

SPRING 2019

IGNITE

SPARKING PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL ACROSS THE UK



A new era for
170-year-old church

WELCOME

Perhaps the greatest thrill in the Christian life, is to experience the joy of leading another person to Jesus! And that is something that I believe every Christian should enjoy. Across the UK, there is a movement taking place. A move to plant churches. Part of the drive for this is the evidence that new churches, and church plants are more effective in winning souls and making disciples. Those of us in longer established fellowships should not see church planting as a threat – indeed, church planting can be a great spur to us all in refocusing our efforts on ‘keeping the main thing, the main thing.’

In this edition of Ignite, these two elements combine to give a picture of how God is moving among us today.

- The Evangelists stories on page 6 are inspiring, as each day Counties Evangelists get to share the Good News with those who are lost without Christ
- We are thrilled to launch Counties Planting Network (page 12), and with it to introduce the M4 training programme for church planters

Thank you for reading this new, expanding edition of Ignite. Please pray, asking the Lord of the harvest to send out more labourers into the harvest field – for the harvest is truly plentiful, but the workers are few!

May the Lord bless you in Making Jesus known!

Martin Erwin, *CEO Counties*



Counties exists to make Jesus known across the UK through our evangelists, exhibitions and resources, in biblically faithful and culturally relevant ways.

Counties (Formerly Counties Evangelistic Work) is a Registered Charity No. 264278 and a Company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales No. 1041761

Address: Counties 30 Haynes Road, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 3HD

Telephone: 01373 823 013 Email: office@countiesuk.org www.countiesuk.org

Thank you for your valued partnership. We are glad to make Ignite available free of charge.

It costs approximately £5 per year to produce and distribute this newsletter to you.

Every additional contribution will help us continue in our mission.

Editor: Helen Rimmer - helen@teaforthree.co.uk

Design: Hullocreative - www.hullocreative.com



connecting befriending serving

24

4

News in brief

6

Stories from the evangelists *News*

10

The Life exhibition gets a new look

12

Counties Planting Network launched

14

European training platform comes to UK

16

Old meets new – Gospel Hall replant

20

Key lessons for church planters by Graham Jack

24

Neighbourhood Chaplains launches in Scotland

26

Meet Hull evangelist Julian Gutteridge

NEW TRAINING PACK LAUNCHED TO HELP EQUIP CHURCHES TO MAKE JESUS KNOWN ACROSS THE UK



A variety of training programmes aimed at helping churches and Christians be better at sharing the Gospel are now being highlighted in a new pack published this month.

The Training Pack from Counties features a range of programmes on offer to help young people, church leaders, youth leaders and Christians step out in faith and share the Gospel in practical ways.

Ash George, Counties Training Officer, explained: *"We now have a great resource to give to interested people which highlights the range of training on offer from Counties. We are passionate about providing high quality training for the body of Christ and believe that training is best done in the context of community and allied with practical ministry."*

"Jesus' model was to work with a group explaining, encouraging and demonstrating to his disciples as he ministered to lost people. As such, our training is about preparing people for the practical outworking of their faith through sharing the Gospel."

Training programmes on offer include:

- One2Lead – aimed at 16-25-year olds to equip them as disciples and in leadership;
- School of Evangelism Lite – for those wanting to be better equipped to share the Gospel;
- M4 a church planter training programme for teams planting and growing churches in new places and in new ways (more on this new programme on Page 18);
- Evangelist Training Programme – aimed at those with a heart and call to be an evangelist
- Neighbourhood Chaplains – a programme to enable local churches to reach out to the lost and lonely in their community.

For your free pack or for more information on any of these programmes call the Counties office on: 01373 823013 or email office@countiesuk.org



SAVE THE DATES!

29 JUNE

A new-style Counties Day Conference is set to take place on Saturday 29 June at the Tom Roberts Adventure Centre in Malswick, Gloucestershire. A family fun day with children's and youth marquees, seminars, food and an evening celebration.



BECOME A COUNTIES CHAMPION!

Do you have opportunities to speak in local churches about the work of Counties? Counties is looking for supporters to help raise the profile of the charity in local areas and raise up Gospel Partners to pray and support its work.

Counties Champions will be given:

- A pull up banner to take to meetings
- PowerPoint presentations
- Regular supplies of literature
- Reduced costs to attend Counties weekend conferences.

A special day of training, fellowship and equipping is planned for interested people to find out more about the work of Counties Champions.

If you are interested - please email martin.erwin@countiesuk.org to find out more.

STORIES FROM EVANGELISTS ACROSS THE NETWORK

SEAFARERS LISTEN TO THE GOSPEL IN BRISTOL DOCKS

Seafarers from around the world are touched by the Gospel when they dock at Avonmouth in Bristol – thanks to visits by Counties evangelist and sea chaplain Steve Loader.

Over 500 ships have been visited in the last year and Steve shows no signs of slowing down as he says he is thrilled with the opportunities God has given him.

Here, he shares some encouraging stories from his times on board the ships:

"On one occasion, I spent about two hours talking to the ship's Bosun on a large baulker ship. He shared with humility the sacrifice he was making in order to provide for his family. When his second child was born by caesarean section, he immediately went back to sea for 27 months so that he could pay the medical fees.

"This seafarer wondered if his family appreciated the sacrifice he was making for them. It was making him sad and resentful.

I shared with him that many are unaware of the sacrifice that our Heavenly Father has made for us! He wants us to know Him and all that He has done on the Cross for us and to know all that He will do in the future for those who put their trust in Him. The Bosun was visibly moved by these words and said that he had never thought of God in this way before; a father who gives sacrificially for his children because he loves them!

"As well as many conversations with individuals, I also get the chance to share the Gospel with all the crew at the same time. Twice this year I was asked by the Captain to share something with his crew. The mess room was quickly organised into rows of chairs with me at the end. The crew of about 18 guys sat and listened to me as I opened the Bible and shared the Gospel with them. I finished by praying a blessing over them to which a number asked for Bibles and thanked me for what I had shared. What a blessing and a privilege to have these opportunities!"



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY IN SOUTH WALES CONTINUES TO FLOURISH

A 'chance' encounter in her local post office saw Pembrokeshire associate evangelist Janet Hawking share her faith with a parent. Janet had visited a school as part of her schools ministry and the local mum remembered Janet and her work.

Janet explains: *"I had just stopped to post a letter, when a mum stopped me and said, 'My son loved your lessons from months ago! He is always talking about the New Testament. I am not religious, but he was really touched by your talk.'*

"I was able to share about a local Saturday event that we are hosting as a church for young people and families. Praise God!"

A LISTENING EAR HELPS A HOMELESS MAN IN BATH

Bath trainee evangelist Craig Dowling was able to share the Gospel by initially not saying a word!

Craig shares: *"Recently in Bath I had a coffee with a homeless man. As he began talking, he talked about God, faith, religion, but the only problem was everything he was saying was wrong. I went to stop him, and correct him, only to have the Holy Spirit hold me back!*

"When we finished, he took off and five minutes later I encountered him again, this time he was in floods of tears, so as I asked him what happened. He told me he had never been listened to before, by anyone!"

"He had spoken with ministers many times only to be put down and told to shut up, and I was the first one to ever simply listen to him. He asked me why I listened to him and then I was able to tell him the Gospel! It strikes me that it really was God holding me back in the first conversation which then enabled me to tell the Good News in our second conversation."

Craig has just finished writing a new course for local churches: 'His Evangelism, Through You'. It aims to help the church move forward in evangelism, build the Church, and invite people to have personal relationships with Jesus. Craig explains: *"The course comes from the view of enabling each individual, to be a witness for Jesus in the work place etc. and to invite people to Church."*

"It begins by each person discovering their own story and being able to tell their story in 3 minutes, it then progresses to having conversations and discipling."

For more information email:
dowling@countiesuk.org



THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

Five people have become followers of Jesus thanks to a ministry set up by Hertfordshire evangelists Kim and Jo Hobbs.

The Cornergate Foundation was set up in 2013 to help prisoners and ex-offenders embrace a new way of living and turn their backs on crime. The team at Cornergate offer friendship, regular social activities, work experience, job hunting, accommodation search and help to tackle addictions.

Kim said: *"Since we started in 2013 five people have become followers of Jesus - none easily and it hasn't been a smooth ride since. Two of these have been baptised, two others are now in paid jobs and are off benefits. Others are now making strides towards similar resilience. Two are free of alcohol with our support and several others enjoy hope and are seeing progress as they work with us.*

"All have new and positive friendships and can see their pathway towards freedom, if they choose to take the first step."

The charity has partnered with Soul Survivor Watford to host a weekly addiction recovery group that uses the AA's 'Twelve Step' principles in a Christian context where Jesus



Christ is our 'Higher Power'. Kim says: *"This is always a positive group, despite challenging situations faced by everyone attending."*

Other areas of work include café events and Bible studies, where the men and women share life together and the team from Cornergate model Christian principles and lifestyle. Support is also given to help ex-prisoners with housing, mental health issues, tackling isolation and addiction. Kim added:

"By such befriending and practical support we gain trust and are then able to model a lifestyle - which may be unfamiliar - of integrity, choosing to live within the law, and caring for others, which in turn helps them find their way to stability and resilience from crime.

"In the process we are able to share the Gospel and see people choose for themselves to follow Jesus for the first time."

CHURCH PLANT WELCOMES FIRST WEDDING

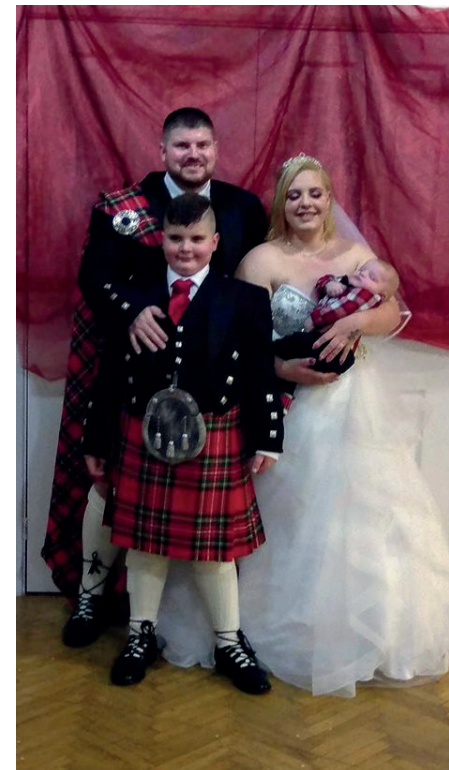
Since becoming a Christian, Stockport mum of two Stephie felt compelled to marry her long-term partner Danny. The couple, who have two children together, got married in a special winter ceremony at Brinnington Community Church – a church planted by Counties evangelists Martin and Angie Korchinsky in 2011.

Martin said: *"Stephie's dream was to be married in our church. We recently had our building registered for marriages and her dream came true the Saturday before Christmas, as Stephie and Danny tied the knot. It was a wonderful celebration.*

"I have always felt that providing weddings would be part of the ministry here in Brinnington, and God has confirmed it already! Another couple called Geoff and Gina have been living together for several years and enquired about getting married here this summer.

"They were encouraged to come to church and they really enjoyed it. Three months down the line and both have put their trust in Jesus as their personal Saviour and are completing a discipleship course!"

They now want to be baptised and are very active volunteering in the church."



GOD OF SURPRISES

Wirral evangelist Rob Watson has been preaching the Gospel across Merseyside for many years and believes we should never be surprised what God can do.

Rob said: *"I recently took a family service at a church I'd never spoken at before. I have to confess, for a variety of reasons, it was with a tinge of reluctance that I had agreed to accept the invitation to speak there.*

"There was nothing particularly different or special about the service, including my sermon, and indeed many of the songs and hymns were more ancient than modern. Yet at the end of the service, and to my great surprise, a lady came forward having accepted Christ as her Saviour during my message.

"I know I shouldn't have been surprised, but I was. Many churches rarely see someone coming to faith through a regular Sunday service, and it's easy to become conditioned by this. It was wonderful to be surprised, but not as wonderful for the lady who experienced God's salvation that morning.

"We have been greatly encouraged by this and other events lately, changing our mind-set and going out with the Gospel with a greater expectancy and a desire to be constantly surprised by our God."



PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCE BOUNCES HIGH WITH NEW INFLATABLES

The Life exhibition, a resource from Counties which shares the story of Jesus with school children across the country, has been given a revamp for 2019.

New inflatables have replaced some of the exhibition pods to create an easier to set up display and one which is more appealing and striking to its visitors.

'It was great to be able to make your own choices about what to watch and the things I wanted to learn about.'



Kevin Baldwin, Life exhibition Coordinator, said: *"This has probably been one of the busiest terms ever for the exhibition, demand for it continues to grow and we just can't keep up. The new inflatables are proving a hit too with both church volunteers and children!"*

More than 136,000 children and adults have visited the Life exhibition since it was created 14 years ago. On average, around 630 pupils go through the exhibit at each venue.

The exhibition is hired by local churches in an area and set up in a hall. Pupils from nearby primary schools are then invited to visit the exhibition, where they can learn about Jesus through an interactive session which includes using tablets, playing quizzes and games.

A Year six teacher, from St Margaret's Church of England School in Durham, said about a recent visit to Durham Cathedral: *"We thought the Life exhibition was superb. To be able to set up such a modern and exciting way of learning in such a historical and inspirational building was amazing. It set the tone and atmosphere for some very reflective and insightful workshops."*

"The interactive and modern tools used, such as the tablets, voting buttons and the video tent grabbed the pupils attention and I think helped them realise that messages given



were real and relevant.

"The learning joined up a lot of our topics and themes. Open-ended activities meant that all pupils could access the tasks but those with greater depth of knowledge were still interested and challenged."

It is always a bonus to have additional voices giving the same messages and also tutors who have great knowledge and confidence to share and explain some of the more difficult messages."

To find out more about the Life exhibition visit:

www.lifeexpo.co.uk

'I thought it might be a bit boring but then it was really exciting having your own iPad and being able to listen to and watch loads of fun things.'

'I loved the rap song in the 3rd pod. It was really cool and I liked the stuff we listened to, but it was also about Jesus and had really good messages in it.'



Church planting has been a part of Counties heritage since it was set up in 1899 and now the charity has established a network to raise up, train and equip church planters looking to plant and grow self-governing churches across the UK. The Counties Planting Network aims to work alongside local church leaders to identify opportunities to plant and grow churches and also replant where a previous church had existed and is coming to the end of its current life. Ignite met up with new Counties Planting Network coordinators James Hyde and Tim Cracknell to find out more.

SO WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE COUNTIES PLANTING NETWORK?

To raise up, train, partner and equip teams of church planters, seeking to plant and grow independent, self-governing local churches in relationship with each other across the UK. We will partner with GLO, Partnership, Church Growth Trust and others, to enable Counties Planting Network to contribute to a wider commitment to church revitalisation.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH PLANTING INITIATIVE (CPI)?

CPI has been good at supporting and encouraging church planters, and those interested in new churches, creating regional Hubs, gathering and fellowshiping together. However, the CPI trustees were wanting to take church planting in the UK to a new level of strategic development and profile, and they agreed that Counties and our friends at GLO were best placed to do that.

For Counties, that has led to a Church Planting Strategy Group, who have developed the Counties Planting Network proposals, with exciting developments on the horizon.

IS THERE A NETWORK ALREADY – WITH EXISTING CPI CHURCHES COMING OVER TO COUNTIES?

CPI provided regional Hub meetings for the planters. However, Counties Planting Network seeks to strengthen this relationship in 4 ways:

1. Giving planting teams a stronger sense of belonging to a network with others committed to the same vision
2. Providing planters access and fellowship to the wider family of Counties evangelists, resources and training
3. Inviting local churches to become part of the Counties Planting Network, either as they seek to plant and grow out from their own church, or as a replanting opportunity.
4. In time, we envisage that these church plants will be part of a wider, national network of local self governing churches, with shared values and vision around the Gospel of Jesus.

HOW WILL THE NEW NETWORK HELP CHURCH PLANTS BECOME ESTABLISHED?

Through a proven toolkit, working with local leaders to assess, train and coach planting

teams. The Counties Network will provide support and encouragement for planters as part of the wider Counties family. We will also introduce the new M4 training programme in the UK. Through M4, which currently runs in 14 other European countries, we will be able to offer training to church planters from across the evangelical church in the UK.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE CHURCHES WHO ARE 'DYING'?

The Network will be able to offer local churches on the verge of closure, the possibility of replanting in the existing building, but under new leadership. This will involve a transition period where other local elders and church leaders will help establish some changes, as 'Transitional Elders,' creating a new culture, which will lead to the opportunity to place new teams to replant the church.

WILL CHURCHES HAVE A BADGE TO SAY THEY ARE PART OF THE NETWORK?

There is a new name and new logo which planting teams and associated local churches will be able to use to help them have a sense of that wider identity. The network will prioritise relationships.

YOU HAVE BOTH BEEN APPOINTED PART-TIME ROLES WITH THE NETWORK. WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?

James Hyde: *I have worked with CPI for 10 years and will be helping all those associated with CPI who may wish to transition their relationships to the Network, and in particular, helping establish M4 and coach the Network.*

Tim: *I am thrilled to be helping to coordinate*

the Network, as well as continuing my role in Forest Community church (a CPI and Counties success story). I will also be helping to model the new approach to replanting through leadership at Henry Street Evangelical Church, Ross-on-Wye. (More details on page 16).

WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

This work launches formally from April 2019. M4 has a training schedule rolling out this year.

For more details on the Counties Planting Network call 01373 823013.

CHURCH PLANTING THROUGHOUT THE YEARS WITH COUNTIES

- **1899:** the first Counties Tent mission in Uxbridge led to the planting of a new church.
- **1970s:** Stephen Gillham – Trickets Cross, Dorset (1979)
- **1986:** Former CEO John Wilkes planted Warren Hill Christian Fellowship, Nottingham.
- **1989:** Evangelist Kevin Ward planted Coalville Evangelical Church in Derbyshire.
- **1996:** Challenge Community Church established Martin and Rachel Erwin and team.
- **2000s:** Counties was a founding partner of CPI – Church Planting Initiative. Forest Community Church launches – with evangelists Tim and Katrina Cracknell. Evangelist Andy Hodson sets up church plant in Brierly Hill. Martin Korchinsky planting in Brinnington joins Counties as an evangelist. London planter, Caleb Mathewos joins the Evangelist Training Programme.
- **2019:** Counties Planting Network established.



SUCCESSFUL TRAINING FOR CHURCH PLANTS LAUNCHES IN THE UK

An exciting new training programme aimed at multiplying church planting movements across the country has been brought to the UK by Counties.

M4 - which gets its names from the four 'm's': Master, Mission, Multiplication and Movement – has been running over 14 years in Europe, helping church leaders to assess, train and coach new church planting teams.

Counties will now be the provider for M4 training in the UK. The programme is built around the ABCs of church planting: Assessment, Basic Training and Coaching.



Martin Erwin, CEO of Counties, said: *"We're delighted to bring this successful training platform to the UK.*

"We believe that church planting is God's initiative and that it's Christ himself who builds His church. Therefore the authority of the Bible is essential for the content and message of M4. We believe church planting has to be done through prayer, worship and discipleship to Jesus Christ.

"Planting includes (1) re-planting a dying church; (2) re-opening churches closed in the past; (3) new-build churches; (4) starting churches in schools, cafés or estates; (5) starting a new congregation. For example, a service especially for foreign-language speakers; (6) a small group 'missional community' dedicated to growing relationally one by one."

"We believe that God's presence and action in our life and ministry is more important than strategies, plans and methods. We want to see a multiplying movement of missional churches, leaders with a Kingdom mentality that seek relationships first and are open to changes and improvement when they walk into the future together with God and His church."

TIMETABLE FOR M4 UK

Training events will take place throughout this year:

24-25 May: M4 Church Planter information events

27-28 September: 'M1 Weekend'

WHO'S IT FOR?

For those with a calling to plant and grow church in their community or replant a closing or struggling church.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

The content in the training is formed around these four topics:
Master; Mission; Multiplication and Movement = M4

The basic training involves:

- Assessing the readiness of a leader who feels called to plant and grow churches.
- Teams will come together with others as part of a learning community, meeting four times over two years.
- Regular coaching sessions will encourage and challenge planters in the work they are doing.
- Church planters and their teams will also join an online platform to watch videos, process the material and do additional exercises to help them in their planting and growing process.

WHERE COULD IT TAKE ME?

All teams that are part of M4 are challenged to plan and prepare so the church they are planting now can be multiplied in 3-5 years. This would then lead us from simple addition of churches to multiplying movements. When a church is spreading the gospel further in its surrounding community, something becomes clear: many people will never connect with your church. One reason is geography. A local church might be full of 200 people, which is still only 1% of the population of their town of 20,000. Church planting comes out of the recognition you are not going to reach all people with what you are doing. M4 equips churches to reach new places in new ways.

"The M4 training has been a great help to us as a church, encouraging and inspiring us in missional lifestyle, community and discipleship. It has helped us from the beginning to focus on the fundamental things – being consistent in spiritual growth, missional lifestyle and building a community."

Church planter Tomas Grulich.

OLD MEETS NEW AT GOSPEL HALL

The leaders of a 170-year-old church in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, are excited for the future after inviting Counties Planting Network to help replant the church and lead it into a fresh new chapter.

The believers at Henry Street Evangelical Church, established in 1859, were not able to find a way forward after numbers started to dwindle. They had prayed for years that the Lord might send a couple, or young family to help.

Former Church elder Martin Hewitt explained: "We were a fairly elderly congregation and we tried to attract younger people into our services over the years but without success. Looking back now, we were trying to reach out to people but not in a relevant way.

"We needed to do something, or the church would die. We hadn't had a baptism in our pool since 2004 and we knew we needed help!"

The elders approached Counties CEO

Martin Erwin and Counties evangelist Tim Cracknell last year, who had previous connections with the church, and a new transitional team was put into place. The church is undergoing a refurbishment, making it more accessible to the public and new weekly groups have been established.

Martin Hewitt continued: *"The Counties team have helped to change our mindset – we were looking at ourselves previously, rather than looking at the people around us and what their needs were. We had to look around and see what God was doing and hang on to His coat tails!"*

The church, which sits in the centre of a busy supermarket car park, has a rich history, nurturing many Christians including well-known pastor and Bible teacher Charles Price.

Tim Cracknell said: *"When we first started the transition, the goal was to help the remaining believers to rediscover a practical confidence in the Gospel, to which they*



old and new members of Henry Street Evangelical Church gather together.

were fully committed, and to demonstrate that it was genuinely possible to see people connecting with the fellowship and being impacted by the Gospel.

"As part of this process, it was a thrill to see over 120 people attend the Carol Service at Christmas! The next steps on the journey are to see the raising up and calling of a team to work in the church, in time, taking the roles of leadership as the church is replanted."

A fresh team is being drawn together to enable the church to be replanted and brought into a new era of fruitfulness.

Local Christians Phil & Barb Gooderson are part of the new team. They said: *"When Tim mentioned involvement at Henry Street, we both felt a sense of excitement at seeing a church being revived. We felt this was God's calling on us to become involved there.*

"We have seen a rising of hope for the future in the existing membership since we started going there, as they get the vision for the future of their church and they adapt to the changes being made.

"Our prayers are that God will continue the work He has started, and new growth and new life will be seen in Ross-on-Wye."

Martin Erwin added: *"Small numbers, a lack of viable leadership on the ground, and steady decline do not have to spell the final body blow to the life of the church. In places where the church exists in a key location or area, with the willingness of the remaining believers, perhaps this route may provide a key to reversing the life and mission of the church."*

The church will be formally re-launched later this year with a new name, team and fresh vision.

SEVEN STEPS

TO HELP REPLANT AN EXISTING CHURCH

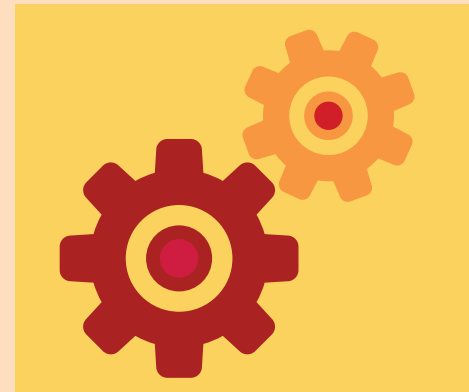
- 1** A church health check will help you begin through our friends at Partnership.



- 2** If 'replanting' is possible, Counties will help arrange a face to face meeting.



- 3** Transitional Elders will be appointed.



- 4** Initial changes will be led by the transitional leadership.



- 6** The new team will be put in place, with training provided through M4, working initially under the care of the Transitional Eldership.



- 5** Transitional Elders, along with the Counties Church Planting Officer will seek to raise and establish a replanting team.



- 7** The new team will take responsibility and new leadership will be recognised in the local church, with the Transitional Elders stepping back.

“PLANTING A CHURCH, IS LIKE BUILDING A PLANE AFTER IT HAS TAKEN OFF!”

Graham Jack, son of Counties evangelist Victor Jack, from Westley Community Church in Bury St Edmunds helped to plant the church in 2015 and since then 30 people, mostly new converts, have joined the church every year.

Here he explains what led him to plant the church and what lessons he learnt along the way.

WHY PLANT A CHURCH?

In September 2010, I returned to Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk after 15 years working with Operation Mobilisation, mainly on their ships. After two weeks of being home, a man called Rob walked into Westley Community Church on a Sunday morning and sat down next to me.

After the service he told me how he had recently lost his mum, and thoroughly fed up with life, had been about to slit his wrists, when he experienced a voice saying, “*you haven’t given me a chance yet*”.

Having been to Sunday School as a young boy, he connected that voice to the possibility that God was speaking to him and came to church seeking answers.

To help Rob and some others who were seeking to know God, we formed a group and led them through the Alpha Course. During this Rob encountered a Saviour who loved him, had a plan for his life, and this completely changed his life.



HOW WE DID IT

At the same time, I had just started an MA in Mission at Cliff College, wondering what God had for me next. To pass this course, I had to plant an expression of church and reflect on the strengths and weakness of my applied learning. So I followed Rob back on to the estate where he lived which largely consisted of social housing. Living on the same estate was a matriarchal figure called Pearl who came to faith in her 50’s. She invited me to her home, and we pulled together a dozen of her and Rob’s family and friends and started an evangelistic Bible study/fresh expression of church. This ran weekly for 18-months and provided a wonderful learning opportunity for me to understand both the needs and the challenges of reaching those in social housing. As well as running this fresh expression of church, we started door knocking around the estate asking how we could help. This led to lots of love in action projects from Christmas Hampers, garden clear-ups, furniture recycling, clothing exchanges, to a cooking club.

To evaluate all I was doing for my MA, I used Michael Frost’s four P’s of being missional:

1. **Proximity** - we step into the experience of those we seek to win
2. **Presence** - we practice the presence of Christ by doing what he would be doing in our situation
3. **Powerlessness** - our personal and church-based wealth can be a prohibitive power base, so we seek to live as simply and similarly as we can to those we are reaching
4. **Proclamation** - pointing those we are reaching to God through demonstrating and declaring the redeeming love of Jesus.

In these early days of seeking to live as missionally as we could, it seemed to us that we were doing okay in both the Presence and Proclamation areas, but due to our middle-class backgrounds and church culture, we were really struggling in the Proximity and Powerlessness areas of missional life.



LESSONS LEARNED

One incident particularly highlighted the gap between our personal and church culture and the community culture we were seeking to reach into. A young woman in her 20s from the estate and our fresh expression of church decided she wanted to try church.

We were delighted by this, but secretly wondering how it would go as Kizzy was raised by a gypsy father in a broken home and taught to shop-lift everything the family needed from the time she could walk. All went well in the church

service for Kizzy until the preacher stood up in his jacket and tie. She told me afterwards, that she refused to listen to a word, because he reminded her of the negative experience of authority, particularly at school, that she had experienced.

To connect the 'Kizzys' of our estate life with a positive experience of church family through which they could encounter God, we were either going to have to radically change church or start again.

A NEW STYLE CHURCH?

As it turned out, West Road Church was thriving and bulging at the seams already, and many of those we were discipling with leadership potential were struggling to get the opportunities in church life they needed to develop.

At the same time, my wife Caroline had started a senior fitness group on the only estate near us without a church. Caroline felt that God was nudging her to ask her ladies to participate in a Senior Alpha Course. To prepare and make the most of this opportunity we started praying on Tuesday lunch times before the course took place in the Westley Community Centre with a mixture of folk from West Road Church and other Christians who lived on the estate.

As we prayed for the estate and wrestled with an overfull church, discipleship opportunities for young Christians and the culture gap between our community and church, there was a growing sense that God wanted us to start a new congregation on the Westley Estate.

So after 18-months of prayer and lots of discussions; a team of 26 people from West Road Church, including nine children, three seniors in their late 70s and eight people who had come to faith over the last three years, launched Westley Community Church, the second congregation of West Road Church, on Easter Sunday in April 2015.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Somebody once said, that planting a church is like building a plane after it has taken off. It certainly felt like this to us! We didn't have many of the skills or giftings to do church and had to learn and grow every time we met. However, God has been so faithful to His promise to build His church. Some 30 people a year have joined Westley, many of them new converts. As our partnership with CAP developed and many from debt and addiction backgrounds started joining our family, God also heard our prayer for more mature Christians to join us with compassionate hearts and pastoral and personal ministry skills.

As the plane/church has continued to grow, we have discovered what someone else was said is true, that church planting is the best evangelistic strategy. It's also great for growing leaders and developing a whole range of spiritual gifts. We now have Westley folk regularly leading and taking part at West Road Church.

“Church planting is the best evangelistic strategy”

As a church, we employ 3 main strategies.

1. Missionally, we seek to B.L.E.S.S. To **Begin** with prayer; to **Listen** to all we meet; to increase our proximity by **Eating** together as often as possible; **Serving** and doing what Jesus would do and **Sharing** our God-stories at every opportunity. The prayer meeting we started before the church on a Tuesday lunch time still continues, plus we now have a dedicated prayer room on the side of a church member's house which is increasingly in use.

2. When it comes to building people into church, we recognise that many will belong, before they believe, and believe before they start becoming like Jesus. So we have had people serve in appropriate teams at church and in our mid-week community projects who are not yet Christians. We also have developed some clear pathways for moving folk from belonging to believing then to becoming, and are still developing others.

3. Our final strategy is both our vision and a pathway, and it comes from Psalm 68:6a, “God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy.” Our desire and prayer is that God would remake us into a family that He can place the lonely in, like Rob, that He would continue to set us free from the world, the enemy and ourselves and lead us into His fullness of life & joy – for His name's sake.



NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAPLAINS

LAUNCHED IN SCOTLAND

A Counties scheme to help churches reach the lost and lonely in their communities has arrived in Scotland.

Bothwell Evangelical Church, near Glasgow, will soon begin to train its team to visit the local community as part of Neighbourhood Chaplains.

Neighbourhood Chaplains, which equips volunteers to help them show the love of Jesus in both word and action, already has ten live schemes in England and Wales.

Members of the Bothwell Evangelical Church heard about the scheme thanks to a national roadshow held at Tilsley College GLO, based in Motherwell, Lanarkshire, in the central belt of Scotland. The roadshow also reached the far south of England visiting Moorlands College in Christchurch.

Bothwell Community Church sits in a commuter community near the M74 and ten miles from Glasgow. It has a mixed community with residents ranging from Rangers and Celtic football players to people living in broken social housing in more deprived areas.

Church elder, Ralph Gunn said: "People call Bothwell 'the village' but it's a small

town really. Bothwell has three churches, but ours is the only one doing evangelism in this way. We asked for a Neighbourhood Chaplains training day because we were looking for ways to reach the community.

"It is increasingly apparent that people won't just come in through the door. At the evening session of the information event about three quarters of those attending were from our church, so our leadership team knew we had a lot of interest in this.

"We hope to get together a team of 10-12 people, and other churches may join the training day too. We liked the idea of joining a national scheme, because there's not much danger of being mistaken for JW's!

"We think that Neighbourhood Chaplains will be a natural extension of what we're already doing. There's an annual community festival which we join in with, that sees over 500 people through our door because we run a coffee shop all day, so our church is well known in the village.

"We also have church members on the local residents' committee – 'Brighter Bothwell,' and volunteers who go out to welcome



people to a new-build housing estate that's going up. They take round a pot of flowers and give general local information to new home owners. It's more than just saying 'come to our church' it's all about being welcoming and caring to people. Neighbourhood Chaplains fits in with that approach."

Jenny Rossiter, Counties Resources Officer, said: "Neighbourhood Chaplains gives local churches the tools to connect their community projects (such as foodbanks, CAP, parent and toddlers, coffee mornings) with the vast number of lonely people in their neighbourhoods.

"It offers a friendly face through a regular chaplain's visit, a listening ear through the

befriender's network and helping hands, as willing and trained volunteers show love in practical ways to people in our neighbourhoods.

"We're delighted to see the scheme begin in Scotland and hope more churches will hear about this and introduce Neighbourhood Chaplains to more areas of the country."

Find out more:

www.neighbourhoodchaplains.co.uk

or email:

resources@countiesuk.org

JUST A MINUTE WITH JULIAN GUTTERIDGE



What are the challenges you face in sharing the Gospel?

I would say the biggest challenge is apathy amongst Christian towards direct forms of Evangelism and barriers that often occur in churches in relationship to cross cultural Evangelism amongst immigrants.

What is the best thing about living in Hull?

Firstly, it is not as big as Birmingham or London. Secondly the sea side is not too far away to go to. It also has very good free museums.

What is your favourite Bible verse, and why?

John 3:16 because it is the verse which the Holy Spirit used to bring me to faith in Jesus. The amazing truth that God actually loved me so much, that he sent Jesus his only begotten Son into this world to die for my sins upon the cross and rise again from the dead to bring me new life, peace and reconciliation with God. Such amazing love.

How do you like to relax?

I have a number of things I like doing to relax; spending time with my dear wife Ella, walking in the countryside, gardening and ornithology.

Ignite meets Counties Hull Evangelist Julian Gutteridge and finds out more about his ministry in East Yorkshire

How long have you worked with Counties?

I have been with Counties for just over three years.

Why did you join?

I love reaching people with the Gospel, especially Muslims, whom I have worked with for many years.

Being part of Counties has enabled Ella my wife and I to fully concentrate on this task because the work we do amongst them has grown.

What did you do before you were a full time Evangelist?

I was working as a full-time evangelist both in London and Birmingham amongst Muslims. Then in 2005 we moved to Hull where I pastored an FIEC Church.

For a number of years I worked as a Shift Caretaker but continued to reach out to Muslims with the Gospel, as well as preaching regularly in churches and doing monthly Open Airs in Hull.

YOUR LOCAL EVANGELISTS

ESSEX

Charles & Elizabeth Addoco
Shaun & Livi Almond (ETP)
Andrew & Rachel Mugford

HERTFORDSHIRE

Will & Lynne Andrews
Kim & Jo Hobbs

SUFFOLK

Tim & Joy Ayrton
Tony & Ruth Hood

NORTH DEVON

Beverley & Bryan Bedford
Steve Ellacott (AE)
David & Katie Symons

CORNWALL

Jacquie & Tim Bodman (ETP)

WILTSHIRE

Jonathan & Heather Brain

WEST MIDLANDS

David & Lindsey Brown
Andy & Isobel Hodson
Paul & Vanessa Willmott

DORSET

Ian & Sally Carr

DERBYSHIRE

James & Christine Coates (AE)

GREATER MANCHESTER

Tim & Charissa Cooke
Martin & Angie Korchinsky
Lee & Lesley Marsland (ETP)

WARWICKSHIRE

Ivor & Angela Cooper

CARDIFF

Clive & Fiona Cornish
Mike & Janet Thomas (AE)

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Tim & Katrina Cracknell

HAMPSHIRE

Gordon & Penny Curley

SWANSEA

Phil & Sheila Davies
Steve & Gwyneth Treseder (AE)
Paul & Laura Davies (ETP)

BATH

Craig & Georgie Dowling

EAST YORKSHIRE

Julian & Elizabeth Gutteridge

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

John Hardwick

PEMBROKESHIRE

Janet Hawking (AE)

BEDFORDSHIRE

Colin & Linda Johnson

BRISTOL & AVON

Steve & Dawn Loader

LONDON

Caleb & Adanesh Mathewos (ETP)

CUMBRIA

Matt & Nicola Rich

SOMERSET

Mike & Su Strange

WIRRAL

Robert & Sarah Watson

SENIORS & WIDOWS

Grace Anderson, Tom & Madelene Bathgate, Jean Campbell, Roger & Hazel Chilvers, Lionel Clargo, Ray & Carol Dadswell, Stephen & Jean Gillham, Hettie Hall, Wendy Iliffe, Victor Jack, Andy & Miriam Jelfs, Phyllis Jenkins, John & Jane Martin, Ruby Powell, Betty Saunders, Bob & Rita Telford, Gladys Whittern.



AE – Associate Evangelist
ETP – Evangelist Training Programme

PARTNER WITH US

SUBSCRIBE

Please send me:

- Ignite Magazine and Praise & Prayer diary by post (please fill in address)
- Monthly newsletter by email

MY DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Your details will be kept on our database and may be shared with a local Counties Evangelist, but with no other persons or organisations.

- Please remove me from your mailing list

MY GIFT

I would like to partner with Counties. Please find enclosed my/our gift of

£

(please make cheques payable to Counties)

To give online by debit or credit card visit countiesuk.org

Gift Aid

- This is a Gift-Aid donation (We will send you a gift-aid declaration, if you have not already completed one).
- I would like to set up a regular standing order.

Your feedback is always appreciated.
THANK YOU

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAPLAINS ROADSHOW 2019



Discover how your church can connect with the lost and lonely in your community

NORTH WEST

4 March 7.30pm

Bare Methodist Church, Morecambe

BRISTOL

11 March 7.30pm

Chealsea Christian Centre, Bristol

LONDON

23 March 2pm

Haddon Hall Baptist Church, SE1

SOUTH

24 March 4pm

Kennet Valley Free Church, Reading

WEST

30 March 2pm

Creech St Michael Baptist, Taunton

EAST

27 April 10.30am

Queen Edith Chapel, Cambridge

SOUTH WEST

27 April 9.30am

Grosvenor Church, Barnstaple

Contact us to host an event near you.



Free to attend. To reserve a place, please call Counties on

01373 823 013

neighbourhoodchaplains.co.uk

