



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

BIRMINGHAM

Candidate Brief

Brief for the position of
Director of Inter Faith Relations
& The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre

Church of England, Diocese of Birmingham

May 2011



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www.birmingham.anglican.org

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Introduction

Birmingham is the UK's second city with the youngest urban population in one of the most lively and diverse regions. The Diocese of Birmingham, founded in 1905, is one of 44 dioceses in the Church of England. It covers an area of nearly 300 square miles, and includes parishes in the West Midlands including Birmingham and parts of Solihull, Sandwell, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

There are 188 Church of England churches and worship centres with an average Sunday attendance of 14,000 from a population of 1.3 million.

Around 165 paid priests, together with additional self-supporting ministers, offer spiritual and pastoral care in the parishes, together with retired clergy, readers, local ministry teams & other non-ordained ministers.

The 9th Bishop of Birmingham, The Rt Revd David Urquhart, was welcomed to Birmingham in November 2006. He leads the Church of England across the diocese and has formed a team of senior staff.

The Bishop shares his Episcopal oversight with the Suffragan Bishop of Aston, The Rt Revd Andrew Watson.

In the heart of the city, Birmingham Cathedral, dedicated to St Philip, is led by the Dean, The Very Revd Catherine Ogle. It has been a place of Christian worship since 1715 and was designed by the English Baroque architect, Thomas Archer.

The Diocese is divided into two pastoral administrative areas led by the Archdeacon of Aston (The Ven Dr Brian Russell) and the Archdeacon of Birmingham (The Ven Hayward Osborne). Each of these areas contains a number of Deaneries, or groups of parishes.

Church House in Harborne, led by the Secretary, Andrew Halstead, acts as a resource centre supporting the parishes of the Diocese and their communities. This support includes:

- Growing churches at the heart of each community
- Development of Priests, Priests-in-training and church goers
- Work with children, young people and in Church schools
- Work place and community regeneration projects
- Care of Church buildings and property
- Encouraging regular giving
- Communications
- Governance, Finance and Investments

Transforming Church

Transforming Church is an initiative of the Diocese of Birmingham which seeks to grow churches at the heart of each community.



Each parish is invited to explore **Seven Areas of Transformation** to develop the church's mission in a way that is appropriate and achievable:

Transforming Worship:

Drawing us into the presence of the Living God

Transforming Relationships:

Finding healing, encouragement and challenge through our life together

Transforming Discipleship:

Enabling us to grow as confident followers of Jesus

Transforming Leadership:

Releasing and harnessing the gifts of all God's people

Transforming Presence:

Living out God's love in our communities and the wider world

Transforming Outreach

Leading others to believe in Jesus and belong to his Body

Transforming Partnerships:

Working together with people of goodwill to see God's purposes fulfilled

Each parish is invited to work towards **Ten Diocesan Goals** to make the church grow larger, younger, deeper and wider:

- To grow the number of adults, young people and children within the worshipping Christian community year on year.
- To make the most of opportunities presented by the occasional offices, the church calendar and invitational events such as Back to Church Sunday.
- To develop an understanding of communications in every parish, promoting a church that is visible, welcoming and accessible.
- To develop a spiritually-enriching children's and youth ministry in every parish and church school, encouraging clustering where appropriate.
- To ensure that a Christian Basics course of some kind is offered in every parish at least once a year.
- To implement in every parish an appropriate strategy for making confident, prayerful disciples in their daily life.
- To encourage an increasing number of worshipping Christians to take tithing seriously, and to give at least 5% of their income to the local church.
- To increase the range and spiritual fruitfulness of partnerships and community initiatives across the Diocese.
- To increase the number of leaders of all ages, and drawn from every ethnic group, who are trained and deployed in the church and wider community.
- To encourage every parish community to think through the challenges of relating constructively to those of other faiths.

To help with the transforming process a Consultant has been appointed to journey with each church, to offer a fresh perspective and to facilitate discussion.

Inter Faith Relations

Birmingham is home to a diverse range of people with heritages from across the world and has an excellent track record of promoting harmony and understanding between communities, and of partnership between the churches and public bodies.

Birmingham Diocese has also played a leading part in the development of the Church of England's national Presence and Engagement process from its inception. There are challenges to be faced by the church in working out its mission in the context of rapidly changing demographics and the impact of national and global trends and events.

We work collaboratively with our ecumenical partners and all people of good will across the city and have as an intrinsic part of our vision good quality relationships and responding generously to the challenges of the city and region.

The Church of England in Birmingham has been part of a number of innovative responses to inter faith relations, from the Ladywood ARC at St John's Ladywood, focussing on the arts and education, to Narthex at St John's Sparkhill with its work with refugees and asylum seekers to The Feast, a charity bringing Muslim and Christian teenagers together. These are three of many examples of grassroots responses to religious diversity supported by the Church of England. There are good quality partnerships with, among others, the Queens Foundation for Theological Education, Birmingham Churches Together, Scripture Union, the Methodist District, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, the Council for Black Led Churches and Church Mission Society.

The Diocese of Birmingham with its ecumenical partners is seeking to establish a Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre in Birmingham with the aim of building social solidarity and flourishing communities across the City of Birmingham and more widely.

The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre will provide a focus for a range of initiatives across the city, bringing together the shared agendas of the Diocese's Presence and Engagement process, Community Regeneration and work with Young People. It will serve as one of the four regional hubs through which the Government sponsored Near Neighbours programme will be delivered.

The Role

Reports to: The Bishop of Birmingham

Line reports: Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre Outreach Worker;
Other Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre staff

Job description

Overall role purpose

The Director of Inter Faith Relations will be responsible for the development and delivery of the Church of England's ethos and strategy for inter faith relations in Birmingham Diocese, and its integration with the diocesan Transforming Church Process. There are three key themes to this work:

- Equipping and encouraging parishes, schools and chaplaincies to respond in creative ways to the opportunities and challenges of our multi-faith, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic diocesan context.
- Building and consolidating relationships with people and communities of different faiths, and public bodies across the city and region, in partnership with ecumenical colleagues where appropriate.
- Advising the Bishop on specific issues in his role as faith and community leader.

The post holder will be responsible for establishing the Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre in Birmingham, overseeing the delivery of the Near Neighbours programme in Birmingham and for the overall coordination of the Centre as it develops.

The Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre will maintain the overall vision for Inter Faith work and resolve any tensions which might arise between the two parts of the job. It is expected that there will be considerable overlap between the two roles, and therefore fluidity in the comparative time given to each of them in the short and medium terms. Over the long term it is expected that there will be a broad parity in the time given to each role.

This post brings these roles together, helping to lead, hold and frame a shared vision for the Christian contribution to the building of a strong and confident multi-faith city and region, and encouraging the Church of England to play its full part in the working out of this vision. Both parts of the post will have national as well as regional impact, as the Director of Inter Faith Relations sits on the National Presence and Engagement Task Group, and the Director of The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre works with the leaders of the other three national Presence and Engagement Centres in Bradford, Leicester and London. There may be other ways in which the post holder is called upon to represent the Church of England in Birmingham on the national and even international stage.

Key accountabilities

Director of Inter Faith Relations

Equipping parishes, schools and chaplaincies

- Develop a 'tool kit' of resources in partnership with colleagues in the Diocese and more widely, including the Diocese's Transforming Church initiative
- Encourage and develop a supportive network for clergy in Presence and Engagement parishes across the Diocese
- Encourage and resource appropriate local mission and inter faith initiatives including drawing on other resources and centres of excellence beyond the Church of England in Birmingham
- Promote quality inter faith initiatives among young people in the Diocese
- Develop and replenish educational programmes and resources: Continuing Ministerial Education, Readers' courses, parish study materials for Lay Adult Education, diocesan study days, diocesan website etc
- Keep up with international, national, cultural, and ethnic issues, especially those relating to faith communities of major religions, and of minorities.
- Provide specific advice on local issues as they arise in parishes, chaplaincies and schools

Building and consolidating relationships

- Identify, build and develop relationships with faith and community leaders across the region
- Encourage local partnerships between churches and different faith communities and organisations
- Work or liaise as appropriate with multi-faith bodies such as the Birmingham Faith Leaders Group, the Faith Encounter Project, Birmingham Council of Faiths and the West Midlands Faiths Forum
- Build relationships with civic authorities, the voluntary sector and universities as appropriate, enabling awareness of faith issues and enabling faith communities to have a voice in and contribute to civil society.
- Develop and consolidate relationships with press and other media in the city and region

Advising the Bishop

- Work with the Bishop and Diocesan Synod in developing the diocesan ethos and strategy for Presence and Engagement and inter faith work across the Diocese
- Act as a resource for the Bishop of Birmingham in his membership of the Faith Leaders Group, including availability and planning for unexpected events

- Help to ensure quality representation for the Bishop on 'Committee B' of Birmingham SACRE
- Provide research support for the Bishop in his ministry including speeches and lectures
- Represent the Bishop where appropriate and especially on the Presence and Engagement National Task group.

Director of The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre

Strategic Management

- Deliver the aims and objectives of the Centre
- Deliver the Near Neighbours programme in Birmingham
- Present annual and longer-term strategic and financial plans to the Trustees, and then enable and monitor their successful delivery
- Ensure and develop effective systems of management , oversight, and review
- Enable and resource the Chair and the Trustees in their strategic roles
- Work with the Centre Members and Directors to identify new members of the Centre's Steering Group and new Directors as appropriate and with the necessary and relevant skills

Operational Management

- Build a strong team of partners with professional standards of competency, accountability and expectation
- Use the Centre to resource and strengthen the work of 'The Feast', the Diocesan Community Regeneration Team and Thrive West Midlands, collaborating and building partnerships with other organisations involved in inter faith engagement
- Providing line management support for Centre employees as appropriate, including the Centre Outreach Worker
- Develop Management relationships with the national Near Neighbours programme.
- Work with the Centre Outreach Worker to identify and support projects funded by the Near Neighbours Programme

Networking

- Maintain, develop and extend key relationships of the Centre with its partners, including the Near Neighbours Programme, the Christian Muslim Forum, the Nehemiah Project and the Hindu Christian Forum
- Network where appropriate with other presence and Engagement Centres nationally
- Be the primary ambassador for the Centre building its reputation and influence



Key relationships

- The Bishop of Birmingham and his staff
- Colleagues in the Church of England in Birmingham, especially Senior Staff and officers of Community Regeneration, Youth and Children's work, Continuing Ministerial Education, Transforming Church, Lay Adult Education and the Diocesan Board of Education
- Clergy (especially Area Deans) and lay leadership, especially of Presence and Engagement parishes and multi-faith chaplaincies within the Diocese
- Directors, staff (especially the Centre Outreach Worker) and key partners of the Faithful Neighbourhood Centre, including especially the Director for Community Regeneration, and staff of The Feast
- Faith and community leaders within the Diocese of Birmingham, especially members of the Birmingham Faith Leaders Group
- Leaders of ecumenical partner churches and para church agencies operating within the Diocese
- The Church of England's National Adviser for Inter Religious Affairs and other members of the national Presence and Engagement Task Group
- The Chair and staff of the Church Urban Fund and the Near Neighbours initiative
- Inter Faith Advisers and Enablers of ecumenical partner churches within the Diocese
- Officers and councillors of Birmingham City Council, especially the Chair of Birmingham SACRE and other civic authorities such as the West Midlands Police
- Members of inter faith and multi-faith groups and networks within the Diocese
- Staff and members of national and regional organisations affiliated with the Presence and Engagement and Near Neighbours initiatives including the Christian Muslim Forum, the Birmingham Council of Christians and Jews, Scripture Union's Youth Encounter, the Hindu Christian Forum, the Nehemiah Project and Thrive West Midlands
- Officers, faculty and staff of the Queens Foundation for Theological Education and the University of Birmingham, especially the Theology Faculty
- Staff of the three other national Presence and Engagement Centres
- In consultation with the Director of Communications, reporters and staff of the regional media
- In consultation with the Director of Education, heads and teachers of schools, where appropriate

The Individual

Overview

The post is open to Christian men or women, ordained or lay, with a commitment to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ afresh in each generation, alongside a lifestyle consonant with Christian values. A Genuine Occupational Requirement under the Employment and Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulation 2003 applies to this post. This position is subject to an enhanced CRB disclosure.

The person appointed will need to own and drive a car, be willing to work evenings and weekends and be prepared to be away from home for residential events. The Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre must be on call to respond quickly to emergencies.

The role of Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre requires a variety of skills:

Pastoral minister; Theologian; Teacher; Diplomat; Politician; Advocate; Mediator; Spokesperson

It is acknowledged that few will come to the post with expertise in all these areas, but experience and confidence can be gained 'on the job' through commitment and enthusiasm. Individual candidates will bring particular appropriate expertise and experience in shaping the role.

The Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre will be someone who has:

- Ability to reflect theologically on Christian mission and ministry in the context of religious and other diversity.
- Understanding and proven experience of Christian mission and ministry in multi-faith, multi-cultural, city contexts
- Proven experience of inter faith engagement
- An articulate and committed Christian faith
- Strong and proven senior leadership skills with the ability to build strong systems of management, oversight and review
- Ability to develop organizational strategy and ethos
- Financial competency with the ability to ensure tight budgetary and financial control
- Entrepreneurial aptitude
- Teaching and training abilities and experience
- A degree level qualification
- Strong communication skills
- Good inter personal and team leadership skills
- Ability to work flexibly, independently and proactively

Terms and Conditions

Salary

The annual salary for a lay Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre is £34,330.

An ordained Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre will be paid a regional residentiary canon's stipend (£24590 in 2011/12) plus housing or an allowance.

The role is subject to three months' notice on either side.

Hours of Work

A normal working week is 35 hours from 0900 hrs to 1715 hrs Monday to Thursday and from 0900 hrs to 1600 on Friday with 1 hour for lunch. However the post will involve substantial evening and weekend work and the person appointed will need to develop a flexible working pattern within the overall hours.

Holidays

Annual leave is 25 days plus Public Holidays, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day and an extra day between Christmas and New Year. Members of staff may be required to work during part of the Easter or Christmas holidays to deal with urgent matters. Any person so required will be granted leave in lieu.

Location

The Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre will be based in The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre and will be expected to travel widely throughout the diocese and occasionally further afield. A contribution to necessary relocation expenses may be available by negotiation.

Travel Expenses

Business car mileage will be reimbursed at the prevailing diocesan rate. A facility to help purchase a car is available, currently at 5% per annum over a 4 year loan period, up to a maximum of half the National Minimum Stipend (In 2011/12 this amounts to half of £21370=£10685)

Pension

A lay Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre may join the Church Workers Pensions Fund (Defined Contribution Scheme) into which the Diocesan Board of Finance will contribute 12% of salary per annum. The Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre may make additional contributions up to a maximum of 5% of salary per annum which the Birmingham Diocesan Board of Finance will match with additional contributions. Thus the total contributions of employer and employee could be 22% of salary per annum. An ordained Director of Inter Faith Relations & The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre will be a member of the Church of England Pensions Scheme.

How to Apply

Birmingham Diocesan Board of Finance is an equal opportunities employer and would welcome applications from a fully diverse range of candidates, regardless of age, gender, marital status, colour, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith or disability.

In accordance with the Disability Discriminations Act of 1995, reasonable adjustments will be made to the requirements of the post to accommodate a suitable candidate with a disability.

To apply candidates should send the following:

- Letter of application highlighting your motivation for the post and relevant experience
- Up to date curriculum vitae
- Details of current remuneration
- Names and contact details for two referees (referees will not be contacted until final interview stage)

Applications should be sent by email, quoting the reference BDBF/0512A, to: christine@birmingham.anglican.org This is the preferred method of application.

Or you can apply by post to:

Christine Wright
Senior Personal Secretary
Bishop's Croft
Old Church Road
Harborne
Birmingham
B17 0BG

Please quote reference: **BDBF/0512A**

Closing date: Friday 20th May 2011

For a confidential discussion about the role, please contact + 44 (0)121 427 1163

Appendix – Near Neighbours

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The 'Near Neighbours – *faithful interaction*' proposals described in this document are a response to the opportunities offered by the Government's policies on localism, decentralisation and the Big Society. The Church of England's commitment to society, its vocation and its ecumenical and inter faith relationships, provide unique resources to strengthen human relationships in multi-religious neighbourhoods. Near Neighbours proposes a £5 million programme of connected activities to be spent over the three financial years 1st April 2011 - 31st March 2014. (We believe that the effective delivery of these proposals will demonstrate the value of this approach such that funding of further related initiatives will be appropriate and of great value.
- 1.2. The activities will be delivered by the Church of England in partnership with a range of Christian, inter faith and other faith based organisations. It will engage through its local parishes and schools which between them constitute the widest network of locally based centres and communities in the country; and through inter faith dialogue and other faith based organisations. We will use the long experience of the Church Urban Fund through a new subsidiary to ensure consistency and accountability.
- 1.3. At the heart of the proposals is the ability to work from embedded local contexts without creating new structures or multiple layers of administration, to increase the number and depth of human relationships particularly in multi-religious neighbourhoods. It will better enable 'Mr and Mrs Smith, Mr and Mrs Patel and Mr and Mrs Hussain', living in the same local neighbourhood, to relate more positively to each other and to release energies for the benefit of the wider local community. The reality of many of our urban areas is that there are significant separations between communities, including religious communities. Much cohesion focussed activity in recent years has not significantly impacted at street level and has been delivered by organisations which are external to the local context. It is through the development of human relationships at the most local level that the negative impact of these separations can be significantly addressed.
- 1.4. The Church of England is very well placed by its presence, its ethos and its relationships to deliver this programme for change. It works in close ecumenical partnership with other Christian churches, and has prioritised the development of constructive links with other faith communities. The programme represents a real shift away from governmental programmes to faith community programmes; away from centralised and top down approaches to locally rooted approaches; and away from quick fix initiatives towards long term patient relational approaches. It is part of the Church of England's distinctive role to be a pioneer on behalf of and with people of faith in society and the approach being proposed will open new ways for government and faith communities generally to relate to each other. The experience of recent years has been marred by an attitude which has tended to problematise religion and then sought, often by a multiplicity of public authority initiatives, to correct the perceived problems.

- 1.5. The Near Neighbours proposals aim to have a significant impact in four key locations These are the 'M62 mill towns' corridor, Leicester, eastern London and east Birmingham. These are areas of substantially multi-religious neighbourhoods and each is served by a Centre developed through the Church of England's Presence and Engagement programme¹. That programme has focussed on the equipping of churches, other faith communities and public authorities for confident relationship building. The Near Neighbours proposals will engage with the work of the Centres and on the partnerships and relationships that they have developed.
- 1.6. Near Neighbours will work through three inter related 'flows' which together will create a virtuous spiral in participating neighbourhoods.

Near Neighbours Fund

- 1.7. The first will be the Near Neighbours Fund which will provide sums of between £250 - £5000 to parishes² for local initiatives which increase the level and intensity of local cross-community relationships. These will be through small scale activities generated locally and administered through the local church. The turnaround time for applications will be about two weeks and consistent criteria will be applied and monitored by the Church Urban Fund and the Centres. The Centres may also foster initiatives through the relationships and networks they have developed.
- 1.8. In addition to the impact of the funded activities themselves - which could include environmental, social action or sports initiatives – they will have the effect of bringing forward a range of people who are able to be active and enterprising in their communities. These might be parents in the local school, a youth worker in the church, a member of the local mosque committee, a shop keeper, the local vicar or equivalent in a faith community – any of whom could have initiated and helped to take forward a practical local enterprise.

Developing relationships

- 1.9. The second 'flow' will be a range of more intensive ways in which these and other individuals from the faith communities will be enabled to encounter each other in short residential contexts. The Christian Muslim Forum has pioneered residential weekends in which 'pairs' of local ministers and imams from the same neighbourhoods spend a residential weekend together. The purpose is for them to get to know each other, their contexts and issues, to continue their relationship and to share it with the members of their congregations and mosque communities. Some 200 people have participated successfully in this programme and Near Neighbours will extend this and share it with the Council of Christians and Jews and with the Hindu Christian Forum. Other aspects of the proposals will

¹ GS1720 at <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/feb2009/gspapers/gs1720.pdf>

² A parish for the Church of England is a legally defined geographic area with a place of worship, a congregation and a licensed minister. It is connected to other parishes through the diocese. A parish serves populations which may vary in rural areas from a few hundred to tens of thousands in some urban areas. The whole of England is covered by the parish system



enable engagement with Sikh and other religious communities³. There will also be a series of residential weeks for young adults from separated communities developed over a number of years in West Yorkshire and Leicester.

Neighbourhood relations

1.10. The third 'flow' will address the ways in which neighbourhoods can better equip themselves to tackle together issues which they have identified as significant for them. The Nehemiah Foundation has been developing such programmes in recent years and will extend these to the four programme areas.

1.11. Through these programmes and the relationships that they generate, a substantial number of people in the four locations can be reached significantly; a further significant number mobilised through the small local projects fund; and young adults, local faith community leaders and local organisers will be equipped to identify and seize opportunities for change.

1.12. The New Economics Foundation will establish benchmarking research in the four localities so that the impact can be measured.

1.13. This programme combines for the common good, the local resources of the Church of England's parishes and schools, the partnerships with other churches and other faith communities and public funding. This provides further attractive opportunities for Trusts and philanthropists to contribute in ways which will maximise their contributions. The Near Neighbours programme does not create new structures and has very low overheads, using as it does, existing organisations at local and national level and the energies and commitments of people in their neighbourhoods.

In summary the proposals will:

1.14.help more people talk (real talk that means real change) to each other on the streets, help them better understand their neighbour and be more tolerant of the differences between them thereby reducing the prejudice and general lack of respect that disfigures our society. We will help Mrs Smith understand some of Mrs Patel's concerns and both of them to have an insight into of some of the challenges they face. From this we will see more empowered local communities and greater levels of participation in civil society.

1.15. bring people together to build relationships and associations that help them to bond at deeper levels so as to nurture trust, mutual support and a sense of peace and security. The proposals will help to create relationships across difference and provide support for people to build a deeper sense of their connection with others. They will provide places for these relationships to develop and thrive and for them to become the foundation for trust.

1.16. encourage people to work together to make their neighbourhood a better place, creating common values and a sense of participation by giving people the

³ There will be discussions through the CMF and CCJ with other Muslim and Jewish organisations such as the National Mosques and Imams Advisory Board, the Three Faiths Forum and the Board of Deputies of British Jews to ensure as wide as possible buy in to the programme

skills and experience they need to build the Big Society. The proposals will help them mobilise and organise both to see and to be the change they want in their locality. They will build their capacity and empower them to make real change in their neighbourhood.

- 1.17.strengthen the sense of people pulling together to make things better where they live, and in wider society. We live in challenging times and want to help people recognise that we all have to play our part in building the common good, signalling a shift of power back to the people themselves so that they can take control of their own destiny.

2. The Church of England

- 2.1. The Church of England is a complex, diverse and decentralised set of communities, organisations and institutions held together by Christian faith and practice and by a desire to see the flourishing of England spiritually and materially. It is deeply embedded in the constitutional arrangements of the country as they have evolved over the centuries; it is rooted in rural and urban communities across the country; and it has contributed and continues to contribute to the stability of English society. It has a longstanding commitment to working in ecumenical partnership with other Christian traditions, both the historic churches and more recently formed groups. In recent decades with the impact of globalisation, its congregations have become very diverse and it has engaged extensively with communities of other Faiths as they have become part of English society.
- 2.2. The internal ethos of the Church of England, reinforced in canon law and indirectly in legislation, is embedded in a duty of care for all parishioners^[2], pupils, chaplaincy patients and others whom it serves without distinction. This is a foundational motivation which is distinctive and provides the basis for engagement with all others in the neighbourhoods. It is this ethos which drives the present proposal.
- 2.3. The Church of England is essentially a Church of local churches drawn and held together by a common faith and self understanding through a series of representational and administrative structures and ecclesial understandings. These have ensured that through the parishes and chaplaincies every neighbourhood, whether wealthy or disadvantaged, has a presence through churches, church schools, education and health chaplaincies and other church associated centres; many of these are ecumenical in their structures and relationships. It is embedded in the local community in about 20,000 'places'^[3] with buildings, people, professional ministers, youth workers and educators. This is on a scale in breadth and depth beyond any other voluntary organisation and enables the Church to reach into a huge range of different groups and communities, including 'hard to reach' groups. Many independent black-led churches are hosted by Church of England churches and halls, as are other ethnic or national churches and in a number of cases, other Faith groups..

^[3] 13000 parishes with 16000 buildings of which about 1000 (2001 Census updated) have more than 10% of their population as people of other Faiths, together with 4670 primary and secondary Church schools

- 2.4. The Church of England has had a very strong record in both ecumenical and inter religious relations over a long period domestically and internationally. Both bilaterally and multilaterally, the Church plays a major role in sustaining inter religious engagement, both 'face to face and side by side' at national, diocesan and local levels. The Church is generally trusted by Christian, other Faith and secular communities as not being an arm of government nationally or locally, and is used to working in partnership with a range of others^[4].
- 2.5. The Church has at all levels, sound, stable and transparent management and governance systems backed by internal and external legal provision and by elected local representation^[5], which provide mechanisms for management and accountability.
- 2.6. The Church of England has over the past six years developed a national programme which draws on and values the lived experience of local parish churches in multi-religious contexts. This 'Presence & Engagement programme'^[6] used the 2001 Census to analyse the religious composition of all 13000 parishes and to focus on the (then) 900 parishes with more than 10% other Faith populations (ranging up to 75%). Amongst many other activities, the programme has encouraged and supported the development of four Centres^[7] for the better equipping of churches, other Faith communities and local authorities to carry out their ministry and work in these contexts.
- 2.7. The programme has had a significant impact both on the equipping of the churches for their ministry of engagement with other faith communities locally; and in enabling the Church as a whole to understand better the significance of an increasingly multi-religious society and how to engage with it. ^[8]

3. The Near Neighbours approach

- 3.1. We^[9] will begin our work by mobilising people through small grants (from £250 up to £5,000, sometimes more) to those who want to engage with their neighbourhood to make it a better place. We want to ignite the passion for change in more ordinary people who have a desire to make things better where they live and work. We would expect to see new community led playgroups, clean-ups, community celebrations, luncheon clubs, befriending schemes, and much more.

^[4] The Church of England has initiated, sustained or partnered with others in all the bilateral or multilateral organisations at national, regional and local levels

^[5] All parish churches have charitable registration or equivalent, each has an elected Church Council and sends representatives to Deanery, Diocesan and national synods

^[6] Summarised in: "Staying present and engaging faithfully": A report to General Synod January 2009:

http://www.presenceandengagement.org.uk/pdf_lib/37_report_to_General_Synod.pdf

^[7] In Bradford, Leicester, East London and East Birmingham

^[8] A recent document: "Sharing the Gospel of Salvation" provides an account of the ways in which the Christian understanding of the finality of Christ is lived out in local multi-religious neighbourhoods:

http://www.presenceandengagement.org.uk/pdf_lib/69_resource.pdf

^[9] 'We' in these proposals refers to the trustees and directors responsible for the Near Neighbours charitable company that will be established as a subsidiary of the Church Urban Fund. They will be appointed by the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England

We will help people to dream dreams, become entrepreneurial and then make their dreams a reality. This we will do largely by adding to the structures and relationships we have in place already and through the work of the Nehemiah Foundation in providing 'health checks' which will assist churches and faith communities in considering their neighbourhood and in exploring possibilities

- 3.2. Next we will identify those who already have influence in their neighbourhoods and build on their capacity to change things for the better. We will work with young aspiring community leaders and help them to build bridges, develop skills of mediation and negotiation and their capacity to make things happen. We will also work with local faith community leaders, help strengthen their leadership skills, their relationships with other groups of people and help develop good governance in their organisations.
- 3.3. To crown what we do, we will deliver a locally based programme of activity which will skill up and mobilise communities to achieve the change they want to see in their neighbourhood. We will find and develop local organisers able to identify and seize opportunities for change. These will be people who know their locality, its strong points and weaknesses and are able to work with the grain of what is already in existence.
- 3.4. The Church of England already has an extensive 'infrastructure' through its dioceses, parishes, schools and in many other ways. Together with the resources of the Church Urban Fund, the Near Neighbours proposals will enable us, with others, to build on what is there and provide it with greater capacity for delivery. We know what works and the support envisaged in this document would create additional possibilities exponentially beyond our present capacity to deliver. We believe that we can bring together a number of organisations and activities with which we have relationships in ways which will together deliver a local impact greatly in excess of any of their individual activities. We are in a truly unique position to do this through the networks - the faithful capital - that we are a part of and have direct and trusted access to. No other organisation has anything like this developed network of contacts, trust and experience of working at the 'nano level' in local communities.
- 3.5. As we deliver this programme of activity we will do it with three main values to guide our decision making:
- 3.6. **Relational:** First the primacy of a relational approach which builds trust and mutual accountability. We are already immersed in the experience of individuals and the communities where we work. Our overall aim is their flourishing and we know that the quality of encounter we have with them is the key to success. We begin by recognising the value of every person we come into contact with and working from there. Hence, we will always choose long term, comprehensive solutions which take seriously the lived experience and behaviour of the people we work with, their view of the world, what they think will work in their neighbourhood and their insights and capacities.
- 3.7. **Locally based:** Secondly, we will aim at specifically local solutions to local problems. We recognise that often local people bring key insights and ideas about how to address the problems they face but do not always know how best to them. We acknowledge the value of centrally organised initiatives in some cases but our

focus is on locally based solutions. Our strategy for change is one which emerges from trust, the lived experience of people and their passion for change. This initiative will give us the capacity to build for the long term future.

- 3.8. **Faith based:** Thirdly, we focus our work on faith based activities and organisations because we are a Christian religious community and because this is the key way for us to reach those who are seldom heard and hard to reach. We have called the proposals 'Near Neighbours' because this refers directly to the teaching of Jesus Christ about the twin commandments to love God and love our neighbour. We are not exclusive about this and see ourselves working with others to serve the whole community according to their need not their creed or colour, their sexuality or gender, their disability or age. We see Christian faith and religious faith in general as having real potential to be an active and integrating force for good which builds flourishing and healthy communities..
- 3.9. We see in this initiative a real potential to connect our existing vocation with the concepts of the Big Society. It will enable mutual respect, relationships that increase supportive bonds and connections and the opportunity for people from different communities and identities to create better places to flourish in and grow. In what follows we will describe what we want to achieve, how we will do it and what we need to make it work.