationship with God.
4. ‘The church is the only organisation that exists for non-members’ was the prophetic message of the Most Revd William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury (see Stephen Spencer, *William Temple: a calling to prophecy* (London, 2001). Temple spoke those words with obvious understanding that the church is much more than a club of religious people who engage in religious activities for their own mutual edification and satisfaction. Jesus – the real, personal, searching, significant Christ – came to seek and to save lost people. We must ‘do church’ in ways that will enable others, including outsiders, to meet with God in life-changing ways.
5. The church’s mission is to be the flavour of God, bringing satisfaction to people’s innermost personalities. God wants His church to be the flavour of God, salt in the world.
6. Historically, where the church has ‘failed’, the failure has to do with a confused or abandoned sense of purpose. Whenever the church has ‘failed’ it has failed when its primary mission became ‘us’ and not ‘others’. The church must be a group of people whose lives are focussed on serving the needs of those around them in their community and world.

It is impossible to love God without turning outward to love those we have the opportunity to love. Loving God leads to loving his world. Jesus said that if we really love Him we will do what He asks us to do. He asks us to serve others. A church that wants to honour God must turn outwards. We are called to *be* good news as well as proclaim good

news. At a recent event in Belfast, Chris Wright, the Ministries Director of the Langham Partnership International, made this profound statement:

‘Our mission must be based on the whole message of the Bible – including the whole range of the Bible’s concerns and teaching. The Bible renders to us the amazing breadth and depth of the creative and redemptive love of God, his total response to our total need. It shows us his loving care for creation, and for all human ‘lostness’, need, pain and peril. It shows us the depth of his anger at sin, his justice in history, his engagement in social, political and economic life, his standards for personal integrity and ethics. It shows us his faithfulness, mercy and compassion. It shows us his unwavering purpose ultimately to bless the nations and redeem creation. We need to ensure that our mission is as holistic as God’s mission, that our concerns are as wide as God’s concerns, that our Gospel is as Good News as God’s is’.

The church in 2005 and beyond must recognise that we have entered a post modern, post-Christian era. This demands outreach-oriented churches geared towards enabling people to belong, while they are still in a process of focusing upon areas of their lives that may still need God’s healing and transforming grace and power. The church needs to be a hospital for sinners rather than a museum for saints. Jesus said: ‘Go’. One church leader, when preaching on the words of Jesus to go and make disciples asked his hearers: ‘Which part of the word ‘go’ do you not understand? Is it the ‘g’ or is it the ‘o’?’ Jesus says to today’s church: ‘Go’.

SEVEN CONVICTIONS

When the local churches begin to live for others some sacrificial choices must be made. Here are seven personal convictions:

- 1. We must choose to live with some loving limitations. In the Church of Ireland having an outward focus must include having liturgies and church services that will quickly put at ease the person who chooses to come to church for the first time in ten, 20 or 30 years.**
- 2. In the Church of Ireland, we must embrace an over-the-top emphasis on, and commitment to, becoming outwardly focussed. We must lean towards outsiders.**
- 3. We must invest sacrificially in terms of time and resources in the needs of outsiders. Our church budgets must reflect an outward focus.**
- 4. Every church of whatever its theological emphasis has a natural tendency towards inward inertia, towards catering for ourselves. We must energetically resist inward inertia.**
- 5. In the Church of Ireland, we need to embrace a desire and expectancy for growth, transformation and change in our local settings rather than expect decline.**
- 6. We must pursue excellence. Only the best is good enough for God. We need buildings and activities and worship services to which we can confidently invite our communities.**
- 7. We need to move into a place where we accept the challenges of the future rather than the glory of the past.**

We need churches and parishes that are a bit more like what God is like.

9 In Conclusion...

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ALL OF THE RESOURCES and ideas in this booklet can be adapted to meet your own situation. That includes the sample brochures to trusts provided in appendices 1 and 2, as well as the contributions from others and the general information and ideas provided. The invitation and encouragement is simple: 'Go and do'. Go and do likewise or as near likewise as you find appropriate in your situation. Jesus still says 'go', and he still says 'do'.

To conclude, the message of Luke chapter 10, verses 25-37, sums up the focus of this booklet:

Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. 'Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?' He answered, 'What's written in God's law? How do you interpret it?' He said: 'That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence – and that you love your neighbour as well as you do yourself.' 'Good answer', said Jesus: 'do it and you'll live.' Looking for a loophole, the scholar asked: 'And just how would you define 'neighbour?' Jesus answered by telling a story.

'There was once a man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up. He also avoided the injured man. A Samaritan travelling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him on to his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying: 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill – I'll pay you on my way back.'

'What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbour to the man attacked by robbers?', asked Jesus. The one who treated him kindly,' the religion scholar responded. Jesus said: 'Go and do the same.'

A prayer for going and doing likewise

God the sender, send us. God the sent, come with us. God the strengthener of those who go, empower us, that we may go with you and find those who will call you Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

Appendix I

A Sample Parish Survey

We are here at [name of parish] to serve you and to serve the local community.

Please take just a few minutes to answer the questions below to help us gain a better insight into the needs of the local people of every age group.

Children

Do you think that the playing areas available to children in the area are:

- excellent adequate poor very poor?

Which of the following facilities are most needed for children in the local area? Please rate 1-7 in order of importance:

- Pre-school day care
- Homework Club (primary children)
- Computer Club (primary and secondary children)
- Football/sports pitch
- Evening activity clubs, e.g. Crafts, sports etc
- Drop-in centre open evenings and weekends
- Other (please state)

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Young people

Which of the following facilities are most needed for young people in the local area? Please rate 1-7 in order of importance:

- Computer Club/Internet Café with access to Internet
- Life skills Club (on making good lifestyle choices)

- Football/sports pitch
- Evening activity clubs e.g. crafts, drama, music, sports, etc
- Drop-in centre
- Non-alcoholic nightclub
- Other (please state):

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Families

Which of the following services are most needed by families in the local area? Please number 1-6 in order of priority:

- Mums & Toddlers Group
- Kids Day Care for working mothers
- Mothers Matter – course on practical parenting skills
- Jobs skills training, e.g. Computer courses
- Drop-in centre with facilities for whole family
- Other (please state)

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Elderly/senior citizens

Please list the services most needed by the elderly and house-bound locally:

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Are there other ways you would like to see your local church serve this community? If so please tell us:

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About your household. Please tell us how many people in each age group live in your household:

- 0 – 5
- 5 – 11
- 12 – 14
- 15 – 18
- 19 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- Over 65

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Appendix 2

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A Sample Strategic Plan

Willowfield Parish, East Belfast,
Diocese of Down and Dromore

The aim of this section is to reproduce a typical strategic plan – in this case Willowfield parish's plan, devised in 2003, which provides a template of the kind of information that potential funders will require. It can be adopted by other parishes seeking resources.

Introduction

Willowfield Parish in east Belfast is setting up a project to try to address some of the many complex social, physical and spiritual needs of the people in the local area. Spanning two wards, Woodstock and the Mount, the parish of Willowfield includes many of the most deprived people in Northern Ireland. Research dividing the whole of Northern Ireland into 566 wards, identifies the Mount as the ninth most deprived ward in Northern Ireland and Woodstock as 26th most deprived. According to the Noble Index and Robson Indicators measuring deprivation the Mount has the worst ranking in the social environment domain, with Woodstock also in the top 10% of most disadvantaged. There is simply no doubt as to the needs of the area.

About the Willowfield area

Willowfield is a working class area that borders the sectarian flashpoint at Short Strand. It includes many of the streets where the current unionist paramilitary feuds are being played out. What was once a highly populated community, fully employed at the height of the shipyard years, has now deteriorated to face many of the worst problems of any inner city area. There have been many serious attacks and two murders in the local streets during the past couple of years.

Single mothers, teenage mothers, children suffering behaviour problems, high unemployment, low income, poor health, low

levels of achievement, a strong paramilitary presence creating an atmosphere of fear, despair and anger – are all symptoms of moral, social, spiritual and personal decay in the area.

Some renovation work has gone on in the environment of the local community, with the demolition of streets of terraced housing. The replacements that have been built are modern but fewer. The new style provides small groups of houses, but the children are left without anywhere but the street in which to play in, so congregate in small gangs without any boundaries or purpose. The old folk are often isolated in their homes, kept inside by fear, and have lost the sense of community that existed in the old environment. One of the local primary schools, where Willowfield church has three transfer representatives on the Board of Governors, reports that 50% of its children are on the Special Needs Register. Children of each succeeding generation are growing up without any sense of respect for authority, education, property or people. In addition they are prime targets to be swept up as the new generation of recruits in the paramilitary organisations

It is into this situation that the members of Willowfield church are propelled to worship and witness to the goodness of God in our generation. We believe that we simply have no alternative but to demonstrate the good news of the Christian gospel through our actions and our lives into a community that doesn't hear or see very much good news. We have seen signs that we are impacting upon those outside and inside our church with a 'grace-filled' programme of outreach.

The background to the project

Since the summer of 2001 we have embarked upon a programme of research into the needs of the local area, what other agencies and churches are already providing, and what we as a church could do to impact upon the lives of those around. Most importantly we have talked to many people in the area - those who come to church and many who don't – to seek their perspectives on the needs of the area, and how we as a church can make a demonstrable difference to our

community.

We have gathered together existing statistics of the area and added to these the results of our own research, more finely targeted at the Willowfield parish area. Having undertaken door-to-door surveys, interviews with professionals working in the area (including school principals, probation board and community service workers and a local GP) and conducted informal conversations with those who have lived, worked and worshipped within the Willowfield area for many years, a clear picture has emerged.

The project aims

The needs are complex and very demanding. Many require a level of specialist input that we as a church cannot provide - specifically the urgent need for sport and recreation facilities in the area. However, we have identified six areas of particular concern around which the project will centre, with clear aims and objectives for each.

PROJECT OUTLINE 2005

1. The elderly

We aim to provide care and facilities to help improve the quality of life and increase the safety of the elderly in the Willowfield area, working in partnership with outside organisations

How will we do this?

- Practical help – home safety and security visits scheme
- A drop-in centre offering help and advice on form filling, benefits etc with a weekly lunch club, befrienders programme, and running courses such as personal safety
- Programmes for the elderly / teens & children together to help create understanding, respect etc

What difference will this make?

- Older people will feel safer
- Senior citizens will attend lunch club and social

programmes, which will counter feelings of isolation and loneliness, and help to integrate them more fully into the community

- Drop-in centre will also counter loneliness, and, in addition, provide help with legal and financial issues, including help with debt and benefit issues
- Practical help scheme – a visiting programme also offering help with shopping, collecting prescriptions, getting to medical appointments etc.
- Programmes to build links between the elderly and teens/children

How will we know? The quantifiable objectives

- We will complete at least 25 safety checks in seniors' homes in 2003
- Thirty or more seniors will attend a weekly lunch club
- Fifty people will use the drop-in centre in the first three months
- Twenty people will have asked for a visit from the practical help scheme, and five volunteers will be trained to respond in 2003
- Ten senior citizens and ten young people will complete an integrated programme each year

2. Unemployed adults

We aim to assist unemployed adults in the Willowfield area to improve their prospects of employment and empower them by restoring a sense of dignity and self-worth.

How will we do this?

- By providing assistance through a drop-in centre, offering a friendly setting, support group, a market place for jobs, perhaps working in connection with specialist organisations such as Belfast Gems etc.
- By improving job prospects through identifying needs for training, and facilitating educational (e.g. adult literacy) and other skills training programmes
- By empowering unemployed adults to improve their situations through a self-support group, and equipping and

enabling them to make job applications etc.

- By setting up a project to provide volunteer work placements

What difference will this make?

- Unemployed adults will be better equipped to apply for jobs and more confident about the application process
- Those involved in the project will improve their literacy and communication skills, become more independent, be suitable for more job opportunities, and less likely to become unemployed again.
- A self-support group among unemployed adults will help increase the sense of self-worth and self-esteem, offering somewhere to turn to at low points and provide somewhere to belong.
- A volunteer project will provide unemployed adults with experience of a working environment, and help with setting a regular pattern or lifestyle, providing a sense of purpose and achievement, improved mental well-being, giving them a real achievement to include on job applications.

How will we know? The quantifiable objectives

- Up to six unemployed adults will attend job interviews each year
- People will complete literacy and other training courses, and go on to develop other skills by completing other relevant training schemes. They will give positive evaluation to the value of the programme and will be able to fill in their own application forms with support. Once they have become employed, the majority will stay in employment for a period of at least 12 months.
- The numbers of those unemployed who continue as committed members of the self-support group will hold up, and they will gain the confidence to participate in volunteer or training schemes
- People will volunteer on a regular basis, arrive on time for their slot and complete the task involved. The scheme coordinator will be able to write character references to recommend participants to prospective employers.

3. Impoverished Families

We aim to provide support, care and advice to those in the Willowfield area who are impoverished materially, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

How will we do this?

- By setting up a Besom Foundation-type project in Willowfield to provide goods and services for those in need.
- By setting up an advice centre offering help with debt counselling, benefit advice, welfare rights, marriage counselling, applications for better housing etc.
- By setting up a contact centre for separated families to maintain contact

What difference will this make?

- People in need of furniture and other essential items, or in need of practical help such as redecorating homes etc will be linked with those who want to give goods or time to relieve poverty
- The advice centre will take stress out of people's lives, and provide help with relief of poverty, and by providing practical help make a real difference to people's quality of life
- The contact centre will offer a free, confidential, safe, controlled and accessible place for separated families to maintain contact by permitting parents and children to meet for supervised visits etc.

How will we know? The quantifiable objectives

- Social services will work with us to refer clients in particular need or assistance. Two or three projects will be completed in the first year and the stories will be documented; goods donated will be checked, cleaned and passed on to the recipients within agreed timescales
- People will come back for further help, or refer others for advice. In the first year, six people will complete personal money/debt management course, and ten people will complete a programme of marriage/family counselling and advice

- Parents and children will use the contact centre regularly, and social services will refer families to the facility. Social workers, users and staff will give positive evaluations of the benefits to children and parents

4. Parents

We aim to befriend parents and guardians and provide support, facilities and advice to enable parents in the Willowfield area to achieve an improved quality of family life.

How will we do this?

- By setting up a pilot scheme for young lone parents
- By facilitating toy and book libraries to visit the Willowfield area on a regular basis
- By setting up a befriending scheme for parents
- By expanding the work of the existing parent and toddler group in Willowfield church Hall, and related summer scheme

What difference will this make?

- The scheme will provide support, training in parenting skills, build confidence and help, raise self-esteem and enable lone parents to make better choices for themselves and their children, encouraging some to go back into education
- Parents will have the opportunity to help their children play with good quality educational toys and participate in active learning. They will interact together and gain information and choice
- Parents will have a volunteer befriender to offer support and help in advice and practical help
- The Mums and Toddlers scheme provides help and support for mums, and also offers role models in terms of older grandmother figures who are able to advise, address issues of loneliness, depression etc.

How will we know? The quantifiable objectives

- Six teenage mothers will join and regularly attend the support group, and half will complete a parenting course.

Some group members will help facilitate the group, and one group member will return to education

- Ten people per visit will use the facility. Toys and books will be returned in good order and parents will be seen to play with their children and interact with them.
- Ten parents and volunteers will join the scheme in the first year and meet regularly. Parents will refer others to the scheme and report beneficial value. Volunteers will complete a training scheme and evaluate the effectiveness of their visits
- Increased numbers of parents and toddlers will attend. Parents will show more interest in playing and interacting with children. Four 'grandmother' figures will complete child protection training and regularly interact with children and parents. Some parents will sign up for a parenting course and complete it.

5. Teenagers

We aim to create a safe and positive environment in which vulnerable teenagers in the Willowfield area can develop their full potential intellectually, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially, to enable them to become responsible and happy members of the community.

How will we do this?

- By running a drop-in centre open evenings and weekends
- By employing a youth worker and recruiting and training a team of volunteers
- By setting up a life-choice programme, a programme to build self-respect and respect for others, a drug and alcohol education programme and other relevant and appropriate activities
- By running a joint programme with the elderly to build mutual trust, understanding and respect

What difference will this make?

- It will provide a safe and positive place for teenagers to go
- The youth worker and volunteers will provide positive role models for young people, ensure child protection

policy is fully implemented, and build relationships with young people through small group interaction

- Young people will be empowered to make better life choices
- Young people will grow in self-respect and develop respect for people, property and authority

How will we know? The quantifiable objectives

- Forty teenagers will regularly attend the drop-in
- Young people who might have been involved in recreational vandalism or come under the influence of local paramilitary groups will find alternative social activities
- Ten young people will complete a programme dealing with issues such as drugs & alcohol abuse, under age sexual activity, education by choice programme etc
- Some of those involved will take an active part in running the drop-in. Police and local community members will report an improvement in behaviour and less young people in the area will end up in the criminal justice system / under probation orders, and truancy figures in local school will fall

6. Children

We aim to create a safe and caring environment which addresses the needs of vulnerable children in the Willowfield area and working with outside agencies to provide quality learning opportunities and address issues of neglect and abuse.

How will we do this?

Working with Willowfield Kids and Teens and other groups as appropriate we will:

- Run an after schools club two sessions per week, with a target of 20 kids per session
- Run two homework clubs (in two venues on Woodstock Road/ Ravenhill Avenue) each offering two sessions each week, with maximum of ten - 12 kids per session
- Run a weekly club and/or sports club for children
- Working with SureStart or other agency we will provide

a respite crèche facility

- Set up a pre-school play group

What difference will this make?

- Provide children with a safe and stimulating environment
- Provide the right environment for homework with supervision and controlled help, e.g. access to computers and the internet for project work
- Provide children with stimulating play, a safe environment to reach respect, team-work, co-operation and underlying need for discipline
- Provide temporary child care for parents under pressure (such as attending medical appointments) where children are safe, well cared for, and parents and children can benefit from excellent care and facilities
- By building a good foundation in the early years, and providing a positive impression of education, the programme will focus on the personal, spiritual and emotional development of children, covering the seven areas of learning

How will we know? The quantifiable objectives

- Target numbers of children achieved and held, with children regular in attendance, keen to take part, learning to integrate and develop relationships
- Positive feedback from primary schools and parents on the benefits of the programme, and quantifiable improvement in standards of behaviour and educational achievements
- Children will play and compete in a positive way, responding to team discipline and taking a pride in belonging to the club
- Positive feedback from parents who will use the facility on a regular basis
- Feedback from parents, social services, and nursery schools on previous attendees

The next steps for our project

In response we have set up a Community Association, made up of members of the Select Vestry together with key people from different ages and interest groups of the parish. One third of the members of the Association live within the target area and are intimately acquainted with the challenges and problems faced.

We are members of NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) and recognised by the Inland Revenue as a registered charity.