



# CHURCHES TOGETHER IN KENT

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## Summary/Issues

- 1-7 **What is Churches Together in Kent, and what does it do?**
- 8 **What changes should be made?**

## Some Notes about Churches Together in Kent (CTKent)

### 1. Who we are

Our membership is:-

(a) 8 of the largest Christian groupings in 'greater' Kent (see 2 below):-

- ◆ The South Eastern **Baptist** Association
- ◆ Two of the **Church of England's** dioceses (Rochester and Canterbury)
- ◆ The Society of Friends (**Quakers**; their East Kent Meeting; W Kent is associate)
- ◆ The South East District of the **Methodist Church**
- ◆ The **Roman Catholic Church's** Archdiocese of Southwark
- ◆ The South East Division of the **Salvation Army**
- ◆ The Southern Province of the **United Reformed Church** (URC)

Note: ~90% of our finance comes from these 8 denominational groupings

(b) **Local Churches Together Groups** (c.f. **Churches Together in Sidcup**) ....

Note ~10% of our finance comes from such local Churches Together groups

Note: There are many other (generally very much smaller) Christian groups in Kent, including Orthodox, New Life, Pentecostal, "House churches", many of which will be members of their local Churches Together Group. See Section 8!

(c) We are **one of 40 approx county-sized "Intermediate" Bodies**, as set up by Churches Together in England - i.e. *intermediate* between CTE and local Churches Together groups

### 2. The Area we cover ("Kent, before the GLC")

- The County of Kent
- The London Boroughs of Bexley and Bromley
- The Medway Unitary Authority

### **3. Our Mission Statement (Working Draft)**

To encourage and enable all the churches within greater Kent to witness together and share together in God's mission.

### **4. Our Main Objectives**

- To help fulfil Jesus Christ's prayer that all Christians will be visibly united
- To be a central point of contact between the churches and "county"-wide bodies like Police, Education, Kent Partnership(s), Media, ....

Some specific examples are:-

- To promote collaboration between the different Christian traditions within our area
- To sponsor and support approx 35 "Local Ecumenical Partnerships" – those partnerships where Christians have contracted or covenanted to work together
  - Advice on finance;
  - Advice and help on appointment of ministers
  - Reviews of LEPs
  - Funerals of LEPs
  - Ecumenical funding for specific appointments (e.g. Ashford)
- To sponsor and support other less formal areas of ecumenical collaboration (approx. 40 Councils of Churches, or local Churches Together Groups)
  - There are two such groups in Kent considering Covenanted relationships
- To act as a two-way conduit of information and advice between such local collaboration and the national organisation (Churches Together in England – whose members are 28 nationally-organised churches)
- To disseminate news, advice and good practice, e.g.
  - questions on insurance;
  - local contacts
- To respond to issues of social concern where they are more than local, e.g.
  - Asylum Seekers/Detention
  - Casinos
  - Engaging with interfaith groups (e.g. yesterday's Observatory Meeting)
  - Rural Issues (e.g. Kent Rural Plan; Closure of Post Offices, ....)
- Arranging Occasional Forums on theological issues
  - (NB this has not happened for some years)

*And see later list!*

## **5. How we currently do our work**

### **1. Full Council**

Representatives from each of the 8 Christian groupings meet one or two times each year in Full Council to confer (and occasionally decide) on better ways of meeting our objectives.

This Council is also a platform for sharing what is happening in our denominations.

### **2. A Standing Committee**

drawn from the above meets in between approximately 4 times a year to progress certain of the business.

---> Meetings between Church Leaders

### **3. Through Ecumenical Officers**

Many denominations have appointed an *Ecumenical Officer* who has specific expertise both in their own tradition's way of doing things, and in ways of collaborating with other traditions.

Typical work-load of an Ecumenical Officer is 1-day per week.

### **4. The County Ecumenical Officer**

Churches Together in Kent also employ a County Ecumenical Officer, appointed by all the denominations acting together, to facilitate much of the work.

Current funding is for 2-days per week.

### **5. Our Honorary Treasurer (Mr Michele Cascioli)**

### **6. Arranging Forums for specific topics**

### **7. Using the expertise accumulated by Churches Together in England**

(National Training courses; Best Practice Procedures; File)

## **6. Partnership Activities (across County !)**

In addition to "church" activities such as LEPs and local Churches Together Groups, Churches Together in Kent is the lead "church" partner/sponsor for e.g.-

- Membership on various LSP Partnerships, and Regional Government (GOSE) (Note the ongoing discussion towards a Kent Assembly)
- Police Chaplaincy (c.f. Kent Police's Ecumenical Chaplaincy)
- Critical Incident Training (c.f. Church and Society)
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service (trial chaplaincies)
- Asylum Destitution (c.f. representations to the (former) Home Office)
- Casinos (c.f. representations to Government and to local Authorities)
- Kent Workplace Mission (c.f. reporting structure through the denominations)
- Interfaith Forums (c.f. yesterday's Faith Observatory re Thames Gateway)
- BBC Radio Kent Advisory Group (c.f. Radio Kent Lent Series)

## **7. Our Major Publications**

- 1) **The Ecumenical Directory**  
(The latest edition is November 2007, runs to 100 A5 pages, and cites all (known) ecumenical endeavour across Kent). Available for download from our website
- 2) **Calendar of Events**  
sponsored by the churches and which are open to all, or are of major denominational significance; courses.
- 3) **Media and Church Resources List** (last updated in early 2006)  
(contacts for Kent, and national; runs to approximately 40 pages)
- 4) **A web-site [www.ctkent.org.uk](http://www.ctkent.org.uk)** (updated approximately once a week)  
(containing all the above information, but regularly updated with latest data)  
Very dependent on information supplied by e.g. local Churches Together groups!

## **8. So what are the Issues?**

Some of these are:-

### **8.1 What if there were no “Churches Together in Kent” ?**

What would we be missing if there was not a county-wide grouping like CTKent?

If there is a need, what should the objectives be?

How should CTKent be best structured to deliver these objectives?

Personnel

Denominational Leaders

Ecumenical Officers

Members of Churches Together groups; etc

Frequency of meetings (and what kind of meetings)

What role should any County Ecumenical /Development Officer have?

### **8.2 Representation of Churches**

(a) To each other

(b) To government and statutory authorities

Non-representation (except through local Churches Together groups) of e.g.

Orthodox churches

Pentecostal churches

House Churches

Other church associations (Ichthus, Vineyard)

### **8.3 Area covered**

Is the current greater Kent the best arrangement?

### **8.4 Relationship with interfaith groups**