

# *Three Churches Project*

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

# **2011**



## *A New Chapter Begins...*

This has been an important year for the Three Churches Project. Beginning with the formation of a strategy group to look at its development and future, we are now ready to begin 2012 with a new name and new partners to help us take the vision forward.

Although we have always worked together with other agencies, local residents and the Christian community in Meanwood, we now have a name and soon a more open structure to reflect this.



... or InterACT for short, is about working TOGETHER, ACTIVELY, in our local community. The development also reflects the fact

that more church congregations are now actively involved in the partnership and outreach work: volunteers and leaders from the Baptist and Methodist churches in Meanwood are working alongside those from Stainbeck, St. Matthew's and Holy Trinity churches, local residents and agencies - all committed to play their part in seeing transformation in our locality.

For all the right reasons, this has been a difficult Annual Report to write. What do you include when, more and more, partners are willing to let go of something and not hold it as their own? We are hopefully moving towards a time when we will all share in the work each other is doing in the area, celebrating it as well as helping to take responsibility for it.

In 2012 we hope to produce something that will more adequately reflect the broad spectrum of community work taking place. For now, we offer a reflection particularly from the point of view of our paid worker - her highlights from 2011.

## Short Courses

### Just People

Over the season of Lent, Diocese Urban Officer Kathryn Fitzsimons, led this six-week interactive course, which looks at compassion, justice and how we can effect change locally and globally. One of the most thought-provoking evenings was when we heard from two of our Police Community Support Officers and also a representative from Re'new (housing), who talked about the area from their various perspectives. We planned a follow-up event that would take us out into the local community. *See events section for more details.*

### Community Arts Activities

In the second half of the year we received funding from the Area Panel of East North East Homes to run Arts projects in the area. The **Drum Circle** and **Community Choir** sessions run by Jamie Fletcher began with low attendance but were so enjoyable that each week welcomed new people, who in turn encouraged others to attend. They were great for bringing the “feel good factor” to a Sunday afternoon.





The **textile course** held at Stainbeck Church was packed from day one. It included different methods of felting and produced some great and varied works of art! Thanks to Agnis Smallwood for her professional input on this.

**Drama Club** benefitted from the Area Panel funding by enabling us to run activities during the summer holidays. We welcomed a good number of new children to the group with a programme that included stage lighting tuition, puppetry, fake blood and bruises! The funding also paid for a reward trip to West Yorkshire Playhouse to see Annie (a very special evening and, for many, a first trip to the theatre) and, in 2012, the input of a professional Hip-Hop Artist to run beatboxing and emcee sessions.



This group gave a short Christmas performance before we all went carol singing around the estates in December. Although the production was short it was a success that helped build the children's discipline, confidence and skills. We were very proud of them!!!

And finally, this same pot of funding paid for a **Christmas Craft Party** for children age 5-8. This age group is not very well catered





for in the community and we are keen to develop a group to meet at the newly (re)opened community house on Beckhill Avenue. This taster session welcomed three families, the best part of which was helping parents and children together make creations especially for Christmas.

## ***Events***

*We were involved in a number of events this year, some of which we had a stronger hand in putting together than others, but all reflecting local churches working together in and with the wider community.*

### **Demonstrate Day**

Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup>. About 65 young people connected through Leeds Youth Cells Network came to Meanwood to help us serve the local community.

The team split up. Two groups collected litter from around the estates and helped with gardening and clearing work at local residences. Another group ran sports activities at the Multi Use Games Area near Aldi, and the third ran a family fun day on site at Stainbeck Church.



This included mask-making, bouncy castle, sports games, face-painting, circus skills, drumming and beatboxing.

It was a good day for all - for local residents taking part in activities and for young people from the Network to grow through getting involved at a local level.

## Hope 11

*Because we believe God loves us all, local churches and young people from across the city have come together to share and have fun with our local community.*

This was our message for Meanwood as we ran a holiday club, community cafe, gardening projects and “Party in the Park” event in July. We were joined (and enabled) by a team of 18 young people and adult leaders from across Leeds, all of whom were taking part in a week long HOPE 11 residential/mission.

Ginnels were cleared; gardens were weeded; hundreds of people were fed free burgers and sausages; children danced, played, heard stories, made kites and banged drums; some ladies learned how to use a mobile phone and email. Doc twisted balloons on stilts for 3 hours, while others painted face after face after face.....

## Hopes, Dreams and Helium Balloons!

In September we ran the Just People follow-up event. We met



members of the public in the square next to Fobi's/ Meanwood Community Shop with helium balloons and the question, "What are you hoping for...?" We ended with a giant balloon structure carrying wishes for Meanwood and personal dreams for us to pray for and help make happen! It was a community consultation with a difference.

### **Light Night at Halloween**

This event replaced our usual youth club as Halloween happened to fall on a Monday this year. Family games, crafts, a DVD and a look at Halloween from a different perspective. It was lovely to welcome old and new faces alike.

### **Carols in the Park and Carols around the Estates**

These were just two of a number of activities bringing the Church and local community together over the Christmas period. They are both quite different events but are fast becoming cherished traditions in Meanwood that help participants really get into the spirit of Christmas.

## *Weekly groups*

### **Craft Club, Drama Club and Monday Night Youth Club**

Our three weekly groups have continued successfully this year, all welcoming new attendees and new volunteers. In addition, all three groups are evidence of the positive working practices in the area as we partner with others, such as Leeds Youth Service, to run

activities, or take referrals from various organisations for people to attend.

## *Partnership Working*

Working with other organisations is a very important part of our work. We continue to attend interagency meetings and work with our local partners wherever possible

## *Finances and Resources*

We have made it to the end of another year, which in the current climate is an achievement! We are very grateful this year for funding received from all those listed below, plus resources shared from numerous sources. Most especially, we are thankful as ever for the time, energy, commitment and encouragement of our amazing volunteers.

*Leeds Christian Community Trust; Diocese of Ripon and Leeds; General Purposes Fund, URC Leeds; Stainbeck, St. Matthew's and Meanwood Valley churches; Leeds City Council Wellbeing Fund: (The Well-Being Fund grant is awarded by local Ward Members through the North East (Inner) Area Committee); East North East Homes Area Panel.*

*Additional finances were received from Wharfedale Vineyard Church for the Hope 11 events, and from individual donors.*