

# Churches Together in Sudbury & District

## Annual report 2015



### Chairman's Report 2014-2015

*Churches Together in Sudbury & District* exists to demonstrate and promote the love of and love for God in our area. Many of us do this Sunday by Sunday through our own churches. It has been very exciting to welcome new churches and organisations into the fellowship – *Agapé Café* and St Mary's Bures with Assington & Little Cornard, and the Box River benefice is on the brink of joining. There has been sadness too, most notably through the death of our dear friend and Pastor Revd Greg Webb of St Gregory's and the ill health of other ministers.

But there is no doubt that real power comes to our witness when we act together as united Christians, working together with enthusiasm and vision to further our faith. *CTIS&D* does this in a number of ways. We have our wonderful, loyal volunteers who ensure that all our associated projects operate regularly and effectively.

The list is very impressive – *Eden's Project*, working week by week with school-age kids in Sudbury, Great Cornard and Glemsford, our cafés *Kettle & Fish* in the town centre, *Agapé Café* in Cornard, *Soul Café* for the young (and not so young) sportsmen involved in *Fellowship Football* and *Fellowship Snooker*, *Fellowship Football* and *Fellowship Snooker* themselves, dealing with a hundred or so youngsters, *Town Pastors* out on the streets on Saturday nights, caring for those whose night out has taken a turn for the worse, more work in the schools through *Open the Book* and *Future Vision*. We're also grateful to *Number 72* for the amazing work it does with families and individuals who have fallen on hard times and to *Stour Valley Vineyard Church* for operating *Storehouse*, the Sudbury food bank.

I think it's probably true to say that in order for these organisations and groups to reach maximum effectiveness, they all need more helpers. The situation is most critical for *Kettle & Fish* and *Agapé Café*, for whom so much effort takes place behind the scenes – as well as behind the counter – in preparation for their days of operation. Helpers are needed to help set them up and break them down after their sessions – desperately. If you can help in this fantastic, greatly appreciated work for Jesus, please let us know.

Space does not permit to dwell on all the other activities that *CTIS&D* engages in – Prayer Breakfasts, the spiritual power-house of the organisation, United Services, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christian Aid Week *Explore*, *I Spy Easter* and so on. All such worthwhile ventures, all bringing together Christians from many backgrounds but all rejoicing in a common faith and desire to extend God's kingdom here, all proclaiming that as God's people we wish to invite more of our fellow citizens to follow Jesus.

**Malcolm Offord**

# Agape Café

Annual Report 2015

Agape = Unconditional Love. Following Christ's example, we selflessly give up our resources to serve our local community.

This year God has graciously blessed the work of Agape Café through the support of the churches in Great Cornard.

With the help of some generous donations from B&Q Sudbury we have been able to refurbish a room at Wells Hall Old School which is now set up and available to hire as a café space. This has benefitted the community as well as the Agape staff greatly.

This year we have been supporting and promoting a local charity 'For Daisy and DIPG Cancer'. We have run a charity event which raised £151 and have provided the opportunity for customers to purchase merchandise to support this charity weekly. This has allowed us to build relationships with and pray for the non-Christian family who set up this charity after losing their daughter Daisy to Cancer in 2014.

As numbers seemed to be decreasing on a Tuesday, Agape Café is now open only one day a week from 10-3. Opening longer hours we are able to provide the community with high quality, low cost simple lunches. We are forming good relationships with a number of community members including a local crochet group who attend every Wednesday.

Agape Live is still open on the second Sunday of every month providing a relaxed atmosphere and occasional live music. The demographic attending this event has shifted and now seems to attract Christian youth and their friends, mainly from New Life Church and The Stour Valley Vineyard. We are currently looking at how best to provide for this new clientele. Some of the youth have been able to help out on the team serving tea and coffee and enjoy getting involved. They are a fantastic help, especially as volunteers are limited.

Agape Café is also in a transition phase as Jon Halden who currently heads this up needs to cut back his hours due to family and work commitments. We are currently looking for an enthusiastic Christian team player with vision to join the team twice a month in place of Jon. We are also praying for more volunteers generally.

As a team we are looking forward to see how God will use us over the next twelve months and are already in conversation with the churches of Great Cornard about supporting a Christmas Community outreach event.

**Linda Hunt**



During Christian Aid Week in May, the Sunday evening service at St Gregory's Church was well attended; Simon Snell, Regional Coordinator for Suffolk, was the speaker and representatives from local churches took part.

More than 70 people collected door to door in Sudbury and Great Cornard. The total of £5,260.93 was a slight increase on last year, and a good result in the current financial climate. The majority of roads are covered, but more collectors would be beneficial. There were separate collections in Long Melford & Shimpling, and in some other villages in the district.

In August, Christian Aid organised another canoe trip down the River Stour. Ten people, including Revd John Boardman, Simon Snell, and teenagers Judith and Matthew Gill from All Saints' Church in Sudbury, arrived safely in Bures after paddling from Sudbury on a fine day. Sponsors contributed the magnificent sum of £1,060. With Gift Aid and quadruple matched funding from the European Union, the total will exceed £4,240. This year the event supported a Christian Aid project to make pregnancy and birth safer, prevent HIV, reduce underage pregnancies and tackle gender-based violence for over 200,000 indigenous women and girls in Honduras and El Salvador.

Christian Aid works on behalf of British churches in more than 40 countries, not only providing emergency relief but, more importantly, supporting long term development. We are most grateful to everyone who helps in any way.

**Malcolm Snow**

## COMMUNICATIONS



### **Website and emails**

The website [churchestogetherinsudbury.org.uk](http://churchestogetherinsudbury.org.uk) carries permanent information about Churches Together in Sudbury & District and individual churches, current and archived news, and an online calendar. We welcome comments on articles; use the form on the *Contact us* page under *Communications*. Please send other suggestions or corrections to me via [ctis.news@gmail.com](mailto:ctis.news@gmail.com). The site continues to be popular. "I Spy Easter" material can be downloaded by any organisation after requesting the password. The help from those who maintain the website and Google Calendar is invaluable.

More than 230 people receive emails about local church news; to join them contact me as above. We are most grateful to those who ensure that items from Church News are included in church magazines and weekly notices. Please make the website and email list known in your own church community.

**Malcolm Snow**



### **Media**

Regular monthly articles are still being written for the *Church Chat* column in the *Sudbury Mercury* newspaper; these articles, where appropriate, also appear in the *Sudbury & Long Melford Community News*, in some church magazines and on our website and is a great way to spread the Christian message throughout the town and surrounding villages.

Over the last year we have seen articles written by a wide range of contributors which is really encouraging as different people contributing to the column gives a good balance, variety and change of perspective. Communications is an essential aspect of the work of Churches Together in Sudbury & District and so if you are interested in writing something but would like advice or help, please don't hesitate to ask. In addition, if you know of any publications you think would be interested in featuring our stories or you have information that would make a good article, please do contact me.

**Lynda Sebbage**



## **Eden's Project**

Eden's Project has now been working in the locality for 16 years faithfully serving the young people of the district, a conservative estimate would be over 2,500 young people have been ministered to over the years.

Stuart and Jude have now been at Eden's for 12 years so the 13 year olds we met when we first arrived are now 25 year old adults - some of whom now have children of their own! It is great to bump into past members and hear their life stories so far and it is always so encouraging to hear their fond memories of their time at Eden's. It was especially interesting when two local police officers popped in to our Friday evening club, as they do from time to time, and one of them said that they had enjoyed coming to Eden's as a teenager!

The latest generation of young people have the options of EPic Youth Clubs at Great Cornard, Glemsford and of course at Eden's main youth centre in Gainsborough Street in Sudbury. At the end of each term we have our Scoffs dinner with an evangelistic message. As we now take young people from age 11 we have adapted the style of these talks to be more interactive and activity based to combat their shorter attention spans.

We are excited to hear about the Porch Project's detached youthwork on the streets of Great Cornard and hope they will encourage even more young people to attend the EPic Cornard youth club which has been going for 3 years now on Wednesday evenings.

We continue to see good results from the football ministry and have a large regular group of young people enjoying the Friday afternoon sessions and we continue have a team in the Monday evening Fellowship Football league. We have been really encouraged by the teenagers in the team coming to the Soul Café outreach evenings and engaging with questions of faith. The concept of not needing a referee as God sees all and has given us a conscience and the courage to be honest and admit our mistakes is a very different message to what they get when they watch Premier League football on TV!

The latest expansion of the ministry is into the area of engaging with parents about how to best understand their teenagers and communication well with them. Eden's have secured a grant from the Safer Suffolk Fund which is enabling Stuart and Jude to undertake 4 days of training from the Christian charity, Care for the Family. This will mean that they are fully trained facilitators and will be able to run courses for parents of teenagers.

Please continue to support the ministry of Eden's in prayer as we fully rely on God for his direction and provision of the work. Please pray with us for a harvest from the many seeds that have been sown over the years.

***Stuart Ayling***

## **Explore - CTiSD academic year 14/15**

We ran another successful event in Thomas Gainsborough School last December. We saw nearly 240 students and ran eight sessions (two to three at a time) during the day. Ian Copeman joined us to facilitate for the first time. Unfortunately we only had five couples who could make this event, three of whom were helping for the first time. Although it threw up some challenges, we made it work, and feedback was generally very positive. We are expecting to return again this academic year at the beginning of December, but we are waiting for the school to confirm the dates and details. I would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported over the last year or so. These events couldn't run without the volunteers committed to the conferences. It's these couples whose life experiences can help shape a generation's view on marriage and committed relationships.

***Andy Beard***

## **Fairtrade Report 2015**

We are pleased that the Fairtrade Foundation approved our continuation as a Fairtrade Town this year. Every few years a town has to send in details of what it has been doing since becoming a Fairtrade Town to show that the group is actively promoting Fairtrade.

Our website [www.sudburyfairtrade.org.uk](http://www.sudburyfairtrade.org.uk) continues to attract public attention. The Sudbury Town Council website proudly shows the Fairtrade symbol and links to the group website. This year we hope to update the Town Fairtrade Directory.

We are delighted that recently Bury St Edmunds has become a Fairtrade Town. We gave some help to get them started.

We have had some changes in our group personnel. If you would like to join our Sudbury Fairtrade group please ring 01787 372738.

***John Boardman***

## **Friends of St Peters**

The group continue to meet and bookings from hirers are at an all-time high.

The Tuesday lunch time free concerts are always well attended. Also the church is open more frequently than ever before making it the second most visited church of the over 400 under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust

Relations with the CCT are as usual somewhat fraught but there is enthusiasm from both sides to develop the facilities. WCs and a new kitchen continue to be top of the agendas alongside, of course, funding.

***Chris Proffitt***

## **Future Vision Report - 2015**

First of all thank you for your prayers!

Chris Rowe did a brilliant job with Future Vision and as is often the case she did lots more than we ever knew. We have discovered some of those things as we have gone through the year.

We have been blessed with some new members on the Working Group and the Trustees, who add new colour and ideas.

Sadly we have to say goodbye to Rachel Banham who has done a great job with our publicity, as she prepares to move to pastures new. Should anyone have the time and skills to take that job on we would love to hear from you.

Over this past school year the Chaplaincy at Thomas Gainsborough School led by Ian and Liz Moulton has grown and been a huge blessing to staff and students. This is a very valuable work and we would appreciate your prayers for them both and for Rev Chris Ramsey as they work closely with the community there.

Jo and Lesley's Open the Book assemblies continue to be welcomed into the Primary schools and children of all ages hear and reflect on the stories from the Bible. They are enthusiastic about the visits and very keen to be involved in the acting!

N Vision clubs are also growing and are tailored to meet the needs of the children who come but always include opportunity to talk about who God is and the difference he can make in our lives. It may not be glamorous work but we can never quantify the effect that this work among our young people will have now or in the future. AND. we believe it is vital to share the good news of Jesus love with them at every given opportunity. Please pray that the doors will remain open and that we will honour the God we serve in everything we do.

Please pray for all the schools, staff and children as they take well-earned holidays.

We remain grateful for your support and ask that you will continue to support us financially so that the work can continue into the future.

***Faith Marsden***

### **I-SPY EASTER**

This year's "**I-Spy Easter**" event was just as successful as it was in 2013 when it had its first launch. On Easter Saturday, members of the cast and team had many opportunities to speak to parents and children about Jesus and this proved to be an excellent way of reaching out to share the Easter story with people of all ages. We calculate that we had in the region of 200 children and adults with whom we shared the Easter message.

Members of the team wandered the streets dressed in biblical costume and acted out short biblical cameos; the children 'spied them out' and collected the signature of each character. With a fully completed card, the children came into St Peter's to collect their Easter 'prize'.

Inside St Peter's there were many activities including drumming, arts and crafts, dancing, face painting, plane flying, fish prayers and an Easter Garden. As before, no charge was made.

Grateful thanks go to all who took part. This event proves the huge benefit from churches working together to the glory of God!

***Lynda Sebbage***



Over the past year there has been a commitment to opening K&F as many times as we can. This creates a stability for our customers who have come to rely on us to be there for them & help some of the more lonely people of Sudbury & District also showing a United Church & Christian Witness. Although we have been told many times that money is not important the extra funds made available have enabled CTiS&D to support a lot more causes. Please remember that the takings from K&F are tithed to The Dorcas Fund & the rest going into CTiS&D. At the beginning of this year's term we were faced with the new ruling regarding allergens, we now have a system which is comprehensive & regularly kept up to date with the help of all our suppliers. We were concerned when the co-op closed but they have been great and deliver our rolls direct early a.m.

We have made a priority of food hygiene & by showing this in every way we can we hope to get our five star status at the next inspection. Thanks to a gift of money from Godfrey Miller we have purchased a set of cake covers that show the food clearly & hygienically. We have invested in eight new aprons in Royal Blue with an embroidered K&F logo, when we support other organizations such as Round Table & F.O.S.P. with their exhibitions the name of K&F along with Church unity is shown.

In the Children's Play Area we now have some soft play equipment along with a children's table, chairs & tea set, chalk board, baby mat with mobile. All these with two high chairs have proved to be very popular. For a long time we used to put out a table with a nappy changing mat, each time knowing it would not be used. It now is used so much that we have a dedicated table cover with balloon pattern. We have, in recent months, been blessed by increasing amounts of children including "The wagon train" when a line of between 6 to 8 pushchairs pushed by young mums winds its way through St. Peters to the back where they circle the wagons around the Children's Area.

One area that has had mixed results is set aside for "Guest Exhibitors" for those such as Credit Union, Air Ambulance, Community Police, Town Pastors & others. Our aim here is to try to bring the Community into The Church and The church into the Community. It can only be supposed that these groups, just as we in K&F do, find it hard to get volunteers to give up time to help.

I thank God for the small but wonderful team that we do have and ask you to pray for them & K&F.

***Ken Steel***

### **Market Town Partnership**

The group continues to meet under the enthusiastic chairmanship of Lesley Ford Platt. It has recently become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which should help it gain grants.

The AGM in April was well attended and Mrs Anesta Newson gave the key note talk on HIVE and the work of the Bridge Centre.

The Transition Group continue with Eco Fairs in St Peters, Seed Swaps and bread making courses.

The offshoot of the MTP, the Town Team (created to make the Portas Bid) organised the Food and Drink Festival which was marshalled once again by members of the MTP and the Sudbury Rotary Clubs.

***Chris Proffitt***

## Report on the work of Number 72 August 2015

We have seen a significant increase in activity at Number 72 as statutory services channel more work in our direction.

The bereavement and loss work amongst children and young people has been running at an unprecedented two courses per week in order to meet demand from Primary and Senior Schools. We give thanks to God that this increase has been met by a similar expansion of the Number 72 team which currently numbers more than 10 people. This is the highest number of folks that have ever been involved in the ministry at one time.

The support we offer on issues like parenting, relationships and family break up continue to receive a lot of interest and we are able to share our faith with different people as we have opportunity.

Tim and Joy's Sabbatical

Tim and Joy took three months out this year which allowed them to go on retreat, have a lovely holiday and spend time praying about the future of the work. We are most grateful to '**Counties**' for the funding received in support of this much needed break. The Team at Number 72 and especially managers Louise Bunton and Ben Hunt managed the work well during Tim & Joy's absence.

### Looking to the future

We are actively making plans to extend the work and outreach of Number 72 even further. Plans are at an advanced stage to establish partnerships to enable us to reach more families in a number of new ways. We are also finalising arrangements for a new service to churches offering training and advice on setting up an outreach work in their community. Many times professionals from the local authority have requested us to help put in place a similar type of outreach work in other areas. We believe now is the time to see this start to happen.

Thank you for your prayers and support for all that goes on at Number 72.

*Tim & Joy Ayrton*



## Prayer Breakfast Report 2015

We continue to meet faithfully at various churches at 8 am on Saturday mornings and at the beginning of the new sessions in September we will even expand into Little Cornard. It is a great joy to meet new folk and discover our 'oneness' in Jesus.

We are aware that some of our local churches and organisations are under pressure partly because the workers are ageing and because our younger Christians have heavy workloads and so many calls on their leisure time. This is a national problem and one that we continue to pray to be answered.

We will greatly miss Greg Webb and his early morning smile but thank God again for the blessings we received through him at St Gregory's Church. We look forward to meeting the new Minister at Sudbury Baptist Mark Ulanowski ('w' is pronounced 'v' – Mark has Polish background but is English!) He commences his ministry in Sudbury in September and will be inducted on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

It is a joy to all of us to see the differences between us, to make allowances for them and then to discover that our roots are deep in the same Triune God. It is a joy too to see the new ideas and

events taking shape in the individual churches. We will continue to pray for God's great blessings of power and encouragement to fill all our local churches, every minister, each lay person and all of those in between. May our prayers and worship delight our God as He continues to delight us!

***Eleanor Ridge***

### **Samaritan's Purse – Christmas Shoe-boxes**

#### Breakdown of Boxes sent.

Boy aged 2 - 4	604
Girl aged 2 - 4	722
Boy aged 5 - 9	2,120
Girl aged 5 - 9	2,807
Boy aged 10 - 14	863
Girl aged 10 - 14	<u>1,166</u>
<b>TOTAL BOXES</b>	<b><u>8,282</u></b>

Please note that this wonderful breakdown is for only 42 pallets of the 49 completed. Terrible rush on the final day and the breakdown went unrecorded! However we did in fact process **9,755** shoeboxes. Majority of the boxes were sent to Belarus, remainder possibly to somewhere in Africa.

Unfortunately, not all countrywide processed boxes contained the requisite donation of £3.00, however Sudbury achieved an average of £2.81.

Our local Warehouse Manager, Kim, will be contacting us later in the year, hopefully with further details and a possible warehouse!!

As your CTiS&D organiser I very much enjoyed the great comradeship encountered during our 'packing' period. Thank you all very much!!

See you all again soon. God Bless.

***David Ford***



### **Storehouse Foodbank – 2015 Report Prepared for Churches Together in Sudbury & District AGM 2015**

Storehouse continues to grow to meet the increased demand from those experiencing hardship. We still provide two weekly drop-in sessions on a Tuesday and Friday from 1 – 3p.m at the Christopher Centre in Sudbury. At the end of the year we will have seen another increase in the amount of food being distributed to those in need, whilst continuing to look at ways to reach those in poverty crisis. We have re-furnished the drop-in to create a more welcoming environment, recipients are offered the usual light refreshments, a listening ear and the opportunity for prayer if they wish, it is always encouraging when this is taken up and particularly when we hear answers to these prayers.

Our number of food collection points has grown again this year to around 37, some new additions being Waitrose Sudbury, the Police Sudbury, Churches in Alpheton and Shimpling and the Co-op

group in Long Melford and Great Cornard. We are also very grateful to the schools and churches that have and continue to donate their Harvest Festival food, which make a big difference to maintaining supplies throughout the year. We were once again grateful to the generosity of Waitrose and the team of volunteers who made it possible to bless over 150 families and individuals at Christmas with the Christmas Hamper initiative.

We believe that God is blessing the work of Storehouse, and we are prayerfully looking to improve and develop this compassion ministry. With this in mind we have increased the volunteer team, and made changes to the management team. Beryl Worvell's role has changed to Storehouse Co-ordinator and we have engaged a new Storehouse Team Leader, Rita Pennington (see Storehouse Newsletter). We are now required to record the amount of food we receive as well as how much we distribute throughout the year. This is now a requirement for all Foodbanks. We are anticipating further changes as we expand this much-needed service.

Many thanks to all who donate and help in the ministry of Storehouse, we are truly blessed by your prayers and generosity with food and financial donations. We couldn't do it without you!

***Rita Pennington***  
Storehouse Team Leader

***Beryl Worvell***  
Storehouse Co-ordinator

### **18-35s Task Group**

The general shortage of young adults – 18-35s – from congregations, nationally and locally, continues to create serious concern. There are encouraging numbers of parents with young families in some local churches, though the parents may often be from Christian families themselves rather than 'incomers'.

Are 'Fresh Expressions' (missional groups forming relationships outside church structures, often outside church premises) part of the answer? We have some vibrant and expanding local FEs: Messy Church groups (children with parents), long-established Fellowship Football (still over 120 men in the various groups, majority 18-35, 60% non-church), Fellowship Snooker (60 regulars plus 30 others, 25% under 35, many non-church), Agape café (midweek mums & children, Sundays all age), Causeway Prospects (informal worship for those with learning difficulties), film nights, Muslim-Christian dialogue, K&F and others. All these have some Christian input – building relationships with Christians, short talks, prayer, and worship in some cases. Last season FF ran two Soul Cafés, with specific spiritual content. However, much debated is: will these FEs lead to committed disciples? If so, within 'traditional' church services, or where/how? How might we sustain regular, relevant teaching/worship events?

This year our 18-35s TG & others concerned have largely focused on supporting non-church-based FEs, and looking at successful non-local projects. FF has asked CTiS&D to help fund a pastoral worker (consideration ongoing). We now recommend that a more regular 'Soul café'-type event, open to all local FEs, and supported by CTiS&D and individual churches, be explored. If the Church is to be renewed by young adults, some serious new thinking is needed. What would Jesus have us do?

***Roger Pullan***