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REPORT

Action Research Project:
Inter-Church and Church-Community Relations in Newtownards

April 2003

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REPORT

Action Research Project:
Inter-Church and Church-Community Relations in Newtownards

April 2003

1 Introduction

This is a report setting out the findings, recommendations and proposed future strategy of the Action Research Project into Inter-Church and Church-Community Relations in Newtownards.

The research was carried out between January and March 2003.

The report includes:

- An Executive Summary of the main findings and recommendations
- An explanation of the background to the research
- A description of the research methodology employed
- A presentation of the main findings of the research
- A series of recommendations and options for the future
- A proposed strategy developed in response to the recommendations
- A set of associated appendices

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2 Executive Summary and Recommendations

2.1 Background

The Link Family and Community Centre in Newtownards commissioned this action research project. The research question is:

"What are the causes and consequences of the barriers and divisions between the churches, and between the churches and the local community in the Newtownards area?"

2.2 Research Methodology

- A Research Partnership Group
- Desk research
- A structured telephone survey with 22 churches
- Semi structured interviews with 18 interviewees
- A Participatory Workshop
- A Strategy Planning Workshop

2.3 Main Research Findings

2.3.1 Ongoing contact involving all 28 churches in Newtownards does not exist

2.3.2 The majority of churches have low to moderate levels of contact with other churches

2.3.3 The majority of churches have low levels of active co-operation with other churches

2.3.4 Most Protestant churches have no contact with the Roman Catholic Church

2.3.5 The Inter Church Group involves 39% of churches in ongoing cross community contact and co-operation at a low to moderate level

2.3.6 There is some co-operation among the smaller evangelical churches, between same denominations, in geographical areas and between small informal groups of clergy

2.3.7 A significant number of clergy have never met each other

2.3.8 There is no evidence of strong conflict between churches

2.3.9 The vast majority of churches are open to inter church contact and co-operation on social/community issues

2.3.10 Most Protestant churches do not wish contact/co-operation to include "joint worship" with Roman Catholics

2.3.11 The main reasons for the current level of church relations are local history and tradition, heavy clergy and laity workload focussed on intra church work before inter church and theological reasons

2.3.12 There is a widespread desire for increased inter church contact/co-operation

2.3.13 The majority of churches have low to no contact with local community/voluntary groups

2.3.14 The vast majority of churches have no active co-operation with local community/voluntary groups (apart from The Link)

2.3.15 Many churches are involved in "hidden" community work within and through their own membership

2.3.16 Many churches are dissatisfied at their current low level of involvement in community issues

2.3.17 Most community/voluntary and statutory groups are dissatisfied at the current low level of church involvement

2.3.18 Some churches see The Link as doing their community development work

2.3.19 The main reason for current church community relations are local history and tradition, heavy clergy and laity workload focussed on intra church work before community work, theological perspectives and lack of knowledge, skills and resources

2.3.20 There is a widespread desire for increased church involvement in community/social issues

2.3.21 The churches need information/training and skills in community development

2.3.22 There has been a high level of positive interest in this research

2.3.23 Church relations can have an impact on wider community relations

2.3.24 Low levels of contact/co-operation, particularly on a cross community basis, is generally perceived as having a negative impact on community relations

2.3.25 The existence of ongoing cross community contact between 39% of the churches is generally perceived as having a small positive impact on community relations

2.3.26 There appears to be a correlation between level of contact and level of trust between churches

2.3.27 Most churches are perceived as having little or no impact or interest in disadvantaged housing estates

2.3.28 There is some frustration at the limited involvement of churches in social community issues (e.g. domestic violence, health and community relations)

2.3.29 There is a perception in the community sector that churches only get involved in community work to access funding for their buildings

2.3.30 Communication between churches and community sector is generally poor

2.3.31 There is a gap in understanding and trust between churches and community

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2.4 Recommendations

2.4.1 It is recommended that each church clarifies the role of clergy and lay leaders in relation to participation in inter church and church community work

2.4.2 It is suggested that the Inter Church Group explore other inter church models from Armagh, Cookstown, Omagh and Coleraine, and continue to explore ways of attracting fuller participation

2.4.3 It is recommended that consideration be given to establishing a new Churches Forum on Social/Community/Civic Issues, facilitated by The Link

2.4.4 It is suggested that Ards Borough Council give consideration to establishing an Annual Good Relations Event to provide a space for the churches along with community/voluntary, statutory and business sectors to develop good relations in the Borough

2.4.5 It is recommended that any new structures that are developed have a strong emphasis on building relationships and trust

2.4.6 It is recommended that The Link considers offering to facilitate the delivery of community development training to local churches

2.4.7 It is recommended that churches consider becoming members of the Community Network, and that the Network invites a Churches representative to sit on its Committee

2.4.8 It is recommended that the community/voluntary and statutory sector attempt to increase the inclusion of churches in their activities

2.4.9 It is recommended that a communications strategy is developed to improve inter church and church community communication

2.4.10 It is recommended that any new structures that develop give priority to increasing partnership and integration between churches and the community

2.4.11 It is recommended that any new structures that develop give priority to the themes of community relations and the community development needs of socially deprived housing estates

2.4.12 It is recommended that any proposals that emerge from this research are consulted on widely and are both realistic and achievable

3 Background

The Link Family and Community Centre in Newtownards commissioned this action research project.

The Link is an independent Christian-based community development organisation. It began in 1997 as a social action initiative of Regent St Presbyterian Church, and later became an independent interdenominational group running a wide range of community projects including initiatives dealing with community relations, youth, parent and toddlers, senior citizens and addiction. Most of the work of the Link is carried out by dedicated team of over 80 volunteers from a broad range of churches, supported by a small staff team of 2 full time workers, 2 part time project workers and a part time clerical assistant.

During the course of its work the Link has increasingly identified the relationship between the local churches and between churches and the local community, as being an important issue in relation to barriers to community development and peacebuilding in Newtownards.

In the Link's experience, the apparent limited contact and understanding between these groups appears to have had a negative impact on:

- Intra community relationships within the Protestant community
- Inter community relationships across the political/religious divide

The divisions between the Protestant churches and the sense of alienation of socially deprived communities from the churches seemed to contribute to a lack of cohesion and weak community infrastructure within the Protestant community in Newtownards. This could be contributing to reduced levels of networking, low community confidence and a lack of trust, all of which are required for engagement in community development and cross community activity.

The Link was also interested in how perceived barriers to cross community contact between the Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic parish may also have an impact on wider community relations, particularly in an area where the Catholic population is 10%.

The Link concluded that an audit of these relationships should explore these perceptions, identify and highlight the main issues and provide a foundation for developing a strategy to reduce any barriers and contribute to peacebuilding in Newtownards.

As a result, this action research project was developed as an essential element of The Link's wider peacebuilding strategy. The organisation also hoped that the project would provide a useful model for groups in other parts of Northern Ireland who have identified similar issues in their local communities.

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3.1 Research Question

The research question was:

"What are the causes and consequences of the barriers and divisions between the churches, and between the churches and the local community in the Newtownards area?"

3.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives were as follows:

a) To identify the scale and nature of relationships between the Protestant churches in Newtownards

b) To identify the scale and nature of relationships between the Protestant and Catholic churches in Newtownards

c) To identify the scale and nature of relationships between the churches and local communities in Newtownards

d) To identify the impact of current inter church and church-community relations on community relations in the area

e) To identify and recommend strategies that will contribute to peacebuilding by addressing these inter church and church-community relations

f) To facilitate the development of an agreed strategy and implementation process based on the findings and recommendations

Independent consultant, Tony Macaulay was appointed to undertake the action research project under the management of The Link and the direction of a Research Partnership Group.

A research methodology (as described in the next section) was agreed with the consultant as the most appropriate way of achieving the research objectives within the resources and time available.

This report presents the findings and recommendations. It also includes the proposed strategy that was developed at a Strategy Planning Workshop in response to the needs highlighted in the research.

4 Research Methodology

An action research approach was agreed, to maximise learning and development throughout the process.

The methodology was as follows:

4.1 Research Partnership Group

The Link convened a Research Partnership Group to advise, monitor and inform the research and the strategy development process. The partnership is made up of a range of the key stakeholders (churches, community/voluntary sector and statutory agencies) whose involvement is vital in the development of any proposed future strategy. The partnership met at the beginning of the research (to inform the process), at an interim stage (to consider the research findings) and at the end of the process (to propose an agreed way forward).

A list of members of the Research Partnership Group is in Appendix I.

4.2 Desk Research

Desk research was carried out to gather background contextual data including demographic trends, levels of social deprivation, the wider policy context, scale and nature of peacebuilding and community development activities in the area and relevant models of good practice from other places.

4.3 Structured Survey

A structured survey was developed and carried out as an audit of current levels of inter-church and church-community contact and activities. The survey was be administered by telephone to maximise the return rate from as many of the 28 churches in Newtownards as possible. It was possible to contact all 28 churches, and 22 surveys were completed within the timescale of the project. A list of survey respondents is in Appendix II. The Telephone Survey questions are in Appendix III.

4.4 Semi Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews were carried out with a sample cross section of stakeholders to explore the nature and impact of current relationships and to identify possible future strategies and ideas including potential opportunities and barriers.

18 Interviews were carried out within 4 main groups of informant:

- 6 Local Clergy/Church Leaders
- 6 Local Community/Voluntary Sector Agencies
- 3 Local Statutory Agencies
- 3 Relevant Regional Agencies

A list of interviewees is in Appendix IV. The interview question framework is in Appendix V.

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4.5 Participatory Workshop

A participatory workshop took place on the morning of Monday 3rd March 2003. It provided an opportunity for a range of stakeholders to identify and discuss issues and ideas together from their different values, interests and perspectives.

A cross section of churches, community/voluntary sector and statutory agencies were invited to participate in the workshop.

33 individuals from a range of churches and agencies attended the workshop. A list of attendees is in Appendix VI.

The aims of the participatory workshop were:
- to draw together interested church, community and statutory groups
- to identify issues and ideas relevant to the research
- to inform the research
- to provide a space for open discussion

A copy of the workshop programme along with the small group discussion questions is in Appendix VII.

Notes from the participatory workshop are recorded in Appendix VIII.

4.6 Clergy Meeting

An additional meeting with clergy was included in the methodology to give the churches an opportunity to comment on the interim findings of the research and to discuss possible options for the future. All of the clergy were invited to the meeting on the morning of 19th March 2003. 9 clergy attended it. A list of attendees is in Appendix IX.

4.7 Research Report

A draft research report was presented to the Research Partnership Group, highlighting the main findings and recommendations of the research and consultation phase of the development process. The report then went through several drafts based on feedback.

4.8 Strategy Planning Workshop

A strategy development workshop was then held on 28th March. In addition to members of the Research Partnership Group, everyone who had participated in the research to date was invited to attend.

15 participants attended the workshop. A list of attendees is included in Appendix X.

The purpose of the workshop was to agree a proposed strategy based on the recommendations of the research. It followed the basic strategy development model:

- Where are we now? (analysing the current strategic position)
- Where do we want to be? (developing a shared vision for the future)
- How do we get there? (developing a clear set of aims and objectives for implementation)

5 Main Research Findings

The main research findings within each of the research objectives are presented below.

A variety of quotations from the interviews are included to give a "flavour" of the views and opinions of various informants.

5.1 Scale and nature of relationships between the churches

5.1.1 Ongoing contact involving all 28 churches in Newtownards does not exist

For the purposes of the research "contact" is defined as basic contact/ communication between church leaders or other "corporate" contact, as opposed to informal contact between church members.

No structure or mechanism currently exists through which all churches contact each other.

The contact that takes place is fragmented. It takes place among a series of sub groups of churches. These sub groups include:

- The eleven churches that are members of the Inter Church Group
- Small ad hoc groupings of smaller evangelical churches that have occasional contact with one another
- Denominational groupings, such as the seven Presbyterian churches, that have regular meetings
- Groupings of churches working in the same geographical locations, such as Movilla
- Small informal groups of clergy who meet together for prayer, fellowship and support
- A very recent initiative drawing together a grouping of evangelical churches

None of the churches in Newtownards have wide contacts with most other churches.

"Everybody works to their own agenda – their own wee patch"

(Semi Structured Interview)

A small number of churches have no contact with any other churches.

5.1.2 The majority of churches have low to moderate levels of contact with other churches

For the majority of churches that do have contact with other churches, the level of contact, on average, varies from once or twice a year to once a month.

This contact tends to focus on sharing information on church activities.

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5.1.3 The majority of churches have low levels of active co-operation with other churches

For the purposes of the research "active co-operation" is defined as partnership or joint working between church bodies, as opposed to informal co-operation between church members working together in other groups.

In all the churches, levels of active co-operation are lower than levels of contact. There are a small number of churches with high levels of co-operation with one other church.

The majority of churches have low levels or no active co-operation with other churches.

A significant number of church members from a broad range of denominations work together in co-operation as individual volunteers (as opposed to official church representatives) in The Link.

5.1.4 Most Protestant churches have no contact with the Roman Catholic Church

Most Protestant churches in Newtownards do not wish to participate in "joint worship" or "ecumenical" activities with the Roman Catholic Church.

However most of these churches do not have a theological objection to working with the Roman Catholic Church on community/social/civic issues.

In spite of this, the majority of Protestant churches, who express a difficulty with "joint worship", tend to have no contact with the Roman Catholic Church on community/social/civic issues either. Only those Protestant churches that have no objection with "joint worship" tend to have ongoing contact with St Patrick's.

A very small number of Protestant churches do not wish to have any contact whatsoever with the Roman Catholic Church.

"Newtownards is predominantly Protestant so inter Protestant relations are seen as most important."

(Semi Structured Interview)

"Because there is such a Protestant majority, the minority voice is not heard and therefore community relations is not seen as an issue"

(Semi Structured Interview)

St Patrick's does not have any theological objection to "joint worship" or co-operation with Protestant churches on community/social issues. St Patrick's is active in, and appreciative of the Inter Church Group.

However, in an area with a small Catholic population of 10%, there are limits to the capacity of the Parish to engage in such co-operation.

5.1.5 The Inter Church Group involves 39% of churches in ongoing cross community contact and co-operation at a low to moderate level

The Inter Church Group in Newtownards has been active for 15 years. It began as an initiative of the "town centre" churches and has developed into a group with a membership of 11 churches from the Newtownards area. The Group meets regularly and organises an annual calendar of events including Inter Church Services such as an Annual Carol Service, as well as occasional talks/discussion-based activities such as Lenten Talks.

In the past, the group experienced some opposition. However this has not been the case in recent years.

The Ards Borough Council often relates to the Inter Church Group as the representative body of the churches in the town.

The Inter Church Group is the only cross community inter church grouping in the town.

"There is a lack of support centrally for clergy who take a risk by getting involved in cross community. Clergy tend not to take the risk for fear of losing their congregations support"

(Semi Structured Interview)

"The Inter Church Group could be doing more. It's getting better, but it's a bit polite with nice meetings and cups of tea."

(Semi Structured Interview)

The majority of the Protestant churches are not members of the Inter Church group because it involves "joint worship" with Roman Catholics.

The Inter Church Group has tried to encourage more churches to become involved.

However, to date only 39% of the churches in Newtownards participate in the Inter Church Group and/or its activities.

In the past 10 years there has been a steady increase in the number and type of inter church fora across Northern Ireland.

"There is far more happening than 10 years ago. The expansion has given new direction to the old models of inter church group, with a greater emphasis on relationships and discussing issues, than formal structures"

(Semi Structured Interview)

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5.1.6 There is some co-operation among the smaller evangelical churches, between same denominations, in geographical areas and between small informal groups of clergy

Among the Protestant inter church groupings in the town, there tends to be a low to moderate level of co-operation as indicated in 5.1.1. This varies from clergy support and fellowship, to information sharing, to co-operation and/or co-ordination in mission and evangelistic activities.

5.1.7 A significant number of clergy have never met each other

A significant number of clergy in Newtownards have never met each other. Some clergy met for the first time at the meetings related to this research.

"It would be nice if at least the other clergy could say hello to you when they passed you in the street"

(Semi –Structured Interview)

5.1.8 There is no evidence of strong conflict between churches

While there is some evidence of sensitivity, tensions and a degree of rivalry between some churches, there is no evidence of strong conflict between churches.

Most respondents described inter church relations as "quite good, but could be better".

"Relations are distant but not confrontational"

(Semi Structured Interview)

Relations between clergy within the various inter church groupings are good.

"It's not just about clergy – relationships with the churches should not mean relationships with the clergy"

(Semi Structured Interview)

5.1.9 The vast majority of churches are open to inter church contact and co-operation on social/community issues

Only a small minority of churches in Newtownards do not wish to co-operate with other churches on community issues.

The vast majority of churches are, in principal, open to co-operation with all of the other churches on such matters, even though there is not a strong tradition of this in the town.

"The first task is to talk about being a human being, before talking about theology"

(Semi Structured Interview)

5.1.10 Most Protestant churches do not wish contact/co-operation to include "joint worship"

As indicated in 5.1.4 most of the Protestant churches do not wish contact/ co-operation to include "joint worship" with Roman Catholics.

Some Protestant churches would apply a similar condition to the type of co-operation that they would find acceptable with other Protestant churches. They would only co-operate if they believed they had a "shared agenda" or similar theological or doctrinal outlook or understanding of the Gospel.

"What would the churches get together for? I wouldn't see value in coming together unless we had the same agenda. A spiritual coming together or worshipping together would cause confusion because it will suggest that our beliefs are the same"

(Semi Structured Interview)

"There is a feeling that if you engage with people with whom you disagree doctrinally, then you are compromising... but to understand you have to engage"

(Semi Structured Interview)

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5.1.11 Reason for Current Inter Church Relations

The main reasons given for the current level of church relations were:

- Local history and tradition: many respondents indicated that their current level of inter church contacts/relations was due to ongoing traditional links with certain other churches or a history of limited contacts

"People are culturally conditioned and cannot break out of the Northern Ireland mindset. They grow up with a lack of cross community contact, attend theological college here, and never break out of the confines of their culture"

(Semi Structured Interview)

"Churches have been sticking to their own wee corner for years"

(Semi Structured Interview)

- Heavy clergy and laity workload is focussed on intra church work: most respondents cited this as a major barrier.

"Churches spending a lot of time together robs local parishes of grassroots work"

(Semi Structured Interview)

However several respondents described this as "an excuse".

"It is moral cowardice to say 'my sole responsibility is to look after my own', or to say 'my people are conservative and I don't want to rock the boat"

(Semi Structured Interview)

- Competing priorities: intra church comes before inter church. Most churches are clear that their priority is their "own flock", and their related denominational commitments, leaving less time for inter church work.

"We do a decent job in looking after our own congregations, but we are not good at being prophetic and challenging to those communities. We are not good at relating to Catholics."

(Semi Structured interview)

"Congregations view the minister as the person who should do everything."

(Semi Structured Interview)

- Theological: this is both a driving and restraining influence on inter church relations.

Some churches restrict their level of inter church contact/co-operation because of their theological position.

"We are open to co-operation with any other sound evangelical church"

(Telephone Survey)

Others extend their level of inter church contact/co-operation because of their theological position.

"It is the right and responsible thing to give people an opportunity for cross community church meetings, especially in the face of growing secularism"

(Semi Structured Interview)

Some respondents from outside the church expressed confusion at these contradictory positions.

5.1.12 There is a widespread desire for increased inter church contact and co-operation

Most church respondents expressed a desire for increasing inter church contact or co-operation in the town, particularly around social/community issues.

Respondents from other agencies also indicated a desire to see the churches role modelling good relations through increased co-operation and higher profile cross community contact.

However most respondents emphasised the importance of any new proposals for increasing inter church contact to be realistic and achievable.

5.1.13 There was a high level of interest in and positive approach to the research

Almost every respondent from the different sectors interviewed for this research expressed a positive interest in the research and an anticipation of the outcome of the findings.

At the participatory workshop there was a strong sense of momentum for positive change in developing increased contact, dialogue and relationships (see Appendices).

Several interviewees expressed a concern that "nothing would come of it" or that the research "might gather dust on the shelf".

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5.2 Scale and nature of relationships between the churches and local communities

5.2.1 The majority of churches have low to no contact with local community/voluntary groups

For the purposes of the research "contact" is defined as basic contact/communication by church leaders or other "corporate" contact, as opposed to informal contact between church members.

Most of the churches have either low or no contact with community/voluntary groups in Newtownards. There is generally a low level of awareness among the churches of the community groups in the town.

"It is very very low. There is not good communication with any of the churches"

(Semi Structured Interview with Community Group leader)

5.2.2 The vast majority of churches have no active co-operation with local community/voluntary groups (apart from The Link)

A number of churches are very active in providing a service to people in need from a faith perspective.

Very few churches in Newtownards are actively involved in working in partnership or co-operation with community voluntary groups.

"The churches are more in survival mode than 'let's change the world' mode!"

(Semi Structured Interview)

However many Protestant churches refer to The Link as their main contact and involvement in community development activities.

In addition, many churches refer to the numbers of individual members that are actively involved in a variety of voluntary organisations. Many of the churches actively encourage this type of involvement.

"Most of our volunteers would come from church women's groups"

(Semi Structured Interview with Voluntary Organisation)

5.2.3 Many churches are involved in "hidden" community work within and through their own membership

Many of the churches are involved in what has been described as "hidden" community work within and around their congregations.

Examples of this include pastoral work with individuals and families experiencing stress, illness and bereavement as well as the wide range of church based youth organisations and women's groups. Clergy often play a key role within local maintained and controlled schools.

Several respondents indicated how they believed that this work by the churches is often overlooked.

"The huge amount of church based youth work is often not valued by the community"

(Semi Structured Interview)

5.2.4 Many churches are dissatisfied at their current low level of involvement in community issues

There is a widespread dissatisfaction among the churches at their current low level of involvement in community issues.

Even those churches that believe they should be engaged in some way (and that is most of the churches in Newtownards) are not active in community development.

Some respondents expressed a fear of the church being perceived as irrelevant, particularly by younger people, in an increasingly secular society.

"There is a recognition by churches of the danger of becoming irrelevant. We need to be relevant to community and society."

(Semi Structured Interview)

Several respondents indicated that churches do not know how to get involved in the community.

"Churches should have a greater awareness of the needs of the community and feel a greater responsibility to put forward a vision for the community –a prophetic, powerful influence – encouraging the whole community towards that vision."

(Semi Structured Interview)

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5.2.5 Most community/voluntary and statutory groups are dissatisfied at the current low level of church involvement

While community/voluntary and statutory groups expressed frustration at the limits of church involvement in community/social/civic issues, there was a strong desire that churches should be supported to become more involved.

"How much do they see themselves as a community facility?... the clergy never knock on my door, I've always to be the proactive one"

(Semi Structured Interview)

"Churches are becoming more aware that they need to go into the community and not just for spiritual needs, but for social needs, for the whole person"

(Semi Structured Interview with Community Group leader)

The potential involvement of churches in an appropriate way was seen as important and valuable for the community.

5.2.6 Some churches see The Link as carrying out their community development work

Many churches referred to The Link in relation to church-community work, particularly as many churches have individual members who are involved as volunteers.

The Link has supported its volunteers to develop an understanding of a community development approach that differs from a traditional evangelism model.

However some churches are suspicious of the breadth of involvement in The Link.

"Are the Link's volunteers from conservative churches there to proselytise?"

(Semi Structured Interview)

Some churches see The Link as carrying out community development work on behalf of the church.

"It's not good enough for churches to say the Link is doing it. That's passing the buck. How could the Link do all that?"

(Semi Structured Interview)

Some churches still perceive The Link as a social action project of Regent St Presbyterian Church.

A very high proportion of The Link's volunteers come from a range of local churches.

A very small proportion of The Link's funding comes from local churches.

The Link does not see itself as engaging in community development instead of the churches, but it does regard itself as a resource or facilitator for the churches.

"The Link has a lot of dynamism"

(Semi Structured Interview)

5.2.7 Reasons for Current Situation

- Local history and tradition: many respondents indicated that their current level of community involvement was simply the way it had always been.

"Traditionally we have been too busy being pastors to our own community. We are very focussed on keeping the show on the road."

(Semi Structured interview)

- Heavy clergy and laity workload is focussed on intra church work: most respondents cited this as a major barrier. Some respondents highlighted a lack of involvement of lay people in sharing this sort of work.

"If clergy equipped their congregations to get involved, to be a good neighbour, the churches could have an impact on the community. At present they are out of the loop and don't know what's going on in the real life of the town"

(Semi Structured Interview)

- Competing priorities: intra church comes before community work. Most churches are clear that their priority is their "own flock", and their related denominational commitments, leaving less time for community work.

"Some churches are concerned that if they get involved in the community they will lose the support of existing church members"

(Semi Structured Interview)

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This stance was criticised by a number of community and statutory groups as being too "inward looking". Some community/voluntary sector interviewees also indicated that the churches were not always trained or equipped to deal with social problems such as domestic violence that exist within their own congregations

- Theological: once again this is both a driving and restraining influence.

"For some, communicating the gospel is best achieved through charitable actions, but for others it still has to be an oral communication, a proclamation, and we can meet social needs alongside that"

(Semi Structured Interview)

- Lack of knowledge, skills and resources is a significant barrier to increasing community involvement

5.2.8 There is a widespread desire for increased church involvement in community/social issues

There is currently a widespread desire by churches in Newtownards to become more involved in community/social issues.

"For years things were at a standstill. Now things are starting to happen, something is moving"

(Semi Structured Interview with Community Group leader)

However there is some hesitation over how to do this, and some concerns about the time and resources required.

5.2.9 The churches require information, training and skills in community development

The churches require increased capacity in the area of community development if they are to become more actively involved.

"Some church people don't know what families and young people are going through. They think if they get involved in church everything will be alright. The churches need to be more than well meaning...if they learn how to do it they could be a good support"

(Semi structured interview)

Increased information, training and skills will be required to support any such moves.

5.2.10 There is a high level of interest in and positive approach to the research

Almost every respondent from the different sectors interviewed for this research expressed a positive interest in the research and an anticipation of the outcome of the findings.

"This research is a very positive step forward. It is stimulating interest and discussion. Everybody's in the same boat - how do we provide an inclusive society and avoid boxing ourselves in?"

(Semi Structured Interview)

At the participatory workshop there was a strong sense of momentum for positive change in developing increased contact, dialogue and relationships with church, community and statutory groups. (see Appendices).

Several interviewees expressed a concern that "nothing would come of it" and some were sceptical of the churches' capacity to engage with the community.

5.3 Impact of current inter church and church community relations on community relations

5.3.1 Church relations can have an impact on wider community relations

Most respondents believed that inter church relations had some impact on community relations. This can be positive or negative.

5.3.2 Low levels of contact/co-operation, particularly on a cross community basis, is generally perceived as having a negative impact on community relations

A significant number of respondents held the view that the current low levels of inter church co-operation has a negative impact on community relations.

"How can you expect people in the community to have cross community contact, when the churches don't have cross community contact?"

(Semi Structured Interview with Community Group leader)

"It has a profoundly negative impact. If churches sustain people in being passive about their local community and peacebuilding it is raising people up to be disengaged"

(Semi Structured Interview)

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5.3.3 The existence of ongoing cross community contact between 39% of churches is generally perceived as having a small positive impact

Some of respondents indicated the view that ongoing contact through the Inter Church Group made a small positive contribution towards improving community relations.

"Newtownards people want to cling on to the notion that we are a mixed area with good relations - but this has been challenged by the new people moving in and so the churches need to work together"

(Semi Structured Interview)

"The bare fact that some churches are prepared to meet is an important statement to the larger community... the Inter Church Group is an indirect witness but it makes little or no difference to the unchurched"

(Semi Structured Interview)

"Inter church groups consider their role more important than the community"

(Semi Structured Interview)

5.3.4 There appears to be a correlation between level of contact and level of trust between churches

It became apparent during the course of the research that the churches with least contact with each other, appeared to have least understanding and trust of each other.

5.3.5 Most churches are perceived as having little or no impact or interest in disadvantaged housing estates

West Winds, Glen and Bowtown estates are recognised as areas of high social deprivation, with significant paramilitary influence. Meanwhile many wards in Ards have very low levels of social deprivation.

Most churches are perceived by community groups and some statutory groups as having little or no interest in disadvantaged housing estates.

Occasional door-to-door evangelism in estates is often perceived negatively.

"Some churches do 'evangelistic commando raids' on deprived estates. They communicate to the community through a megaphone. They don't do missions in their own nice areas. Maybe they're afraid they'll meet someone they know!"

(Semi Structured Interview)

The few churches located in housing estates tend to be made up of a majority of members who no longer live in the estate.

The churches are largely perceived as middle class and existing to serve their middle class members.

"Young people turn their nose up at the churches. They need to know they won't be preached at"

(Semi Structured Interview)

Some churches are suspicious of engaging with groups that they fear are under paramilitary influence. Some clergy have in the past felt "used" by paramilitary groups.

5.3.6 There is some frustration at the limited involvement of churches in issues such as domestic violence, health and community relations

Agencies involved in issues such as domestic violence, health and community relations expressed some frustration at the difficulty in engaging churches in the issues or on inter agency groupings.

"We tried unsuccessfully to get clergy onto the Interagency Forum on Domestic Violence. There is a high level of domestic violence in this area and some of the families we support are involved in their church. So the churches should be taking domestic violence more seriously"

(Semi Structured Interview)

They pointed out that these issues were not just issues outside of the churches, and that clergy could benefit from information and training on offer.

"Health and well-being would be a safe area to come together on"

(Semi Structured Interview)

There is evidence of some successful involvement with statutory agencies. However, not all statutory agencies invite the churches to be involved in their initiatives.

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5.3.7 There is a perception in the community sector that churches only get involved in community work to access funding for their buildings

There is some suspicion in the community sector of the churches' "agenda" in getting involved in community work. There is a concern that the church is motivated by self interest in sustaining its buildings and will only get involved to secure funding for its buildings, with no real commitment to community development.

"Church buildings should be open to all people - like a community centre. Why are all the rooms lying idle?"

(Semi Structured Interview with Community Group leader)

There is also a perception that churches only get involved with vulnerable people to "convert them".

Several respondents indicated that this perception of churches and church based community groups also exists among funders of community development work. This creates an additional barrier to church involvement in community development and contributes to the gap between church and community.

5.3.8 Communication between churches and the community sector is generally poor

Communications from the church to the community sector and from the community sector to the churches are very limited. This contributes to an overall lack of knowledge and understanding among one sector of what the other sector is doing. There is no clear mechanism for such communication.

"Ideally there would be some mechanism to bridge the gap between churches and the community sector and there would be good information and communication between churches and community groups."

(Semi Structured Interview)

5.3.9 There is a general gap in understanding and trust between churches and community

While these findings indicated a gap in understanding and trust between churches and community, there is no evidence that relationships have broken down. In fact a number of key community workers in the town have church connections.

6 Recommendations

As a result of the findings presented above and the ideas explored throughout the action research project, the following recommendations were offered for further discussion.

6.1 It is recommended that each church clarifies the role of clergy and lay leaders in relation to participation in inter church and church community work, to increase the time available to commit to such activities

6.2 The Inter Church Group has an important role to play in inter church relations in Newtownards. It is suggested that the Inter Church Group explore other inter church models from Armagh, Cookstown, Omagh and Coleraine and continue to explore ways of attracting fuller participation

6.3 It is recommended that consideration be given to establishing a new Churches Forum on Social / Community / Civic Issues, facilitated by The Link, and supported by the Inter Church Group, the Community Network and the Council. The participation of the churches that are members of the Inter Church Group would be essential for this to be a success

6.4 It is suggested that Ards Borough Council, supported by the Network give consideration to establishing and sponsoring an Annual Good Relations Event to provide a space for the churches along with community/voluntary, statutory and business sectors to develop good relations in the Borough

6.5 It is recommended that any new structures that are developed have a strong emphasis on building relationships and trust

6.6 It is recommended that The Link considers offering to facilitate the delivery of community development training to local churches

6.7 It is recommended that churches consider becoming members of the Community Network, and that the Network invites a Churches representative to sit on its Committee

6.8 It is recommended that the community/voluntary and statutory sector attempt to increase the inclusion of churches in their activities

6.9 It is recommended that a communications strategy is developed to improve inter church and church community communication

6.10 It is recommended that any new structures that develop give priority to increasing partnership and integration between churches and the community

6.11 It is recommended that any new structures that develop give priority to the themes of community relations and the community development needs of socially deprived housing estates

6.12 It is recommended that any proposals that emerge from this research are consulted on widely and are both realistic and achievable

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7 Conclusion

By initiating this research the Link has acted as a catalyst in drawing together a range of churches and other agencies that have a shared desire to develop better relations in Newtownards.

The findings and recommendations provide a number of challenges to consider carefully. There are no easy options, given the time and resources required.

However, it is the nature of creativity and innovation, that a great deal can be achieved even with limited resources, so this need not be a major barrier to development.

My experience has been of a very positive research process, with high levels of participation and openness.

It seems that the time was right for this action research project and the time might well be right for some important new developments to emerge as a next step.

There appears to be sufficient vision, enthusiasm and momentum to move forward in this area.

In doing so, all of those involved need to be realistic in planning what can be achieved within existing capacities.

There is now an opportunity for the shared vision of greater partnership and integration between church and community in Newtownards, to become a reality.

I would like to thank all of those who participated so readily in the research interviews, surveys, workshops and meetings.

I would also like to thank Diane Holt at the Link for providing me with all the information and contacts I required to complete the research.

I would like to wish the Link, the churches, Ards Borough Council and the community in Newtownards every success in bringing forward any strategy that emerges from this research.

Tony Macaulay

31 March 2003

8 Proposed Strategy

The strategy outlined below was proposed as an initial response to the findings and recommendations of the research at the Strategy Planning Workshop.

Overall Aim:	**Action Plan:**
To improve inter church and church community relations in Newtownards.	To achieve this overall aim, it was agreed that a number of steps needed to be taken. The proposed action plan below outlines these initial steps.

ACTION	WHO
1. Ards Borough Council convenes a meeting of all the churches to discuss a proposed new Churches Forum	Paul Killen
2. All churches are contacted personally to explain the proposal and the meeting	Diane Holt
3. The meeting is facilitated to clarify the aims and objectives of a Churches Forum	Paul Killen & Tony Macaulay
4. The Churches Forum is encouraged to suggest to the Council the establishment of an Annual Good Relations Event	Churches Forum
5. The Churches Forum shares the idea of a Good Relations Event with the churches, business, statutory and community sectors	The Link, The Network, The Council, Chamber of Commerce etc
6. The Link identifies the community development training needs of the churches	The Link
7. Community development training for churches is provided	The Link
8. The Churches Forum and Inter Church Group members encourage churches to clarify the roles of clergy and laity in representation on these bodies	Churches Forum/ Inter Church Group/ Individual Clergy
9. The Inter Church Group discusses exploring other models of inter church group	Alan Wardlow/ William Sinclair

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ACTION	WHEN
10. Resources and support are provided to the Inter Church Group to explore other models	Autumn 2003
11. Information to and from the churches is exchanged for the new Community Directory	By end of June 2003
12. The Churches Forum is encouraged to invite the Network to its meeting to explain its function	Autumn 2003
13. The Network is encouraged to invite a churches rep onto its Board	Autumn 2003
14. The Churches Forum is encouraged to establish a sub group to develop a communications strategy	Autumn 2003

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Appendix I

Members of Research Partnership Group

1. Fr Paul Armstrong, St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church
2. Rev Alistair Bates, Scrabo Presbyterian Church
3. Margaret Cameron, West Winds Community Association
4. Diane Holt, Community Relations Development Officer, The Link
5. Paul Killen, Community Relations Officer, Ards Borough Council
6. Jenny Murphy, Link Volunteer
7. Cathy Rice, Ards Development Bureau & Community Network
8. Captain Sharon Skinner, Salvation Army
9. Canon Kenneth Smyth, St Mark's Church of Ireland Church

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Appendix II

Telephone Survey Respondents

1. Fr Paul Armstrong, St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church
2. Rev Alistair Bates, Scrabo Presbyterian Church
3. Captain Sharon Skinner, Salvation Army
4. Canon Kenneth Smyth, St Mark's Church of Ireland Church
5. Rev Jim Campbell, 1st Newtownards Presbyterian Church
6. Rev WL Haslett, Ballyblack Presbyterian Church
7. Edith Bell, Christian Fellowship Church
8. Rev James Logan, Ards Congregational Church
9. Pastor Roy Brennan, Crossroads Fellowship
10. Rev Alan Wardlow, Movilla Methodist Church
11. Rev John Carlisle, Movilla Presbyterian Church
12. Trevor Mitchell, Newtownards Baptist Church
13. Rev Knox Hyndman, Reformed Presbyterian Church
14. Rev R.P.Roddie, Regent Street Methodist Church
15. Rev Allen Sleith, Regent Street Presbyterian Church
16. Mr John Hagan, Scrabo Hall
17. Rev W.Sinclair, Strean Presbyterian Church
18. Rev F Greenfield, Grace Free Presbyterian Church
19. Eric Noble, Francis St Gospel Hall
20. Anonymous member of a local church (who did not wish to be named)
21. Rev David Rutherford, Ards Evangelical Church
22. Pastor Pinkerton, Newtownards Church of God

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Appendix III

Churches Telephone Survey

1. How would you describe relationships between the churches in Newtownards?

   Very Good
   Good
   Neither good nor poor
   Poor
   Very poor

2. How much contact does your church have with other churches in Newtownards?

   No contact
   Once or twice a year
   Once a quarter
   Once a month
   Once a fortnight
   Every week

3. Which churches does your church have contact with?

4. Does your church work together in partnership or co-operation with other churches in Newtownards?

5. If yes, which churches does your church work with?

6. What sort of activities do you work together on?

7. What activities do you not wish to work with the other churches on?

8. Are there any of the other churches that you do not wish to work with?

9. What are the reasons for your current level of contact and/or co-operation?

10. How would you describe relationships between the churches and the community in Newtownards?

    Very Good
    Good
    Neither good nor poor
    Poor
    Very poor

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11. How much contact does your church have with community and voluntary groups in Newtownards?

    No contact
    Once or twice a year
    Once a quarter
    Once a month
    Once a fortnight
    Every week

12. Which community/voluntary groups does your church have contact with?

13. Does your church work together in partnership or co-operation with community/voluntary groups in Newtownards?

14. If yes, which community/voluntary groups does your church work with?

15. What sort of activities do you work together on?

16. What activities do you not wish to work with community/voluntary groups on?

17. Are there any of the community/voluntary groups that you do not wish to work with?

18. What are the reasons for your current level of contact and/or co-operation?

19. Have you any other comments in relation to these issues?

Appendix IV

List of Interviewees

1. Canon Kenneth Smyth, St Mark's Church of Ireland Church
2. Rev Alan Wardlow, Movilla Methodist Church
3. Trevor Mitchell, Newtownards Baptist Church
4. Rev Allen Sleith, Regent Street Presbyterian Church
5. Fr Paul Armstrong, St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church
6. Rev Alistair Bates, Scrabo Presbyterian Church
7. Linda Higginson, Citizens Advice Bureau
8. Margaret Cameron, West Winds Residents Association
9. Rosemary Reid, Bees Nees Early Years Centre
10. Mandy Cowan, North Down & Ards Women's Aid
11. Diane Holt, Community Relations Development Officer, The Link
12. Cathy Rice, Ards Development Bureau & Community Network
13. Paul Killen, Community Relations Officer, Ards Borough Council
14. Amanda Davidson, Social Services Adolescent Team, UCHT
15. Lorraine Lindsay, Investing in Health, Eastern Health Board
16. Duncan Morrow, Director, Community Relations Council
17. Doug Baker, Irish School of Ecumenics
18. Linda Gould, Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland

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Appendix V

Semi Structured Interviews: Question Framework

1 How would you describe the scale and nature of relationships between the churches in Newtownards?

2 What are the reasons for the current situation?

3 How would you describe the scale and nature of relationships between the churches and the community in Newtownards?

4 What are the reasons for the current situation?

5 What do you think is the impact of current inter church and church-community relationships on community relations in Newtownards?

6 How would you like inter church relationships in the town to be in the future?

7 How would you like relationships between the churches and the community to be in the future?

8 Have you any other comments in relation to these issues?

Appendix VI

Participatory Workshop 3rd March 2003: Attendee List

1. David Jebb, CHAT and Crossroads Fellowship
2. Rev James Logan, Ards Congregational Church
3. Nicholas Donaldson, The Link
4. Ruby Boyd, The Link
5. Bill Hosford, CHAT and MARC
6. James Rogers, Student Minster, Presbyterian Church in The Link
7. Neil McGurk, The Link
8. Ruth Hutchinson, The Link
9. Rev Isaac Delaware, St Mark's Parish Church
10. Rev Bill Haslett, Ballyblack Presbyterian Church
11. Canon Ken Smyth, St Mark's Parish Church
12. Trevor Cummings, Evangelical Alliance
13. Rev Stevie Mitchell, Ards Elim Church
14. Rev Allen Sleith, Regent Street Presbyterian Church
15. Hamilton McCorriston, Greenwell St Presbyterian, Newtownards Lions Club, Ards Talking Newspaper
16. Tom Carroll, NI Housing Executive
17. Rev William Sinclair, Strean Presbyterian Church
18. Alistair Bates, Scrabo Presbyterian Church
19. Linda Higginson, Citizens Advice Bureau
20. Margaret Cameron, Little Doves Community Playgroup, West Winds Residents Association
21. Rosemary Reid, Bees Nees Early Years Centre
22. Mandy Cowan, North Down & Ards Women's Aid
23. Diane Holt, Community Relations Development Officer, The Link
24. Paul Killen, Community Relations Officer, Ards Borough Council
25. Rev John Carlisle, Movilla Presbyterian Church
26. Lorraine Lindsay, Investing in Health
27. John Turtle, Quayside Project, BCM
28. Mary McFeeters, The Link (CHAT)
29. Greer Douglas, Youth Division Officer, PSNI
30. Colleen Morrison, CHAT & 1st Ards Presbyterian
31. Cathy Rice, Ards Development Bureau & Community Network
32. Rev Robin Roddie, Regent St Methodist Church
33. Jan Carson, Youth & Family Worker, 1st Ards Presbyterian Church

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Appendix VII

Participatory Workshop Programme

10.00 Welcome and Introductions

10.30 Presentation on the Action Research Project

11.00 Questions, Issues and Ideas

11.30 Break

11.45 Discussion Questions in Groups

12.15 Feedback Session

1.00pm Lunch

Discussion Questions

- How do you see the relationships between the churches in Newtownards?
- How do you see the relationships between the churches and the community in Newtownards?
- What impact, if any, do these relationships have on community relations?
- What do you think would reduce any barriers or divisions?

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Appendix VIII

Notes From Participatory Workshop Discussions

1 What are the issues?

- Effective community/church networking
- A need to concentrate on own congregation
- Looking away from ourselves to promote continued interest in world development, fair trade, the environment, (ecology) among churches and community groups
- Lack of time - huge clergy workload
- To make our community realise that there is more that unites us than divides us
- People here have the perception that we all belong to church. People can be very uncomfortable within church groups if they have no affinity to a church
- Homeless alcoholics
- Paramilitary activity
- Underage drinking (youth in general)
- 26 churches for a small area? What message does that give?
- The community doesn't recognise the niceties of theological difference
- The nature of church leadership/ministry i.e. priorities, goals, time, resources
- We need to make contact with the people in the organisation doing the work - not just the Chief Executive or Director
- Time
- Churches seem to need to agree theologically to work together
- It is very difficult to link young people to the traditional church activities
- If churches are seen by the community as being separate. How can we expect the community to react differently?
- Church is an alien environment for people to come into out of the community
- Churches not prepared to go out into the community
- Relations between churches –time factor
- Churches increasingly isolated from community
- For many secularism seen as "safe" option in terms of peace/cross community work
- Finding common ground that we can work together
- Impact of the churches on the community (or lack of!)
- The real, apparent or assumed lack of engagement between different socio-economic groups in Newtownards
- How to overcome the issue of funding any ideas which may be put forward today

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2 Questions

- How can church resources become more fully utilised – people and buildings?
- Do the churches know about current community activities outside their church?
- What is community development? How can churches engage more effectively?
- How can we make church buildings more accessible to the community?
- What aspect of evangelical thinking inhibits the church from getting involved in the community?
- What ideology lies behind the ethos of the different "church traditions" in Newtownards?
- How do community groups and voluntary organisations perceive faith-based community work?
- Are there underlying theological issues/beliefs that affect the nature and extent of churches' involvement with each other, and with the community? If so, what and how?
- Are churches represented on any Local Strategic Partnerships?
- Does each of us know what the others are doing?
- How do you break down barriers between communities within the town?
- Do the churches find I difficult to respond to requests from community groups?
- How can the churches justify the waste of resources tied up in buildings with such need in the community?
- I am aware there an inter-church group exists, but have no idea of the issues they discuss or the work they do. How can their work be publicised?
- Do churches feel they have a role to play in promoting reconciliation in NI?
- Do churches see their role as working with the whole community or just those that are members of that church?
- Do churches really want to work together, or do they have their own agenda?
- In what areas are the churches/groups prepared to build relationships?
- How can help/support be given?
- Where is the level ground to prepare a sound foundation?
- How can we breakdown barriers in areas where there is paramilitary influence?
- How much autonomy do local churches have? Are they directed from a central organisation?
- Is the local church doing things that the community needs?
- What can we do to remove apathy from within our community?
- How do the socially excluded feel about this project?
- How do we create a structure in Newtownards which will enable us to address the social problems of the area?
- In such a small area as Newtownards why are so many of us not aware of each others role? Why?
- How do churches feel other organisations can help them to extend into the community?
- How fluid/static is the community of Newtownards?
- How to approach the problem of social isolation most beneficially?

Appendix VIII cont'd

3 Ideas

- An open and, as far as possible, neutral forum for all church groupings in Newtownards to participate in regularly
- To plan very public events - to show our community that help is available out there and that they are not alone with their problems
- Contacts with churches should be through youth leaders, those in charge of mums and toddlers, senior citizens groups etc. not ministers
- All churches should have at least one rep on the Community Network
- A community website to facilitate the communication of ideas
- All students for the ministry of any denomination should have to spend time working in a community project
- Devise an annual festival of Ards in all its diversity
- A list of all community/social/ church workers and leaders
- Formation of a Churches Forum – identifying issues of local social concern
- More social events and things where you get to know people involved in community work
- A more structured day for the many socially disadvantaged ad socially isolated people within our community
- Would it be useful for churches to join the "Wellnet" as a means of local communication
- Fro church leaders to offer leadership, challenge comfort zones, and be seen to work together
- Time ring fenced for local community issues
- A meeting of church and community groups on a 3 monthly basis to share ideas and new developments
- A chance for the churches to listen to the community
- To be able to work more together to the benefit of the community
- Churches could have a list of community groups that would love some volunteer support. Time for these groups to speak at church meetings

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4 How do you see the relationships between the churches in Newtownards?

- Fragmented - churches themselves are not working together
- The Inter Church Group is mostly about information sharing and worship among established churches
- Some churches are excluded - there is no forum for all of the churches. Some churches are working on their own. This can lead to suspicion. There is a need for corporate worship.
- At what level - casual or formal?
- Clergy level or congregational level?
- It needs a representative from each church to develop relationships between churches, and between churches and community
- They need leadership from clergy to move out of comfort zones
- Need to start at human and social relationships to foster concern for others in the community
- Could be better - need interaction
- Theological issues - suspicion
- Need trust
- Communication even among denominations could be better
- Churches connect in a number of ways
- Protestants together or all together - Roman Catholic involvement?
- There are some relationships to work on
- Relationships between Protestant churches is quite good, but could be better
- Protestant and Catholic churches don't have a fantastic relationship
- For this to change - is it related to church leadership?

Appendix VIII cont'd

5 How do you see the relationships between the churches and the community in Newtownards?

- Need to remove the barriers between churches and community
- How are churches informed as to the work of community groups?
- At clergy level - perceived no involvement due to time constraints
- There is a huge gap - the churches don't recognise the wider community and are not engaging in the Network, Inter Agency Groups, in local community activities
- The church is losing touch with the community
- Who is church and who is community?
- Weak structures and weak relationships
- Enable representation within churches - key people acting as a point of contact
- Churches are seen as closed - issue over buildings
- Community is confused by 27 churches and their theological differences - we need to move on
- Is this a false division? Church people are in the community already.
- Is it about people and projects?
- Church offers unique qualities - spiritual transformation
- Evens are run - e.g. youth organisations
- The churches are weak in areas of social deprivation and do we know the community workers?
- Looking after our own? Or beyond ourselves?
- There are few representative of churches on the Community Network
- Class distinction - church is middle class
- Relationship between church and community is not good
- Church is reaching out for the wrong reasons
- Poor communication
- Success of failure is measured in numbers

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6 What impact, if any, do these relationships have on community relations?

- At present minimal
- Outside perceptions - "tight", poor relationships - need to get improved message out
- Not sure of impact
- Church-community can and does improve community relations
- If church stepped back society would notice

7 What do you think would reduce any barriers or divisions?

- Meet on neutral ground, giving people the opportunity to talk
- Investigate commonality
- Increase clergy understanding of community development, mechanisms, activities and structures
- Change thinking – equip ministers for community
- Importance of linking together – pool resources
- Dialogue will bring a growth of trust
- A churches Forum on Social Action
- The potential is there to start getting involved in the community
- Need to deal with real, not perceived needs
- Need to create a vision for our youth work and tap into our resources
- Index of resources the church can offer
- It's about gaining trust
- Motivation must be the welfare of the community
- Problem of paramilitaries

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Appendix IX

Clergy Meeting 19th March 2003: Attendee List

1. Rev Isaac Delaware, St Mark's Parish Church
2. Canon Ken Smyth, St Mark's Parish Church
3. Rev Stevie Mitchell, Ards Elim Church
4. Rev William Sinclair, Strean Presbyterian Church
5. Rev Alistair Bates, Scrabo Presbyterian Church
6. Diane Holt, Community Relations Development Officer, The Link
7. Rev John Carlisle, Movilla Presbyterian Church
8. Rev Robin Roddie, Regent St Methodist Church
9. Rev Jim Campbell, 1st Newtownards Presbyterian Church
10. Rev Roy Brennan, Crossroads Fellowship

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Appendix X

Strategy Planning Workshop 28th March 2003: Attendee List

1. Mandy Cowan, Women's Aid
2. Rev Alan Wardlow, Movilla Methodist Church
3. Rev Isaac Delaware, St Mark's Parish Church
4. Rev William Sinclair, Strean Presbyterian Church
5. Rev Alistair Bates, Scrabo Presbyterian Church
6. Rev John Carlisle, Movilla Presbyterian Church
7. Rev Jim Campbell, 1st Newtownards Presbyterian Church
8. Roy Brennan, Crossroads Fellowship
9. Rev Allen Sleith, Regent Street Presbyterian Church
10. Rosemary Reid, Bees Nees Early Years Centre
11. Margaret Cameron, Little Doves Community Playgroup, West Winds Residents Association
12. Cathy Rice, Ards Development Bureau & Community Network
13. Diane Holt, Community Relations Development Officer, The Link
14. Paul Killen, Community Relations Officer, Ards Borough Council
15. Lorraine Lindsay, Investing in Health