



# **Annual Report**

**November 2008**

**We're on the web  
[www.ctsd.org.uk](http://www.ctsd.org.uk)**

For use at the Open AGM held  
13th November 2008  
at The URC Church (St John's Hill),  
Sevenoaks  
(7.30 for 8.00pm)





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Shoreham	St Peter & St Paul (C of E) The Vicarage, Station Road, Shoreham TN14 7SA	Rev Richard Freeman 01959 522363
Sundridge with Ide Hill	St Mary (C of E) The Rectory Chevening Road Sundridge, TN14 6AB	Rev David Attwood 01959 563749
Underriver	St Margaret* (C of E) St Lawrence Vicarage, Stone Street, Seal, Sevenoaks TN15 0LQ	Rev Michael Cooke 01732 761766
Weald	St George* (C of E) St George's Vicarage, Church Road Weald TN14 6LT	Rev Serena Willoughby 01732 459316
Westerham	St Mary the Virgin (C of E) The Vicarage, Borde Hill, Westerham TN16 1TL	Rev Paul McVeagh 01959 563127
Westerham	Evangelical Church* The Bramblings, Buckham Thorns, Westerham TN16 1ET	Mrs Strickett
West Kingsdown	St Edmund* (C of E) The Rectory, School Lane, West Kingsdown TN15 6JL	Rev Judy Thurlow 01474 852265

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Although the formal Salvation Army presence in Sevenoaks ceased in 2003, Dianne Jarrett can be contacted as link person at:

71 Riding Park  
Hildenborough  
Kent TN11 9JD

01732 838226

*Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District is a Fair Trade organisation and, as such, undertakes to try to use Fair Trade goods wherever possible and, in particular, to try to ensure that Fair Trade tea and coffee are served at all its meetings.*



**Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District  
Officers and Executive Committee 2007 – 2008**

**OFFICERS:**

<b>Chairman</b>	vacant
<b>Treasurer (From 2001)</b>	
Mr Douglas Seal	12 Holmesdale Road
St John the Baptist (CofE)	Sevenoaks TN13 3XL
01732 456124	
<b>Secretary (From 2002)</b>	
Mrs Lis Lidbetter	1 Brittain's Lane
St Nicholas (CofE)	Sevenoaks TN13 2JN
01732 454012	

**COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES:**

<b>Christian Aid</b>	Mr Stephen & Mrs Jean Day St Mary Kippington (CofE)
<b>Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service</b>	Mrs Maureen King Bessels Green Baptist Church
<b>Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern</b>	Lady Miranda Cormack St Mary, Riverhead (CofE)
<b>Sevenoaks Churches Literature Project</b>	Mr John Lane Sevenoaks URC
<b>North West Fellowship</b>	Rev Peter Hills The Drive Methodist Church
<b>Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust</b>	Dr Caroline Berry St Nicholas (CofE)
<b>Seeds</b>	Rev Neil Durling Bessels Green Baptist Church
<b>Co-opted Members</b>	Dr Sydney Beech Society of Friends  Mrs Anne Straight St Mary Riverhead (CofE)

Sevenoaks	St Nicholas* (C of E) Church Office, Rectory Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 1JA	Mr Martin Levett (Administrator) 01732 740340
Sevenoaks	St Thomas of Canterbury* (RC) The Presbytery, 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1ER	Fr Richard Harvey 01732 454177
Sevenoaks	Society of Friends 3 Nightingale Road Kemsing, TN15 6RU	Dr Sydney Beech 01959 523430
Sevenoaks	Town Church° The Mill Lane Centre 128 Seal Road Sevenoaks TN14 5AX	Mark Hewett 01732 464456
Sevenoaks	Vine Baptist Church* Church Office, Park Lane Sevenoaks TN13 3UV	Mrs Fiona Murray (Church Administrator) 01732 740634
Sevenoaks	Vine Evangelical Church* 7 Lakeview Road Sevenoaks TN13 3EH	Rev Simon Duan 01732 453209
Sevenoaks	Vineyard Church* 7 Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks TN13 3QQ	Mr Tony Cornfield 01732 452062
Shipbourne with Plaxtol	St Giles (C of E) The Rectory, The Street Plaxtol Kent TN15 0QG	Rev Andrew Procter 01732 810319

*“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all people.”*

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Riverhead	St Mary* (C of E) (with St John, Dunton Green) St Mary's Vicarage, The Glebe Field, Shoreham Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 3DR	Rev Paul Francis 01732 455736
Seal	St Peter & St Paul* (C of E) The Vicarage, Church Street, Seal, Sevenoaks TN15 0AR	Rev Anne Le Bas 01732 762955
Seal Chart	St Lawrence* (C of E) St Lawrence Vicarage, Stone Street, Seal, Sevenoaks TN15 0LQ	Rev Michael Cooke 01732 761766
Sevenoaks	URC* at Christ Church and St John's Hill 78 Marlborough Crescent Sevenoaks TN13 2HR	Rev Ken Thom 01732 453405
Sevenoaks	The Drive Methodist Church* 6 The Drive, Sevenoaks TN13 3AE	Rev Peter Hills 01732 452870
Sevenoaks	St John the Baptist* (C of E) St John's Vicarage, 62 Quakers Hall Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 3TX	Fr Ivan Aquilina 01732 451710
Sevenoaks	St Luke* (C of E) St Luke's Vicarage, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1XT	Rev Mark Griffin 01732 452462
Sevenoaks	St Mary, Kippington * (C of E) The Vicarage, 59 Kippington Road, Sevenoaks TN13 2LL	Interregnum Curate: Lynette Leithead 01732 742942

### **Plea for a Chairman**

In order to continue to function, CTSD **urgently needs** a Chairman. The Chairman's role is chiefly to affirm, encourage and celebrate ecumenism, and to give direction to the Executive, who meet only 3 times a year in addition to the AGM. The Constitution provides for the Chairman to be elected for a 3 year term. Please be thinking and praying about whether this role is for you or for someone you know. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Lis Lidbetter, CTSD Secretary, on [alidbett@fish.co.uk](mailto:alidbett@fish.co.uk) or 01732 454012.

Our 2008 AGM will be chaired (as a temporary measure) by John Lane, whom many of you will already know as our CTSD Literature Project Co-ordinator, Chair of the Sevenoaks Christian Aid Committee and Secretary to the Sevenoaks URC.



### **Minutes of the Sixth Annual General Meeting held at Sevenoaks URC (St John's Hill), on Thursday 8 November 2007**

**Present:** 58 names appear on the register, from 23 churches.

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies:**

The Chairman, Michael Cooke, welcomed everyone to the meeting and received apologies from:  
John Lane (Literature Project), Neil Durling (Bessels Green Baptist Church), Dianne Jarrett (Salvation Army), Mark Hewett (Town Church), Richard Hutson (Bethel Free Christian Fellowship), John Cunningham (Church in Society) and Paul Francis (St Mary, Riverhead).

#### **2. Opening Praise and Prayers** were led by Tony Cornfield (Sevenoaks Vineyard).

#### **3. Agreement of agenda and AOB:** The agenda was agreed. There was one additional item (see 9(a) below).

#### **4. Minutes of the Fifth AGM of Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District held on 9 November 2006**

These had been circulated. The Minutes were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

#### **5. Matters arising:** There were no matters arising.

#### **6. Annual Report**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the reports would be taken as read and that all matters arising would be dealt with at 11 below.

## 7. Adoption of Accounts

The CTSD Accounts for the year to 30 September 2007 had been circulated in the Annual Report together with the Independent Examiner's report. Douglas Seal, Treasurer, reported that finances were healthy and that, once again, subscriptions to CTSD were not to be increased (town churches - £12; country churches - £8). The Independent Examiner's signed report was lodged with the Secretary. The Treasurer and Independent Examiner were thanked for all their hard work. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Martyn Berry and seconded by Valerie Ruddle, and the accounts were adopted unanimously.

## 8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The re-appointment of Mr Michael Richardson as Independent Examiner was proposed by Anne Straight, seconded by Miranda Cormack and unanimously agreed.

## 9. Election of Officers

### (a) to Churches Together in Sevenoaks & District Executive

The positions of both Chairman and Treasurer were due for election this year. The Chairman, Michael Cooke, was standing down after 6 years and Miranda Cormack expressed the gratitude of all member churches and of the Executive for all his hard work and committed leadership by handing over a small gift. There had been no nominations for a new Chairman but it was essential that someone come forward soon. Anyone prepared to take this on should speak to the Secretary. The Treasurer, Douglas Seal, offered himself for re-election and the offer was unanimously accepted with gratitude for all he did so effectively.

### (b) to Christian Aid Committee

The Treasurer to the Christian Aid Committee, Mike Smith, had moved away a few months ago and David Brunning (St Thomas of Canterbury RC Church) had stepped into the breach. The formal election of David Brunning as the new Treasurer was proposed by Sally Thompson, seconded by Ailsa Walker and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

### (c) to Sevenoaks & District Churches Group for Social Concern

The nominations of Tony Cornfield as Chairman, Miranda Cormack as Secretary, Rosemary Wakefield as Treasurer and Rita Bennett, Elaine Coupe and Vivienne Hall as Members were proposed by Peter Hills, seconded by Bob Coupe and agreed unanimously.

## 10. Membership of CTSD

CTSD had received requests for membership from the Town Church and from Bethel Free Christian Fellowship. This was welcomed and their membership was proposed by Tony Cornfield, seconded by Ailsa Walker and agreed unanimously.

## 11. Future Ecumenical Activities (and issues from Annual Report):

### (a) CTSD Events and Publicity Group

i) Valerie Ruddle explained that all churches had been contacted with a request for contributions to a new Prayer Plan. About half the churches had responded but with many similar concerns, so the ideas had been used but it

Dunton Green	St John (C of E)	see Riverhead
Eynsford	St Martin (C of E) The Rectory 6 Pollyhaugh Eynsford, DA4 0BE	Rev Neil Taylor 01322 863050
Halstead	St Margaret* (C of E) The Rectory, Church Road, Halstead, Sevenoaks TN14 7HQ	Rev John Benson 01959 532133
Ide Hill	see Sundridge	
Ightham	St Peter (Cof E)* The Rectory, Bates Hill Ightham TN15 9BG	Rev Stephen Jones 01732 886827
Kemsing	St Mary (C of E) The Vicarage, High Street, Kemsing, Sevenoaks TN15 6PY	Rev Nigel Ashworth 01732 761351
Knockholt	St Katherine* (C of E) The Rectory, Church Road, Halstead, Sevenoaks TN14 7HQ	Rev John Benson 01959 532133
Otford	Methodist Church* 18 The Old Walk, Otford TN14 5PP	Rev Kath Pawlett 01959 522196
Otford	St Bartholomew* (C of E) The Vicarage, The Green, Otford TN14 5PD	Rev Richard Worssam 01959 523185
Platt	St Mary (C of E) The Vicarage, Comp Lane, Platt, Sevenoaks TN15 8NR	Rev Liz Walker 01732 885482
Plaxtol	see Shipbourne	

## **Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District**

### **List of Members**

(email addresses, websites and local maps are given on our website: [www.ctsd.org.uk](http://www.ctsd.org.uk))

\* signifies that, as of October 2008 these are the churches which have returned a signed Declaration and paid an annual subscription.

Other churches listed are those which have paid an annual subscription or have become members during the course of the year.

Names given are those provided by the churches as the CTSD contact. Where none has been provided, the name of the Incumbent or the Church Secretary has been used.

Bessels Green	Bessels Green Baptist Church* Bessels Green Baptist Church Office, Bessels Green, Sevenoaks TN13 2PS	Rev Neil Durling 01732 454921
Borough Green	Church of the Good Shepherd (C of E) The Vicarage, 24 Maidstone Road, Borough Green, TN15 8BD	Rev Tony Powell 01732 882447
Brasted	St Martin (C of E) The Rectory, Brasted Westerham TN16 1NR	Rev Penny Stephens 01959 565829
Chevening	St Botolph* (C of E) The Rectory, Homedean Road, Chipstead TN13 2RU	Rev Chris Johnson 01732 453555
Dunton Green	Bethel Free Christian Fellowship 169 London Road Dunton Green TN13 2TA	David Kelsey 01732 462409
Dunton Green	Free Church* 12 The Beeches, Chatham, ME5 0NS	Pastor Kenneth Kemp 01634 666346

had proved impossible to include prayers specific to each church. 8 copies of the new Prayer Plan had been provided for each church but more could be supplied on request or churches could make their own copies. Valerie added a plea that churches consider using the Plan on a Sunday and encouraging their church family to use it daily. It would also be available on the CTSD website.

- ii) The main united service in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity would be on Sunday 20 January at Christ Church, and Valerie had letters to distribute to each church regarding the choir for that event. The speaker would be Revd. Tony Cross, a former regional minister for the Kent Baptist Association and former Chair of Churches Together in Kent. Other events in the Week of Prayer would be Taizé Worship at St Lawrence, Seal Chart, at 7pm on Saturday 19 January and Lunchtime Prayers at Vine Evangelical Church at 12.30pm on Wednesday 23 January.
- iii) There would be a musical event on Good Friday evening 21 March.
- iv) Mary Cox introduced herself as the new Press Officer for CTSD. She expressed thanks to Dianne Jarrett who would be laying a wreath at the Vine Memorial Service on 11 November on behalf of all CTSD member churches; explained that the Festival of Carols was unable to take place in 2007; encouraged the meeting to publicise and support the Ecumenical Lent House Groups (booking forms would be available immediately after Christmas) and thanked the organisers, Pat Harman, Dianne Jarrett and Isobel White; thanked Francis Chappells for allowing the continued use of their window for Christian displays; reported that the Sevenoaks Chronicle had agreed to include a short article on the window displays thrice yearly; and appealed for new members.

#### **b) Sevenoaks Churches Literature Project**

John Lane had provided the Secretary with an update report, which was circulated. Copies are available on request. For 2008, it was proposed that CTSD support a project in Ghana: 'Women's empowerment for sustainable poverty reduction'. The Feed the Minds local partner in Ghana was working to empower disadvantaged women and young people through education and training. Much of Feed the Minds' literacy material was Bible based and provided an opportunity for spreading the gospel at the same time as helping the marginalised out of acute poverty. The suggested project for 2008 was proposed by Martyn Berry, seconded by Miranda Cormack and unanimously carried.

#### **c) Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust**

Chairman of SAYT, Rob Marsh, thanked all those who had attended their Annual Open Meeting and was pleased to report a successful year, with quality youth work provided week in and week out in all weathers. SAYT had received positive feedback from youngsters, from other agencies and from the schools in which they were involved. There had been a good level of funding from other agencies. The key was to empower and invest in young people. Sue Baldwin, as Communications Officer, had been doing an excellent job. Rob Marsh also expressed gratitude to the youth workers, Jane Down (who

had recently left) and Judith Cork, to Penny Boshoff, their line manager, Jean-Pierre Darque, the Treasurer, and the rest of the fund-raising team. SAYT were recruiting a youth worker and looking for a Minutes Secretary and would like to have a "Champion" in every local church. The support of the churches through prayer and finance was the foundation of SAYT. A recent Sencio golf day had raised over £2,000 for SAYT and helped to raise its profile in the community. Rob Marsh lodged a report with the Secretary and copies can be obtained on request.

**d) Christian Aid**

2007 had been a bumper year for the local Christian Aid Committee: they were pleased to report that the amount raised in Christian Aid Week was up 20% on last year and they had been able to send almost £37,000 to Christian Aid over the whole year. The money would be used to respond to disasters such as hurricanes and floods and to target people who were in particular need. Christian Aid was also campaigning to change the conditions that cause poverty and was particularly focussing on the Climate Change Bill currently. There had been a number of changes in the local committee, not least the change of Treasurer. The Committee expressed its enormous debt of gratitude to Mike Smith for 9 years' hard work and welcomed the new Treasurer, David Brunning. Two dates for diaries were the annual frugal lunch on Sunday 24 February and a coffee morning with silent auction on Saturday 15 March. Christian Aid provided Christmas resources to help us focus on Jesus' love for the poor, weak and broken, and those at the meeting were encouraged to take a Christmas star to use as a card or prayer prompt and to consider using the resources or dedicating the collection at one of their Christmas services to Christian Aid. The Committee invited everyone to take part in the carol singing at the Christmas lights switch-on in Sevenoaks on the evening of Friday 30 November. The Present Aid catalogue provided opportunities to make a lasting difference to the lives of people in the developing world this Christmas. The presentation concluded with the singing of a light-hearted carol about the benefits of Present Aid.

**Action: All**

**e) Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service**

Maureen King, Director of Counselling, reported that, thanks to God's guidance and the generosity of individuals and churches, SCCS were making good use of their extended premises and were about to expand the team. They had written to local churches, seeking a commitment to support the SCCS for the next 5 years, and were delighted with the support they received. The statistics showed that SCCS clients range from 8 to 80+ in age, with most in the 30-50 year old bracket. Many are recommended to SCCS by a doctor or psychiatrist, some by a church and others come from personal recommendation or have found SCCS through the web. In 2007, SCCS started a new initiative, open training days, as a way to care for counsellors and provide them with support. The workshops were open to all and topics covered had been 'exploring Christian community' and 'stress'. Any suggestions for further topics would be gratefully received.

**f) Sevenoaks & District Churches Group for Social Concern**

The finances of the Group had been made available to the Meeting and included the finances for the Befrienders. Chairman, Tony Cornfield, thanked those who had contributed and asked for continued support. He suggested that anyone

town at the height of the 'summer', held on Chipstead Common after every other venue fell through. Hundreds of people enjoyed the activities and entertainment provided, and many heard the gospel as well.

The following week, VEC hosted an interview evening with three Christian international rugby players, with over 100 people attending to hear about their faith.

The rest of the summer was quieter, but in September St Nick's hosted a professionally-run 'It's a Knockout' day at Lady Boswell's School and BGBC held another Quiz Night. A children's party has been organised as an alternative to Halloween at the Town Church, and there will be a number of events tying in with Christmas celebrations from the end of November. For more information on any of these events, past or future, please email [hopein7oaks@gmail.com](mailto:hopein7oaks@gmail.com).

***Matt Young - Hope '08***



and the name of the group. Change may follow later in the year.

Revd Ken Thom has taken over as Chairman of the group.

***Mrs Jennifer Jackson - Secretary***

### **Seeds - Hope '08**

Hope '08 is the national initiative that has seen local churches and organisations all over the country joining together with each other to help make the Good News known. In Sevenoaks, planning began in September 2007 with many churches committing to working together like never before.

Next was a well attended and enjoyable Quiz Night run by BGBC at a local pub, with an explanation of what Hope '08 was. For Easter, BGBC invited Lance Pierson to present his 'Mark's Gospel' performance. Another high point came in May, with a 24/7 prayer week hosted by VEC.

At the end of May, Tony Cornfield helped organise the 5<sup>th</sup> Community Action Day in and around Sevenoaks, with various projects undertaken both indoors and outside, in spite of the rain! As always, many people were amazed at being shown such kindness.

Early in June, on a beautifully sunny day, an event took place that was postponed from Easter Monday due to snow! It was the Dunton Green Fun Day, put on by members of BGBC, St Mary's Riverhead and Bethel Free Church, providing all sorts of fun activities for around 400 local people. It was a real milestone in relations with local families and groups, and will hopefully be repeated annually.

Another event that was extremely well received was the Hope Football Tournament, run by BGBC Football Club at Hollybush. Nearly 100 men took part, and nearly as many spectators again enjoyed food as they listened to a brief message by Neil Durling.

The Mill Lane Gospel Choir performed at the Stag to a capacity audience as part of the Sevenoaks Festival, singing songs of hope to many who would never have heard such things before.

The biggest event of the year was Re:Act, a fun-day for the whole

wanting to receive a copy of the Compassion Newsletter should contact him or look on the CTSD website. The Befriending Scheme had received 16 referrals this year and some befrienders were still working with people who had been referred to them at the inception of the scheme. Looking to the future, the Group was investigating ways to become involved in supporting the growing debt crisis in this country. A significant amount of training would be required for those wishing to become a debt counsellor/befriender. Tonbridge Churches Together had a team of 40 (20 counsellors and 20 in support/admin roles) each working 1 Monday and 1 Thursday evening a month. They would be happy to assist with setting up a similar scheme in Sevenoaks and would be at an open meeting which the Group planned to hold in the New Year for all in the Sevenoaks area who might be interested. If the scheme were to get off the ground it would need a champion, someone with a heart for this issue and time to give to it. Tony asked everyone to pray and think about this.

**Action: All**

#### **g) North West Fellowship**

Peter Hills reported that the Fellowship would be holding its customary advent carol service, Lent frugal lunches and Good Friday Walk of Witness. In 2008, the Pilgrimage would be to Guildford Cathedral. The fellowship might expand in 2008 and the name may change. Ken Thom would be taking the chair in January.

#### **h) Seeds**

Seeds comprised a number of churches and SAYT, who worked together on joint outreach and evangelistic events. Stephen Scott distributed leaflets and explained that Hope '08 (which is all about Christians reaching out to the community) would be the main focus for Seeds next year; he encouraged everyone to come to an open meeting on Hope '08 at Bessels Green Baptist Church at 10am on Monday 12 November.

**Action: All**

#### **12. Question Time with Panel**

The Panel (chaired by Michael Cooke) comprised:

Merle Bigden (Head of Community Development, Sevenoaks District Council)

Michael Fallon MP

Rob Marsh (SAYT and West Kent YMCA)

Sue Revell (Mental Health Service)

Gillian Shepherd-Coates (Age Concern).

The panel considered the following questions:

1a) What is the most important aspect that you think is going well in our community?

1b) And what is the area most needing improvement?

2) What should the Christian community be doing locally – or not be doing?

#### **1a) What is the most important aspect that you think is going well in our community?**

**Gillian Shepherd-Coates** felt that there had been much improvement in joint working and joined up thinking and commented that there were some significant challenges ahead with the predicted large increase in numbers of people over 65 years of age in Kent.

**Merle Bigden** pointed to the reduction in crime rate and attributed this in part to some amazing local volunteer projects and new initiatives.

**Michael Fallon** wanted to acknowledge the sheer scale of volunteering that goes on

across the area with so many organisations like CAB, the Volunteer Bureau etc. etc. **Sue Revell** agreed and reminded the Meeting that it was only a year or so ago that Sevenoaks had been found in a survey to be the happiest town in Britain and that this had been attributed to the level of citizenship and involvement in volunteer projects.

**Rob Marsh** highlighted the empowerment of young people and cited the example of SAYT having recently involved the young people with whom they work in the process of selecting a new youth worker.

**Penny Stephens**, from the floor, added that the churches were strong in the Sevenoaks area.

#### **1b) And what is the area most needing improvement?**

**Michael Fallon** commented that he heard frequent complaints about the shortage of facilities for young people, particularly in the villages of our area.

**Merle Bigden** challenged the Meeting to reconsider attitudes to young people and related a recent incident in which a group of youngsters (whom some would have described as “jobs”) had helped her to change a flat tyre when others had simply walked past without offering to assist. Sevenoaks District Council has developed a multi-agency youth action plan with services provided by a whole range of people and would be delighted to work with churches in any village to help young people.

**Gillian Shepherd-Coates** pointed out that national funders thought of Sevenoaks as a wealthy area so that it often missed out on grants. More support was needed from statutory funders as it was very difficult to obtain financial support for information and advice services: for example, CAB might be facing a cut.

**Sue Revell** felt that people with mental health disabilities or learning difficulties were not welcome in the community and that more thought should be given to finding ways to include them.

**Rob Marsh** suggested that the Meeting consider the “hoodie challenge”. Did the Meeting appreciate that young people were more likely to be the target of crime than older folk and that, as a consequence, they felt under threat? That was why many young people wore hoodies and congregated in groups – it helped them to feel safer. We should be looking deeper and seeing their potential. As Christians, we should want to welcome the outsider, the alien, the asylum seeker.

**From the floor**, the issues of public transport, traffic congestion and pollution were raised. There was concern at the scrapping of some local bus services, which further isolated the elderly. Sevenoaks District Council had recently held a meeting about the future of local transport at which these issues had been raised. All of us were the problem and all of us were the solution: public transport would not be viable if it were insufficiently used. It was observed that many changes in our local community were the result of choices we all made. For example, the loss of village shops and the alteration to Sevenoaks Town Centre over recent years had been caused largely by the prevalent choice to patronise large supermarkets. **Sue Revell** felt that a change of attitude was beginning to appear and that some people were trying to live more sustainable lives, although this needed to become more widespread.

#### **2. What should the Christian community be doing locally – or not be doing?**

**Sue Revell** asked the churches to consider ways of providing those with learning difficulties, the long-term unemployed, ill or disabled with supported employment. There were many who simply needed a little help to get on the first rung of the ladder

We trust that the **Compassion Newsletter** is keeping everyone informed and up to date. If you would like to print additional copies for your fellowship, the Newsletter can be emailed in pdf format, on request from [Tony@7oaksvineyard.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:Tony@7oaksvineyard.freeserve.co.uk)

**Tony Cornfield - Chairman (Sevenoaks Vineyard Church)**

**Miranda Cormack - Secretary (St Mary's Riverhead)**

**Rosemary Wakefield - Treasurer (Sevenoaks URC)**

**Elaine Coupe - Executive (Drive Methodist)**

**Penny Walsh - Executive (Vine Evangelical Church)**

**Rita Bennett - Executive (St Mary Kippington)**

**Simon Dawes - Executive (Bessels Green Baptist)**

### **North West Fellowship of Churches Annual Report 2007-2008**

Throughout the year the members of the Fellowship took part in the customary quarterly services and combined August evening services, which in 2007 were held at St Luke's and in 2008 at The Drive.

In October 2007, the Autumn Service was at St Mary, Kippington and on 19th October 2008 at St Mary, Riverhead.

The Advent Carol Service was held at The Drive on 2nd December 2007 and was very enjoyable. The combined choir sang with enthusiasm as usual. The venue for 2008 will be at St Mary, Kippington.

In Lent, the Midweek Meeting with frugal lunch was held in five of the churches of the fellowship. The money raised in 2008, £300, was donated to Demelza House Children's Hospice.

The Silent Witness Walk on Good Friday has become a regular feature and is well supported. It concludes with a short time of prayer and singing at Bligh's Meadow.

Our pilgrimage in 2007 was to The Friars at Aylesford. It was a big success, with 52 pilgrims attending for a guided tour of the Priory, an ecumenical service and time for quiet reflection and/or shopping. In 2008 we undertook a very popular pilgrimage to Guildford Cathedral on 13<sup>th</sup> August.

Discussions are taking place regarding the membership of the NWF

This October is the 3rd Anniversary of **Befrienders**, our community befriending scheme. During this time, people from many of our churches have been trained and released to support individuals who have been referred by Social, Medical and Caring professionals. Each year additional people have come forward from our churches to strengthen the team. Coordination, training and ongoing support have been generously provided without charge by members of local churches. The funds required for insurance, telephone calls, police checks, travel expenses etc. have all come in ahead of need, from local churches . . . all so that vulnerable hurting people, outside the church, could experience God's love and kindness through His people.

This year has seen all the groundwork being done to establish a Churches Together **Debt Advice Centre** here in Sevenoaks. After confirming through discussions with the CAB last year that there was increasing need for local debt counselling & support, discussions were held with the Tonbridge Debt Advice Centre (TDAC) based at Tonbridge Baptist Church about working together to extend their successful model in order to establish a SDAC here. Graeme Connell the TDAC coordinator led an inspiring initial discussion in April to demonstrate the need and show what could be done with Godly compassion and comprehensive training. As a result, 12 people from Sevenoaks churches went to Tonbridge to see and hear first hand, what would be involved in taking the concept forward here. During the summer, leadership, coordination and suitable premises have been agreed upon to take this forward with an initial group of 10 people committing to training from October through to December with the potential of launching SDAC towards the end of January.

From the church's involvement in the local Domestic Abuse Working Group, the need for a local **Child Contact Centre** was identified for children who lose access to one of their parents through family breakdown or divorce. Having highlighted this need in the Compassion Newsletter, individuals and a church have seen the difference that a team of volunteers could make and a meeting of interested people was held at the end of September, with a view to taking this initiative forward to help children who are the hidden victims of family breakdown.

and begin to contribute to society. One suggestion under consideration was the possibility of a Community Café serving locally grown food to local people. The produce could come from an allotment and would give employment to those growing, preparing and serving the food and in the administration of the project. To provide such supported employment would also create lots of volunteering opportunities.

**Chris Walker** added that he was involved in a similar project in Sheerness and that maybe the time was right to try it in Sevenoaks.

**Michael Fallon** observed that many of the one-time problem areas of the world (e.g. China and India) were seeing significant economic growth but that the one place that was certain to be an ongoing problem for generations to come was Africa. He was aware that many churches supported projects in Africa, but wondered whether there was scope for twinning Sevenoaks with a town in Africa to provide a formal link, to which Churches could contribute, in the same way that Sevenoaks is twinned with Rheinbach in Germany and Pontoise in France.

**Gillian Shepherd-Coates** commended Sue Revell's suggestion and added that a 'one-stop shop' where people could go for advice and information and to break their social isolation would be very valuable to the community, but would also need volunteers.

**Merle Bigden** took the opportunity to encourage the churches to move out into the community but stressed the need to be professional in every aspect of outreach and recommended the resources provided by Faithworks. She also highlighted the problem of hidden discrimination. Because Sevenoaks was a predominantly white area and ethnic minorities were small in number, they sometimes felt completely excluded from the community despite wanting to contribute and to belong.

**Rob Marsh** asked the churches to consider supporting 3 ventures:

(1) Hope '08; (2) a Community Café, which would change the attitudes of the community and give all those involved greater self-esteem; and (3) a project called "Inner Journey" where young people who have been homeless were given a chance to go to a YMCA in Gambia, Africa. One such trip had already been undertaken and the benefits to the young people had been enormous.

To encourage those considering the challenges of undertaking anything new, **Stephen Scott**, from the floor, explained that he had recently been involved in an initiative called "Slum Survivor" where young people had camped out in a slum constructed in Vine Gardens and that many perceived difficulties, such as obtaining permission from Sevenoaks Town Council and the Vine Cricket Club, had not materialised and that there had been a great deal of support.

Michael Cooke thanked the Panel for their contributions to the discussion.

### **13. Date of next AGM**

The next AGM would be on the evening of **Thursday 13 November 2008** at a venue to be agreed.

**14. Closing Devotions:** The outgoing Chairman closed the meeting in prayer.

**Churches Together in Sevenoaks & District**  
**Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 30 September 2008**

2007			2008	
£	£		£	£
340		Subscriptions*		340
175		Deposit Interest		194
<u>515</u>				<u>534</u>
		<u>Deduct:</u>		
	91	General Expenses, Postage, Stationery	54	
	144	Churches Together in Kent Subscription	144	
	90	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Expenses	0	
<u>325</u>				<u>198</u>
190		Surplus for the Year		<u>336</u>
=====				=====

**Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2008**

GENERAL FUND:				
1205		Balance at 1 October 2007	1395	
190		Surplus for the year	336	
<u>1395</u>				<u>1731</u>
PUBLICITY FUND				
2069		Balance at 1 October 2007	1847	
350		Contributions from Churches	350	
<u>2419</u>			<u>2197</u>	
(572)		Less: Costs incurred	(413)	
<u>1847</u>				<u>1784</u>
CTSD LITERATURE FUND				
1602		Balance at 1 October 2007	938	
2298		Contributions from Churches	1879	
<u>3900</u>			<u>2817</u>	
(2962)		Less: Paid to Feed the Minds re. 2007	(1913)	
<u>938</u>				<u>904</u>
FESTIVAL OF CAROLS FUND				
396		Balance at 1 October 2007	396	
<u>4576</u>				<u>4815</u>
=====				=====
4576		Represented by: Balances at Bank	4815	
=====				=====

**NOTES:** \*Subscriptions in 2008 were as follows: town churches £12, country churches £8  
It is proposed that subscriptions remain at this level for 2009.

**D. C. Seal - Treasurer**

alongside hurting people.

I remain amazed by God's grace and continuing provision for our needs and for the needs of our clients. I hope you share a sense of partnership with us as we seek to express our Christian faith through the work we do.

**Maureen King - Director of Counselling**



**Compassion**

**The Sevenoaks Churches  
Group for Social Concern**

What an excellent year 2008 has been, full of hope and expectation!

**Hope 2008** has helped focus the churches on unity and working together, to be and do all that Jesus Christ asks of His body, in its community. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, encouraging them to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. It has been our privilege to participate in this goal, by envisioning, leading and supporting several initiatives under the umbrella of SCGSC.

This year saw the 5th and final (for the time being) Churches Together **Community Action Day** on the last bank holiday in May. The aim over the last 5 years has been two fold:

- 1) To serve our community - individuals, families and groups - by demonstrating God's love and kindness in practical ways . . . gardening, decorating, rubbish clearing and the like.
- 2) To encourage local churches to make this kind of compassionate outreach a part of their own ministry in their neighbourhood. We are confident, going forward, that more practical compassion will be happening during the year than could be organised on a one-off bank holiday.

publicising Christian Aid events.

**John Lane** (Chairman)  
**Elsbeth Cooke** (Secretary)  
**David Brunning** (Treasurer)



**Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service**  
**2007 - 2008**

As anticipated in my report last year, the staff team has increased in number and continues to grow as we seek to utilise to the full the additional space provided by our building expansion at The Bridge. Prayer and financial support coming mainly from within our community and local churches, has made it possible for some of our existing counsellors to work more sessions, and for us to engage a few more therapists to strengthen the Team. I am delighted that Andrew Procter, Pam Coling and Kathy Reed have joined SCCS. We are now numbering fifteen counsellors including a counsellor in training and in a typical week see in the region of a hundred clients.

A new and exciting development for SCCS is the plan to offer Child and Family Therapy later this year. There is undoubtedly a real need for this specialist service in our community as there is very little Child and Family Therapy available in the Sevenoaks area. Catherine Rodger, a therapist with much experience in the field, has joined the Team and will be working one day a week for SCCS making what we believe to be a valuable contribution to meeting the needs of many children and their families in our district.

Other aspects of our work during the past year have included supporting independent therapists, pastoral workers and others in their work, through consultation, supervision and our varied training programme.

Our Open Training in 2008 was held on July 19<sup>th</sup> – the topic being ‘Helping in a Counselling Way’. Ideas for future workshops welcome!

Instead of holding our Annual Open Meeting in May, it was decided to do something a bit different in 2008. We met with supporters at St Nicholas Church Undercroft, for a three course evening meal followed by an opportunity to hear Godfrey Featherstone (Kenward Trust) who spoke in a most entertaining way about coming

**Independent Examiner’s Report**

The report on the funds of Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District for the year ended 30th September 2008 is set out on the preceding page and is in respect of an examination carried out under section 43 of the Charities Act 1993.

**Respective responsibilities of members and examiner**

As members of Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District you are responsible for maintaining records and the preparation of the appropriate accounts. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 1995.

**Basis of Examiner’s Report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. This examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Treasurer and a comparison of the accounts with those records. The procedures undertaken do not provide evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

**Independent Examiner’s Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**M J Richardson**  
Chartered Accountant  
19 Mount Harry Road,  
Sevenoaks  
20 October 2008

## The Events And Publicity Group

### EVENTS

**The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2008** marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the first octave in New York. The main United Service held at Christ Church URC was well attended. The choir comprised 45 singers drawn from 10 churches. Tony Cross was the speaker. The Lunchtime Prayers at the Vine Evangelical Church was much enjoyed, though numbers attending were small. St. Luke's will host the main event in 2009, when Bruce Kent will be the speaker.

**Ecumenical Lent House Groups:** Attendance this year surpassed all expectations. Over 100 hundred people representing 15 churches within the district joined the 12 House Groups. The York Course studies based on The Lord's Prayer were very well received. For 2009 a further York Course study series has been selected on the theme "... Faith, Hope and Love" from 1 Corinthians 13. Familiar to most Christians, and many non-Christians, Paul's writing is certain to encourage many more people to participate next year.

**Good Friday Music:** The Drive Methodist Church was the setting for "Christ's Seven sayings on the Cross", a text by Fred Pratt Green. An ecumenical choir of 40 voices from 8 churches also sang a variety of Passion Music. The evening was led by Dianne Jarrett, Miranda Cormack and Denis Bestwick.

**Remembrance Sunday 2008:** Dianne Jarrett represented Churches Together in laying a wreath at the Vine War Memorial. We are grateful to Peter Hills for agreeing to lead the prayers at the Act of Worship.

**Festival of Carols 2008:** Unfortunately, once again, it has not been possible to arrange a Festival of Carols this year. It is hoped that the future of the Stag will soon be assured and 2009 will see the return of this popular Festival.

### PUBLICITY

Francis Chappell & Sons have kindly continued to allow the display highlighting Christian Festivals in their window, for which we extend our grateful thanks. The usual Christmas greeting from the churches appeared in the Chronicle in 2007. Sadly, local

## Sevenoaks and District Christian Aid Committee Report

2007 – 2008

Christian Aid's activities in the Sevenoaks area have continued to pursue the dual aims of fund-raising for Christian's Aid's worldwide development work, and of raising awareness of developmental issues.

### **Fund Raising**

The main fund-raising effort is Christian Aid Week with a house-to-house collection and a collection at Sevenoaks station. The amount raised this year was over £29,000 - an excellent total although down on last year's record. (The launch of a Disaster Emergency Appeal shortly before Christian Aid Week this year may have been a contributory factor, as people had recently given to that). A most successful and enjoyable Coffee Morning with a Silent Auction, a stall at Sevenoaks Charity Fair and more recently a Cake Stall at Chipstead Village Fête added to the total amount raised during the year.

In the year ended 31st March 2008, over £31,500 was sent to Christian Aid. Full accounting details have been submitted separately to Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District.

### **Raising Awareness**

In addition to our presence at public events such as Carol Singing at the Christmas Lights Switch-on, we held our annual Frugal Lunch during Lent, when we had a very interesting and informative presentation from Rob Cunningham, Christian Aid programme manager for South Africa and Lesotho. We had also hoped to have a tree-planting event to highlight climate change issues, but practical difficulties over finding a permitted public location meant that this will not now take place.

### **Thank you**

Finally we would like to thank all those who supported Christian Aid during the year, local churches who not only raised a considerable sum for Christian Aid directly, but allowed us to use their premises for Christian Aid events without charge, and Rosemary Cracknell, the churches' correspondent for Sevenoaks Chronicle for regularly

previously. Also in connection with Hope 08, the “Re-Act” family fun day on August 2nd was eventually held on Chipstead Common, the final venue after several previous possibilities fell through. This inevitably required hours of work from Judith as the main organiser. The rain threatened but held off and, according to the Sevenoaks Chronicle, the event was enjoyed by more than 1,000 people. There were various activities, some energetic, some more artistic, and an outdoor worship service at the end of the day.

The Annual Open Meeting was held at Vine Evangelical Church on 11<sup>th</sup> June. Apart from the usual business matters, it focussed on the work done by the volunteers and provided a good opportunity for ‘networking’.

Judith spoke at St Nicholas Tuesday Fellowship in the Autumn of 2007 and at a Prayer Breakfast there in early 2008. She also spoke at a service at VEC in the Summer. Such opportunities raise the profile of SAYT, and encourage support through both funding and prayer.

SAYT continues to participate in ongoing discussions about setting up a Sevenoaks Community Café. There are also regular links with KCC Youth Service.

The Sevenoaks Chronicle for 19<sup>th</sup> June had a very positive full page article on Judith and the work of the Trust with a healthy emphasis on its Christian foundation.

We have been fortunate to receive repeat grant funding from both the District and Town Councils, but continue to be grateful to the local churches and individuals whose generous gifts underpin our financial stability and enable our work to continue.

The Trustees and other Officers are able to continue their service, with the exception of Jean-Pierre Darque, our Treasurer, who has stood down. We are delighted to report that Chris Stiven has “volunteered” to succeed him. Chris Walker is delighted that I (another “volunteer”!) succeeded him as Secretary to the Trustees during the year. He remains a Trustee.

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Sue Baldwin - [saytnews@sayt.org.uk](mailto:saytnews@sayt.org.uk)

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**Caroline Berry**

*Secretary to the Trustees: [secretary@sayt.org.uk](mailto:secretary@sayt.org.uk)*

newspapers and magazines which have been approached in recent months and asked to run a short item on CTSD have not yet included any of the articles submitted to them. All we can do is to keep knocking on doors until we get an answer!

#### MEMBERSHIP

The Events & Publicity Group would like to see 2 or 3 new members join us. If you can help with organising or publicising an event; if you have a particular skill such as music, writing or promotion; or would like to represent your church, please contact any member of the group – we look forward to welcoming you!

**Miranda Cormack, St Mary Riverhead**

**Mary Cox, Sevenoaks URC**

**Pat Harman, St Thomas RC**

**Dianne Jarrett, Salvation Army**

**Lis Lidbetter, St Nicholas**

**Valerie Ruddle, The Drive Methodist**



#### Ecumenical Lent House Groups 2008

*What do you do in a Lent Group? – A question we are sometimes asked.*

Put simply: It is a group of local CTSD Christians from different denominations

who meet. They will already have received the York Course booklet which follows a theme; this year “The Lord’s Prayer”. People take it in turns, if they wish, to lead the evening, which lasts about two hours. There are themed Bible readings by way of preparation, as well as the weekly reflections on the theme in the booklet. This all leads to discussion. Ideas and questions are in the booklet as prompts if they are needed.

As the weeks go by conversation becomes deeper, and sharing more meaningful as the theme takes root. Trust grows and emphases shift. There is a tradition in the Church called “spiritual conversation”, and that, at heart, is what happens as the weeks pass. True conversation seems to need listening, dialogue and perception and this is evident in these groups. This takes place in an atmosphere of ecumenical fellowship.

More and more local Churches and denominations are taking part in this form of fellowship; trying to follow Christ’s prayer: “that they

all may be one ----“.

Key features are the commitment of individuals, the stepping out into the unknown (see Matt 14 v.28 - 33 ) and generosity of spirit. This year over one hundred people registered, and we formed 12 groups. This adds up to 120 hours over five weeks of “spiritual conversation”. In a busy, secular world this is good news.

And practicalities are important too: the hospitality of the host house, the lift givers and the leaders who include everyone who wishes to say something. All these people contribute week by week, to create the right atmosphere for “time out”.

#### A picture of perfect harmony?

Yes, mostly, but that doesn't mean we all agree on everything. But what strikes us again and again is much underlying agreement, our need of Christ, His Spirit, a prayer life, and increasingly, our need of each other. Often what seems to separate is a difference of emphasis rather than doctrine.

Listening quietly to the importance placed by another Church on a certain aspect of faith can enlighten one's own faith. Tangible and more intangible gifts and benefits emerge from the groups.

So, we hope these groups will increase in number and spread into other Churches. We take seriously feedback from groups, and there will be a few changes next year.

The 2009 theme “These three: Faith, Hope and Love --- “, based on 1 Cor. 13, will be a rich source of “spiritual conversation”. We look forward to planning for this and request your prayers and support when the time comes after Christmas to advertise the Course.

***P.Harman, D.Jarrett and I.White - Organisers***

#### **CTSD Literature Project**

The project that we supported for 2007 was for the provision of Christian material to be used in School Assemblies. This was, of course, through the offices of Feed the Minds. I am able to report that, thanks to the generosity of a number of member churches as well as some individuals, we reached a total figure of £2,948.89 which, in a year that had a number of appeals following disasters, was very creditable. Feed the Minds have also asked me through this report to thank all those who have so kindly produced such a very good result.

For 2008 it was decided to support Feed the Minds, in conjunction with Our Lady of Mercy Community, in their efforts towards the empowerment of disadvantaged women and young people in the Kassena District of Ghana through vocational training.

I am pleased to report that to date we have received £1,327 in total, although on a forward projection it would appear that we are likely to fall short of last year's total. I appreciate that as time goes by there are constantly increasing requests and appeals, but I truly hope and pray that this project will strike a chord with all who read the report. Meanwhile may I record the thanks of Feed the Minds and Our Lady of Mercy Community, as well as my own, to those who have been able to give so generously thus far.

***John Lane - Project Co-ordinator  
September 2008***

#### **SAYT - Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust 2008**

We are very grateful to Judith for holding the fort for almost a year following Jane's departure. We are delighted to announce the appointment of Phil Taylor as Jane's successor. He joined us in July and, as with Jane, will spend half his time attached to St Mary's Church Kemsing and half his time on detached work for SAYT.

We were fortunate to have a CYM student, Gavin Hicks, working on the Greatness estate with us. He was a great asset, but has now completed his placement.

Judith continues to help at Wildernesse School with the ASDAN group. She and David Garrett took some assemblies in the Summer term, and a bereavement course is planned for the Autumn term. The small Christian Union at Bradbourne School continues to meet in a relaxed way, looking at 'Encountering Jesus', and the Lord's Prayer.

Detached sessions at Greatness have been greatly helped by having 5 or 6 volunteer leaders helping on a regular basis. There have been fishing trips and football visits from Charlton Athletic. Seven young people went to Halls Green in February and had an excellent time.

More volunteers were available in Kemsing enabling continuing involvement with young people there during the summer months.

Judith undertook much of the organisation of the SEEDS Hope 08 Prayer Week which was supported by more local churches than