

Missionally Engaging in New Housing Areas: a set of *How to* Guides



Produced for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on
Housing, Church and Community



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Introduction

Britain is in a housing crisis. One of the ways in which the Government has responded to this crisis is to commit to building 300,000 new houses each year for the foreseeable future. This is creating huge cultural and social change.

Individual Christians, churches and denominations are beginning to wonder what the Christian response should be to this change. They acknowledge that new housing developments can be soulless places, with high levels of isolation. There will be no established Christian presence and it is unlikely that there will be a church building so as well as soulless it may also feel spiritually barren. Increasingly, The Church is exploring out how to missionally engage with these new housing areas, challenging these negative images of new housing areas and investing times and resources into inhabiting these spaces as places of new possibilities, new life, and hope.

Initial anecdotal evidence from early adopters suggests that this engagement has a positive effect on the ethos and social capital of new estates and contributes to flourishing. Alongside this community flourishing, new contextually relevant new communities of faith (or churches) are emerging. New housing areas appear to be spiritually 'thin' places where people are open to talk about what life looks like now, in this new space and address existential questions. They are also a context which fosters both new friendships and an openness to engage in new activities.

A Kairos Moment?

Is this time of social and cultural change, a Kairos moment, when God is inviting his people to embody his love and blessing in these thin spaces? Is this a moment to help build healthy new communities where people can thrive? Is this a time to share the good news that people are not abandoned or isolated but that they are precious and loved by a God who created them? I believe that it is.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing Church and Community

The Archbishop's Commission was set up in response to the housing crisis to consider how The Church might respond. The New Housing Hub has partnered with the Archbishop's Commission to raise awareness of housing need and to consider the relationship between Christians and new housing areas. The New Housing Hub has a vision *to work together to share God's love with every new housing area* and this vision is woven into this work.

These *How to* guides have been developed in conversation with other with new housing practitioners and enablers to explore what Christians are doing that is having a positive effect upon new housing communities. My own stories are woven into the stories and experiences of others. They address such areas as how to get started, how to work with councils and developers, how new communities of faith are being birthed amongst those beyond the church; and what theological and missional principles have emerged which underpin this ministry.

A set of *How to* guides sounds deceptively simple. It suggests an off-the-peg one-size-fits-all approach to missional engagement. This is, however, not the intention. The first section of guides focuses upon being Christlike and suggests a posture which acts as a lens through which to read all the other guides. Rather than suggesting an off the shelf approach, the *How to* guides include stories and examples of how others have engaged missionally in new

housing and encourage the reader to consider how these principles might apply in their context.

The guides are deliberately short – just two sides of A4 each. They are introductions. Something to inspire and initiate deeper thought or to inspire prayer and action. Many have links and resources to go deeper and the New Housing Hub website has a variety of resources and links to training and event that will hopefully help develop the journey into new housing engagement.

Each new housing area is different, and God’s Spirit leads us in different ways, however I hope and pray that these *How to* guides will be helpful food for thought.

The How to Guides are organised in the following sections:

Section A How to be Christlike in New Housing Areas

Section B How to Deal with Practicalities

Section C How to Work Together as the Body of Christ

Section D How to Plan and Evaluate

Section E How to Engage in Different Contexts

Alison Boulton December 2020



SECTION A: HOW TO BE CHRISTLIKE IN NEW HOUSING AREAS

Introduction

In *Pilgrims and priests: Christian mission in a post-Christian society*, Stefan Paas states,

Decades of post-war missional thinking have been characterised by finding the most effective missional “structures” and “models”; but in the end there are no missional structures, only missional people.¹

In our eagerness to work out *what* to do on new estates, it can be easy to overlook the *why* and *how* of what we do and who we are. This section addresses this issue. It explores ‘being Christlike’ as an organising principle underpinning the missional engagement. Whilst secular community development has a positive impact on building community, having an intentionally Christlike posture embraces a missional imperative of embodying the love and blessing of God alongside these new residents and in these new communities. It is a call to go beyond community development, to selflessly lay down our lives for a new community. These *How to* guides are a call to embrace deep discipleship, to be led by the Spirit thus going beyond functional atheism to weaving our faith into all of who we are and what we do.

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.’ Mark 8:34-35 NIVUK



THEstowe
at Wichelstowe

The Stowe Church, which has been birthed on a new estate in Swindon, articulates Christlike principles in their DNA which underpins who they are and help them discern what to do.

¹ Paas, S. (2019). *Pilgrims and priests: Christian mission in a post-Christian society*. London, UK: SCM Press. xvii

HOW TO...

A1: How to be an unconditional blessing

Biblical/Practical Intro

- The LORD had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 'I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. Genesis 12:1-3 NIVUK
- The idea of both being blessed by God and embodying that blessing to others – blessed to be a blessing - is a founding principle within the Bible. This 'How to' guide explores how people have sought to live out this principle of blessed to be a blessing on new housing estates.

At a glance

- Unconditional blessing practically embodies the nature of God in our new communities
- Unconditional blessing takes place through the stakeholder and structures at a macro level and also through relationships and community engagement at a micro level.

Embodying unconditional blessing was the first value that The Stowe team embraced as Ali and her family prepared to move into the first house on the new estate. The phrase 'Called to bless' underpinned everything, from planning the day – how can I be a blessing? – to evaluating it – was I a blessing today? Lythan also noted the foundational importance of the principle of 'Blessed to be a blessing'. It is vital that blessing is unconditional and is genuinely focussed on the good of the community not the agenda of The Church or individual pioneer/minister.

Being a blessing can be embodied practically on both a macro and micro level (ie with stakeholders and the local community/individual residents).

Macro Level - Blessing the community by building relationships with the council, planners and other stakeholders

This needs to begin before anyone moves in, as well as continuing into the ongoing life of the new community.

Whilst the purpose of the blessing is centred upon the community advocating for the future and current residents, experience has shown that the structures and stakeholders can also be blessed and indeed be a blessing as 'people of peace'. (see 'How to work with Councils, Developers and other Stakeholders'.)

Sue, Penny, Helen and Ali all worked with the stakeholders before houses were completed and occupied. In doing so they were able to speak into the ethos of the development in various ways. There is a sense in which, by being involved at an early stage, we are able to dig blessing into the very foundations of the new community. Ali attended every community meeting in the consultation phase of the new development. These meetings covered the plans for the area and a specific school consultation meeting. Ali was only member of the public that attended the meetings, as it was too early for people to have decided to move to the new area and existing residents in surrounding areas were attending protest meetings rather than positive consultation. Ali was able to raise issues regarding community infrastructure and the school on behalf of not yet residents which legally had to be taken in account as they were part of the consultation process. These meeting also enabled a friendship to grow with the stakeholders.

It is important to have a servant heart in relation to the stakeholders and to bring a Christian distinctive of love even when challenging plans and community provision, as opposed to the anger of the protest group.

(Community blessing is enabled when there are good relationships with the wider stakeholders. This is linked with a posture of servanthood - see How to have a posture of Servanthood rather than leadership).

One team began their blessing by contacting the council, at least five years before the housing estate was built, in response to community consultation and asking how they could serve. Sue, who now heads up the engagement on behalf of an ecumenical group of churches, is able to bless the developers by being at the grassroots of the development alongside the residents. By forming strong relationships with the council, developers and housing association alongside local residents, she is able to bring the blessing of being a peacemaker bringing together different perspectives and opinions. Similarly, Penny at Ebbsfleet notes how you can be a blessing to the whole community by bringing together churches and councils and developers for the good of the estate.

Micro Level - Blessing the community by community engagement and friendship

Once people move on to the estate blessing can be embodied practically with the residents. Penny and Ali both noted that they embodied God's blessing by visiting new residents with a gift. Ali stresses the importance of the unconditionality of the gift. When she delivered welcome baskets she shared all her details with the new residents so that they could get in touch with her but did not ask for any of their details in return. 'Some people shared their life stories, others just said 'thank you', but most importantly there was no expectation to share – it was a pure gift.' This is an important unspoken embodiment of the gospel. (Offering genuine friendship rather than an institutional client approach is also key to blessing – see 'How to be Friends')

This attitude of unconditional blessing can be woven into the ongoing life on the estate and relationships. Lythan, Penny and Ali all note the different activities that they facilitated in response to the wishes of the community rather than their own agenda (see also 'How to join in with what God is doing') and also the importance of continuing the advocate on behalf of the community – particularly with those who don't have a powerful voice. Ali has seen this lead to the creation of an ethos of blessing and contribute to individual transformation. One new resident wrote on Facebook that she was 'blessing the community' by giving away her baby clothes, others have been impacted by the embodiment of blessing and that has led them to explore faith.

Fiona notes that people find an attitude of unconditional blessing shocking. This is the power of the gospel.

Learning Points

- 'Conditional blessing' for the purposes of data collection, building 'contacts' etc is soon spotted
- Don't be discouraged when plan A doesn't work out! Penny tried to bless the community with an 'Activity bus' and began fund raising with the community. The developers would not allow the bus in the end but the community fund raising activities led to friendships and an unexpected outcome.
- Blessing unconditionally leaves you open to people taking advantage – Jesus had the same problem. By being aware of this we can make a choice to lay down our lives willingly in intentional love and discipleship.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Chalke, S (2019) *The Lost Message of Paul: Has the church misunderstood the apostle Paul?* London SPCK Publishing. Exploring Jesus putting love first.

Marsh, P., & Boulton, A. (2016). *Pioneer ministry in new housing areas: Personal reflections and a practical guide.* Cambridge: Grove Books Limited

See newhousinghub.org for resources and stories

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Helen Baker, Penny Marsh, Fiona Mayne, Lythan Nevard & Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

A2: How to have a posture of servanthood

Biblical/Practical Intro

- Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:25-28 NIVUK
- Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.' Mark 8:34 NIVUK

At a glance

- Jesus modelled the laying down of self and the posture of servant and calls his disciples to do the same.
- Arriving as a self-declared leader is both un-Christlike and practically unhelpful as it alienates and/or annoys local residents
- Laying down our personal – or church agenda – and listening to local people is embodying being a disciple of Jesus within the community
- Listening and facilitating rather than controlling than community is important
- Some allocate the first 6mth or year to listening and serving rather than initiating
- Am I doing this for me or in order to selflessly serve the community?

Jesus modelled the laying down of self and the posture of servant and calls his disciples to do the same. However, if we are used to being within the structure and culture of a church, it's easy for serving (ministering) to look like leadership. It is then easy to bring that approach to missional new housing engagement and arrive on the estate as a church – or self - declared 'leader'. Not only does this fail to embody the nature of Christ and the message of the gospel but it can also alienate residents who do not relate to church and have little tolerance or respect for those arriving with an attitude of superiority.

Lythan's Story – A posture of servanthood

Lythan shares her story of the importance and embodiment of the posture of servanthood. She has been reflecting on is being a servant to, rather than master of, the community. She has learnt to be involved without feeling that you have to lead everything and has seen the way in which this has both empowered the community and also made space to see God at work.

The Litter Picking Group is a good example. It's a 6-year-old idea which has grown and developed. Cornerstone now underwrite the group but don't run it. 'Partnering is healthy' Lythan states and she notes that it helps with succession planning so things can grow and continue.

The story of the toddler group is also a great illustration. Originally it was run by friends of the minister but it got to the stage where Lythan was almost leading alone. She knew that she couldn't just keep 'soldiering through alone' and wondered if the group should close. She shared the dilemma with the local community and local people emerged into leadership. Lythan says, 'It was a miracle! There are times when there is nothing we can do and God steps in.' It's interesting to see how the name of the toddler group indicates how the local community see the input of Lythan and the church. It was called 'Cornerstone toddler group' then the Community called it 'Cranbrook Toddler group' but now Lythan has noticed that locals are calling it 'Cornerstone Toddler Group'

again. In one sense this is a small change, yet it seems significant in understanding how by letting go of control a community can embrace both the activity and the church.

The final example is recognising that by being servants to the community we also allow God to be in control. One day Lythan met a local family who were on the very edges of Cornerstone blackberry picking. Later the thought “wouldn’t it be great if they were part of cornerstone.” She didn’t know how to make that happen but amazingly that afternoon they got in touch and said they would like to be part of cornerstone. Lythan recognises that it won’t necessarily always be that easy! But it’s a reminder that not everything is about us our leadership and what we do, God is the real leader. Lythan suggests that rather than seek to be in charge we should serve. We should ‘find the gaps serve and respond’. Sometimes we need to step back even further to let go of control and let God lead.

Listening and Facilitating

Being a Christlike servant of the community means laying down our personal, or church focussed, agenda and listening to the community. For Ali this was the embodiment of being a follower of Jesus. She also believed that God would show them what to do through the local community so by being humble and listening they were also hearing the voice of God.

Many of the new housing engagers who shared their stories for these guides named the importance of humbly listening to the community and joining in rather than dictating what should happen in the community. Most set aside the first 6 months or year to listening and serving.

Angela Parfitt undertook a case study on the estate where Ali lives as part of her academic studies. Parfitt, who has no Christian or church affiliation noted that a strength that emerged from the approach Ali and the team were taking. She states, ‘The church leader has facilitated, rather than dictated, how the community develops’. She titled her research ‘Divine Inspiration?’ in response to the huge (and unexpected) impact that the Christians were making on the new estate.

A key question in leading is – Am I doing this for me or in order to selflessly serve the community?

Learning Points

As Ali immersed herself in serving the community, she was asked to take on roles of leadership such as Chair of Governors of the new school and to chair the residents’ meetings. Local residents looked to her to lead. She inadvertently gained power. Ali had to be aware of this power and ensure power was used to influence for good and not to take control. She laid down some roles to enable others. She learnt not to accidentally exercise power of people in the community who felt powerless or had little self-esteem. This meant that she did not tell people what to believe or invite people to faith events directly, as some felt obliged to ‘obey’. Instead, she shared her own faith and simply made people aware of events, allowing others to invite their peers.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor’s Page

Read more of Lythan’s story here: <https://urc.org.uk/media-news/2392-building-a-cornerstone-of-community-at-cranbrook.html>

Angela Parfitt’s research is unpublished but briefly summarised in Marsh, P., & Boulton, A. (2016). *Pioneer ministry in new housing areas: Personal reflections and a practical guide*. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited p6-7

For more details contact Ali at info@newhousinghub.org

Read Ali’s story on newhousinghub.org/talesfromnewcommunities

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Lythan Nevard for sharing her story and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

A3: How to be Friends rather than ‘make contacts’ or ‘build a client base’

Biblical/Practical Intro

‘I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my father I have made known to you.’ John 15:15

At a glance

- The guides moves way from a professional/client relationship to building authentic friendships
- Always be ready to listen and to talk
- Be present in the community
- A smile goes a long way

It takes time for strangers/neighbours to become friends. It is important to be willing to spend time getting to know people, to listen and talk. The value of being ready to stop and talk to people is something that becomes apparent over time. In the early days on a new estate, this may not necessarily seem fruitful and yet the stories of how to be friends come from a place of knowing the value of taking time to get to know people.

There are many ways to be friends with people and specifics will vary in each context. The key is being open to the situation you are in and willing to learn in it. Every smile, wave and conversation, creates an opportunity, over time, to become friends. Sometimes this will happen naturally and quickly, other times it will take time, depending on individuals and situations. Having a posture of servanthood and of unconditional blessing are important in developing new friendships. [See *How to have a posture of servanthood* and *How to be an unconditional blessing*] Shared interests and/or willingness to learn something new, allow space for friendship. Every time you meet with someone new, there exists potential for conversation and /or something unexpected and yet significant.

Fiona joined the Woman’s Institute. Joining a local group allows opportunity to get to know people and their interests, there is also potential to discover a shared interest. Fiona also discovered that in being a dog owner, taking her dog out for walks and meeting other dog walkers, allowed for conversations and to become part of the dog walking community. Dogs become a talking point that allows space for natural conversation. These conversations can naturally turn into deep conversations with people. Fiona notes that it is important not put the focus on the individual’s faith. If faith conversations come up they do so naturally and inviting people to events comes a “by the way” or if you ever wanted to come”

Before moving onto the estate, Penny spent lots of time making friends with local residents. People quickly saw Penny as a friend and began inviting her in as a guest. Despite living off site, Penny was invited into residents’ groups because she was an authentic friend to those within the community. [See *How to serve the estate if you don’t live there.*] Sue also made friends with residents from the estate and saw the importance of having coffee with everyone, of pushing doors of friendships and being open to everyone.

Jade notes the way in which most of her time has been spent making friends with people and recognises she has been able to do this because friendship has been part of the culture within the estate. While Jade has been on

the estate for 3 years, she recognises that because people trust Ali and others before her, they have come to trust Jade too. Jade has found that some of her friendships are through shared interest but also found opportunity to step out of her comfort zone and to learn something new. In doing so Jade was invited into another resident's space, their group of friends and has been learning about their interests and activities. Being a guest as well as a host is essential.

All These stories demonstrate the importance of being incarnational, dwelling within the estate. In being present, you become aware of the culture held by those within the estate. Sue states that, on her estate, there exists a culture of not knocking on people's doors. In respecting the culture, she respects the residents which is a sign of friendship. Friendship is built on trust. Trust is built by spending time with people, giving time to conversations and listening, it allows space to explore ways to work together in creating opportunities for others. It is important to not force friendship but to be open to opportunity.

On Ali's estate, residents who were welcomed by a visit when the first moved in, now welcome new residents. Friendship continues and strengthens and those who have been received have gone on to share with others. 11 years into life on the estate, residents are recommending new residents and/or friends to Ali, Owen and others because of the friendships that have developed over the years. New friendships are being created and many longstanding friendships are growing stronger.

Lythan noted that friendship can and does mean being an advocate for the community. Ali does the same. This was something also noted by those within Bicester.

Introverts and extroverts will conduct friends in different ways. It is not about how you are a friend but rather emphasising friendship over a client approach. Friendship is powerful and gives emphasis to a working **with** rather than doing **to** approach. Journeying together to seek ways in which to create community in New Housing Areas. It is also a Christlike attitude through which people glimpse something of what God is like.

Learning Points

- Being a friend rather than a professional means standing alongside people not above them. It is tempting to hide behind a professional role to disassociate ourselves from being connected to difficult situations or uncomfortable places, but Jesus said 'I call you friends'. Let's rise to this challenge
- Be sensitive to the culture of the estate. Sue learnt that knocking on doors and visiting homes was not part of the ethos of the community. She found that a community Hub was a much better place for people to become friends with her and others
- Ali learnt that boundaries are important but that everyone has personal boundaries within their friendships and by being aware of this, boundaries that suggest 'you are work not a friend' can be avoided.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Pathak, J., & Runyon, D (2016) *The Art of Neighboring: Building genuine relationships right outside your door* Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books

Sparks, P., & Friesen, D. J. (2014) *The New Parish: How new churches are transforming mission, discipleship and community* Downers Grove, IL Intervarsity Press

<https://churchmissionsociety.org/resources/disability-natalie-burfitt-anvil-vol-36-issue-1/>

Author: Jade Zerk and Alison Boulton. Thank you to Owen Green, Penny Marsh, Fiona Mayne, Lythan Nevard, and Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

A4: How to start a gathering or birth a church

Biblical/Practical Intro

- 'And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.' Matthew 16:18 NIVUK
- 'Come, see a man who told me everything I've ever done. Could this be the Messiah?' They came out of the town and made their way towards him...Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I've ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. John 4:29-30, 39-41 NIVUK

At a glance

- *'I will build my Church'* This is about joining in with God's mission in our communities.
- *Contextually Relevant and emerging from Friendships* New gatherings/churches are unlikely to look like existing models or even each other. Something that fits the local context and emerges from what God is doing within local friendships shares the good news in relevant and relatable ways.
- *Accessible Content* New gatherings seek to include those with no existing knowledge or church or faith
- *No hard sell* This is the work of the Spirit not the missionary!

This *How to* guide is about starting a public gathering on the new estate. Some will see this as birthing a church, some will understand 'church' as something that the team or pioneer embodied right from the beginning and call this the birth of a gathering, and some will see this as a missional gathering connected to, but not in itself, church.

'I will build my Church'

It can be easy to imagine that churches and new disciples are created through human action. Yet it is God who builds the church and the inner working of the Holy Spirit which transformed people. This guide assumes that we are seeking to join in with God's action rather than operate purely on our own initiative.

Contextually Relevant and emerging from Friendships

Penny, Fiona and Ali have all been involved in birthing contextually relevant church gatherings that have emerged from their community engagement and friendships. All three have a connection to other community activities.

Penny had reflected upon what a church gathering might look like in her community. It quickly became obvious that something contextually relevant needed to emerge. Penny's new community was a designated 'healthy new town'. Her partnerships with the development group and other stakeholders were around this agenda. Friendships were growing through engaging in running and other activities with local residents and it was natural to have conversations around faith with these new friends. It was clear to Penny that their Christian distinctive was the inclusion of spiritual fitness into this otherwise physical approach. Rather than 'gospel' they used 'spiritual health' as a way of talking about faith. That did not seem weird with the context of the healthy new town. Their gathering, *Sunday Active* was born into existing relationships and a culture of openness to a holistic view of fitness and wellbeing.

Fiona's *Tea and Toast Church* also emerged from existing friendships and was a natural extension of their community activities. Fiona set up a pop-up café in the school in September 2016 with a team of Christians from a number of different local Churches. Conversations developed showing that there was interest from people to know more about God. From that *Tea and Toast Church* started in April 2017. This is a monthly café style Church

that is informal and family friendly and aimed at new and non-Christians. *Tea and Toast Church* fits naturally within a context where relationships are developing via a café.

Ali and her family kept an open house with the new community where she lived as initially there were no community buildings. In the early days, the house was used, to enable people to meet for coffee, as a venue for young families to get together, for a kids' club and a place where people could just drop by. So, when someone in the community (unused to church) wanted to start coming to their 'church' – which did not exist – they naturally assumed that people gathered at Ali's house. Ali reflected, 'Right from the start people seemed to feel comfortable and it just felt like a natural extension of the other things we were doing.' Ali also noted the importance of someone in the community asking for a church gathering rather than the Christian team suggesting it. This was significant firstly, because of the importance of being invited into a faith sharing space, rather than imposing faith on the community and secondly, because Ali and the core team believed that God would tell them what to do through the community and this felt like the Holy Spirit inviting them to join in with God's mission.

Accessible Content

Penny built on the familiarity of activities like the Park Run. They gather early on a Sunday morning and offer three different physical activities This is followed by breakfast together and a short, focussed time exploring spiritual health together. The talks explore a variety of themes relevant to those who gather using a variety of media, includes discussion around tables and ends with take away thought and prayer. From Sunday Active, a second session, Sunday Active extra has developed with deeper bible discussion and worship. Penny ensured that everyone knew that *Sunday Active* was not competitive but rather celebrating achievement, and that those who were unable, or did not want, to join in the active session, were still welcome to breakfast and the spiritual fitness session.

Fiona shared 'I don't use Christian jargon. All my talks at tea and toast church are at Alpha level and don't assume that people have faith. Long detailed in-depth sermons are not what I have been called to do. I am there to make God accessible for people that don't know him like introducing to friends that you think might get on.' Ali had a bag of costumes from a community nativity play and therefore responded to the question 'apart from Christmas and Easter, do we know anything else about Jesus' with scratch dramas over the first year exploring the life of Jesus.

No hard sell

Neither Fiona nor Ali directed invited people to the new Gathering, they both shared naturally. Ali had been ascribed power in the community which she didn't want to misuse by making people feel obliged to come to the Gathering. The Gathering was public knowledge, however and some people approached Ali and asked to join in whilst others were invited by members of the community who were also exploring faith (see Jn 4:29-30, 39-41)

Learning Points

Both Penny and Ali had good ideas about what a gathering might look like in their new community, but both learnt to hold back and wait for God's leading through the community to birth something that was Holy Spirit inspired and contextually relevant.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Moynagh, M. (2017). *Church in life - innovation, mission and ecclesiology*. SCM Press. In particular chapter 2 (which includes Ali's story), 9, 10, 12.

Sunday Active see <https://freshexpressions.org.uk/connect/local-pioneer-centres/sunday-active-ebbsfleet-garden-city/>

Fiona's Story newhousinghub.org/talesfromnewcommunities

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Penny Marsh and Fiona Mayne for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

A5: How to become part of the community

Biblical/Practical Intro

- The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. John 1:14 NIVUK
- ..have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! Philippians 2:5-8 NIVUK

At a glance

- Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus – he came to where we are
- The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us – A call to live on the estate
- Move in early – at the very beginning if possible
- Smaller Estates – it does not have to be a paid worker who moves in!
- This is an unrepeatable Kairos moment and thin space when people are open to discuss life

The same mindset as Christ Jesus

One of the underlying values within these *How to* guides is that the call to serve on a new estate is a call to be Christlike, humbling and unconditionally loving serving and blessing the residents and stakeholders. The call is to be *with* the community not to do *to* them embodying the attitude of Christ in Philippians 2 humbly joining us where we are. This is embodied most powerfully by moving onto the new estate.

Most practitioners have found it helpful to live on the estate. John and Mandy spent three years living off and found it much harder to engage. John notes that as a non-resident you cannot get involved in residents associations and the like which is a real disadvantage. Similarly, Sue shared that she 'found it really hard not living here at the beginning'. (Not being able to live on the estate does present some challenges but it does not make meaningful incarnational engagement impossible. See *How to serve on the estate if you don't live there*)

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us – A call to live on the estate

Theologically and practically, there is a notable difference between living on and off the new estate.

Theologically the call to be Christlike is a call to embody the principles of the Incarnation. Penny and Ali in their book, *Pioneer Ministry in New Housing Areas* state 'Bing incarnational means coming alongside people where they are. For us it meant living on our Estates, sharing in the issues of the new communities as they developed, warts and all.' (8) They cite independent research undertaken by Angela Parfitt as part of her academic studies exploring community development in urban villages. Parfitt, who has no Christian or church affiliation, undertook a case study of the estate where Ali lives. She identified the importance of the Christian team and concluded, 'The church leader's residence within the community enables her to engage with the community as a resident and community builder, and working in partnership with stakeholders allows understanding of the communities needs from a range of perspectives' (7) John noted that when he moved in he able to be a 'light on the estate'.

Move in early

The timing of moving in makes a huge difference. Being present on site right from the beginning enables the person missionally engaging to visit people and make friends with people as they move in.

In the fragile early days of the new community, they can nurture an ethos of blessing. People who are there at the beginning are embedded in the unfolding story of the new community and become part of the history of the estate.

Ali found that by being first to move on to estate she was able to serve the new community much more effectively. By being first in (a month before anyone else) she was able to identify and address issues. A key issue was that the houses are built on a flood plain and so she could not get house insurance. Ali worked with Baptist Insurance, the Environment Agency, the council and the housing association to resolve this issue and change the Environment Agency status of the area from a high to a low flood risk thus enabling all future residents to access insurance easily. There were also issues with establishing the first postcode which were forced to a resolution once they moved in. The area also had a brand new fibre optic system delivering internet and TV to the houses via a newly established internet provider. Ali and her husband were able to address some of the teething problems and then pass on their experience as others moved in.

Helen was called to work on a flagship self-build estate. Before she could move in, they had to build the house! The church bought a plot of land and as Helen and her husband over saw the building of the property, Although Helen could not move in straight away, she joined a community of self-builders! Helen knew her neighbours before she even moved in!

Smaller Estates

Not every new estate has a paid dedicated worker or minister who can move in. However, it does not need to be an employed worker. The person moving in can be any Christian who catches the vision to love the new community and embody Christlike values. In some towns there are a number of smaller estates. David is working in one such context, working with small new estates across the town. Obviously, he can only live in one area but by living on a new estate he is sharing the experience of new housing with others, if not the exact context.

Learning Points

Moving in later can mean missing the early opportunities to make a lasting difference to the ethos of the community and may miss the 'thin space' time when residents first move in and are openly wondering what new life might look like now. Missing the opportunity to move in early may arise if prayer, planning and fund raising started too late. (See *How to get started*)

The early days are a particularly 'thin space' when people are exploring this new season and wondering what life looks like now. There are often reflecting on big life questions. This is missed if engagement on the estate starts later. The beginning of a new community is a one-off Kairos opportunity not to be missed!

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see [The Contributor's Page](#)

Marsh, P., & Boulton, A. (2016). *Pioneer ministry in new housing areas: Personal reflections and a practical guide*. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited

Angela Parfitt's research is unpublished. For more details contact Ali at info@newhousinghub.org

Read about Helen's self-build context here https://baptisttimes.co.uk/Articles/547764/A_Grand_Design.aspx

Read Ali's story on newhousinghub.org/talesfromnewcommunities

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Helen Baker, John Bentley, Mandy Bentley, David Johnson, Penny Marsh and Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and for Dan Simpson with his help with the interviews.

HOW TO....

A6: How to join in with what the Holy Spirit is doing on the estate

Biblical/practical introduction

- 'No, please!' said Jacob. 'If I have found favour in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favourably.' Genesis 33:10 NIVUK
- Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. Psalms 127:1 NIVUK
- When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. Acts 16:7 NIVUK
- When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea." Acts 8:39-40 NIVUK

At a glance

- Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury quoting John V. Taylor's *The Go-Between God* stated that Christian mission is 'finding out what the Holy Spirit is doing and joining in'. This 'How is about working out how to apply this theology and practically to working on a new estate.
- Listen to the local community and listen to God
- Be flexible and open to God working in unexpected ways
- Don't be afraid of risk taking!

When it comes to engaging in mission, most people want to 'find out what the Spirit is doing and join in'. It is important to recognise that it is God's mission, not ours. Whatever he does is part of the building of his kingdom and his church. On a new estate, a blank canvas, it's hard to know where or how to discern; there is no community to research, no existing community to speak to and no church with a body of Christ already journeying and listening to God within that place.

When Ali and family along with six others, who felt called to unconditionally love, bless and serve the new community, prayed they sensed God say that he would speak to them through the people moving in to the new community. In the same way as Jacob saw God's face in Esau, Ali and the others saw God's face in the new local residents.

This meant that rather than arriving with their own plans and agenda they listened to the new residents and waited to be led through them. Initially the people asked for opportunities to get to know their neighbours, a rounder match, coffee and toddler times and a Halloween Party [She worked **with** the community rather than doing **to** the community – see links below]. However, as conversations about faith grew the residents asked for: a 'God Club' to tell the local children about God ('my kids don't know anything about God – you could teach them' said the parent who suggested it); a community nativity play; an event telling the Easter story; and, a year after ali and her family moved in, a regular church gathering. Conversations about faith were also initiated by others rather than imposed by the existing Christians, but they were – and are – surprisingly frequent.

John, Mandy and Chris similarly shared that they were guided by the community in that they went out to the people rather than waiting for people to 'come to us and our church'. Sue, Helen and Penny all actively listened to the community.

The importance of prayer emerged as a theme as people shared their journeys, with the accompanying attitude of listening to God. John, Mandy and Chris shared how they joined in with what God was doing through a prophetic word given during a prayer walk to identify a house to live in. The word tied into to a later diocesan offer and they could see God's leading in it. Prophetic words have also played a significant role in Ali's discernment – including having a word for a local resident that was part of her journey to faith.

David highlighted the importance of trial and error in discerning what to do, and the value of taking a risk. He stated that we should take a risk to do things differently, 'if it doesn't work it doesn't mean it's a bad thing!' Being given permission to fail (including allowing ourselves to fail) is all part of our learning and also discernment. Penny shared the story of trying to get a bus as a community space and began fund raising with a 'running for the bus' scheme. Ultimately, she could not get planning permission for the bus to be on site but the running took off and grew into a significant community activity, growing friendships and, ultimately playing a key role in the emergence of 'Sunday Active', their Fresh Expression.

Sometimes we simply do not know what to do but as we pray and take risks we see where God is a work as something flourish and others fall away.

Sue's experience was similar in that things emerged unexpectedly. John and Mandy stress the importance of having 'no remit' and Ali advocates 'laying down your agenda'. Both point to the same attitude of making space for God to lead and to join in with what the Spirit is doing.

Seeking to join in with the Spirit is risky and sometimes we will get it wrong. However, the safer alternative is human led and ultimately leads to disappointment.

Learning Points

Sometimes practitioners on the ground are scared of seeking to join in with the Spirit as it involves risk taking for which they haven't been given permission. Not being given permission to fail by the church or funding body who is overseeing the work is counterproductive, as it is through taking risks and trial and error that significant learning emerges and the opportunity for God to bring forth something exciting, unexpected and unplanned that may be transformational.

Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Taylor, John Vernon (1972) *The Go-between God. The Holy Spirit and Christian Mission* SCM Press

Wells, S. (2018). *Incarnational mission: Being with the world*. London: Canterbury Press, Norwich

Moynagh, M. (2017). *Church in life - innovation, mission and ecclesiology*. SCM Press. In particular chapter 2 (which includes Ali's story)

See more of Penny's story here Sunday Active see <https://freshexpressions.org.uk/connect/local-pioneer-centres/sunday-active-ebbsfleet-garden-city/>

See more of Chris Hunt's story here <https://www.hopebicester.org.uk/index.php/blog/>

Ali reflects on joining in with God's mission here <https://churchmissionsociety.org/resources/what-earth-am-i-doing-ali-boulton-anvil-vol-33-issue-3/>

See more stories on newhousing.org/talesfromnewcommunities

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Helen Baker, John & Mandy Bentley, Chris Hunt, David Johnson, Penny Marsh, and Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.



SECTION B: HOW TO DEAL WITH PRACTICALITIES



Introduction

This section is perhaps more typical of what one might expect of a set of *How to* guides. The following set of guides deal with a variety of practical issues.

However, these practical guides are best approached with discernment and applied in ways that are contextually relevant to the new estate. They seek to unpack principles with corresponding examples rather than to be simply blueprints to copy. The Christlike principles are embodied within these practical out workings.

When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house' Luke 10:5 NIVUK



An unconditional welcome gift embodies the unconditional love of God

HOW TO....

B1: How to get started

Pray continually 1 Thessalonians 5:17 NIVUK

He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field...' 'When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house." If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. 'When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal those there who are ill and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." Luke 10:2, 5-9 NIVUK

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect 1 Peter 3:15 NIVUK

At a glance

Pray

Connect with council, developers and stakeholders

Make friends

Let go of control

Engage with the seasons and festivals

Meet with local churches

Create a welcome pack

Listen to the community

Be authentic and vulnerable

Be faithful and patient

Be flexible!

- Pray! And listen to God. Ultimately, we are joining in with God's work on these new estates not strategizing from a purely human perspective. The places that are sharing stories of community transformation and the birthing of new disciples, have a strong sense of discerning God's calling. Pray for the area, prayer walk, and listen to God. John and Mandy named this as their starting point. And start early; Ali, along with family and friends, began prayer walking the fields where the houses were going to be built 14 months before she moved in to occupy the first completed house.
- Meet with other local churches, leaders, and ecumenical groups and if you have a vision for a large area, your denomination or network body. Pray and discern whether this is an ecumenical project or if there will be a lead denomination [see *How to work together*]. Explore whether you might call a pioneer [see *How to employ somebody to serve the estate*]. Sue was employed 6 months before any houses were occupied and this was really helpful.
- Establish a relationship with council, developers and stakeholders. Again, start this as early as possible [see *How to work with Councils, Developers and other Stakeholders*.]
- Move in! [See also *How to engage if you don't live on the estate*] Being present on the estate is transformative. It enables relationships to form naturally with neighbours and stakeholders tend to engage with residents more readily. Theologically this also models something of the Incarnational nature of God's mission: God who becomes flesh and comes to where we are. Councils, developers and housing associations have all noted the significance of people living on the estate. One Council Leader stated, 'You need activists who live in community – those people are really important'.
- Create a welcome basket/bag/ pack and give a gift [see *How to create a welcome pack*] Visit people as they move in. A personal visit is much more welcoming and powerful than a card or leaflet posted through the door. David noted that cards and leaflets didn't work without relationship. A visit and a welcome gift is an embodiment of God's unconditional blessing and is also a lovely way to get to know people as well as giving practical information to support everyone moving into a new area. Ali found that lots of people got in touch

after having a welcome visit to ask about practical things like connecting to the community TV satellite.

- Make friends. Don't build a client base or a list of 'contacts', make friends and love the neighbourhood [See *How to make friends*]
- Listen! Listening to the community is a crucial part of starting to serve this new neighbourhood. Fiona stated, 'You have to first go there and listen, join in with what they're doing rather than coming and saying we've got all the answers.' David didn't start anything for the first six months. He simply prayed, listened, and made friends. Ali and her team listened to the people in the area and only did things in partnership with local people in response to their suggestions. This is how Ali and the team sensed – and still sense – what God is up to [see *How to join in with what God is doing*].
- Let go of control. The importance of laying down our own agenda emerged in so many of the stories. Ali sees this 'laying down' as part of the posture of discipleship; Sue spoke of 'playing with an open hand rather than a clenched fist'; John and Mandy advocate having 'no remit', Chris named the importance of being open minded and Helen and Steve talked of not having a 'prescribed plan'. This posture enables us to work **with** a community not **do** to a community and it gives space to see where God is at work through his Spirit and join in rather than imposing our human will. Lythan embodied this openness by saying 'yes' as much as possible and always being ready to talk.
- Be authentic and vulnerable. Chris introduced himself by saying that he was new and training to be clergy. This enabled him to be in a position to work alongside neighbours and help one another. Authenticity rather than perfectionism is also a key value for Ali and The Stowe church which has emerged. Living into our values is also key. Living side by side with our neighbours means that we need to live authentic lives, living into our named values. Chris stated that living into his value of a 'culture of honour' was paramount for him.
- Give and receive hospitality. For Fiona it all began with the 'hospitality side of things'. This embodied God's love and the Gospel by preceded any explicit Christian activities.
- Engage with the seasons and festivals. When people did begin to introduce what Fiona calls 'low key Christian things', it was usually in response to a season or festival – often Christmas but also Easter. Carol singing and Easter egg hunts are very acceptable culturally amongst those of all faiths and none. In Ali's case these Christian activities were at the invitation of the community.
- Be faithful and patient. Penny encourages us to be faithful, have a long-term vision, be patient, notice and celebrate the small encouragements. Look for God opportunities, in terms of people of peace, connecting places or opportunities, such as being a healthy new town [See *How to work in Fitness or Arts*] Be prepared to use what you've got rather than focus on what you don't have. Penny did outdoor events for 3 years before the community centre was built.
- Be Flexible! Sue says, 'You've got to adjust all the time' 'Don't think permanent'. This resonated with all the stories.

Learning Points

Get started and do something! It does not have to be the perfect. Lots of people express a desire to love their new estate but are held back by the fear of doing it wrong. Step out and start. Pray and take a risk! Authentically loving imperfectly is better than simply not loving at all.

Be patient, things take time. Be faithful.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Marsh, P., & Boulton, A. (2016). *Pioneer ministry in new housing areas: Personal reflections and a practical guide*. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited

See newhousinghub.org for more resources and stories

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank You to Helen Baker, Steve Barber, John and Mandy Bentley, Chris Hunt, Fiona Mayne, David Johnson, Penny Marsh, Lythan Nevard and Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

B2: How to create a welcome pack

When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house." Luke 10:5 NIVUK

The LORD had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 'I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.' Genesis 12:1-3 NIVUK

At a glance

- Welcome gifts and packs are an unconditional gift that model God's unconditional love and blessing and the gift of Jesus
- Contents should be contextually relevant for the area and people
- Deliver with a posture of friendship rather than institutionalism

Welcome packs serve multiple purposes. They model God's blessing, they are a gateway to friendship, and they show love by offering practical help as people move house and settle into a new area.

It is always good to include a gift not just information – in this way we model God's blessing.

Be careful to ensure that the Welcome Pack is a genuinely unconditional gift – not a means of 'data collection' or an opportunity by which to tell people about our church, or even faith (unless/until invited) but simply a love gift. Wherever possible visit the new residents in person and make friends, rather than simply leaving it with the sales office to pass on (although this is not always possible, particularly with flats/apartments, which are not always accessible). Include a personal name and contact number so that there is an opportunity for friendship to grow. There is not a 'one size fits all' welcome pack, any more than there is a one size fits all way to love new housing areas. Build on the principles but make your pack contextually relevant for your community. Here are some examples below.

Working in partnership with the housing association, Ali delivered welcome baskets on moving day to a largely social housing community, some of whom were moving from temporary or hostel accommodation into their first real homes. The baskets, which were funded by the housing association, contained practical, moving day gifts alongside community information. (See the photo and list below). As the demographic of people moving into the community changed, and it was no longer possible to visit on moving day, the gift changed to chocolates, but the underlying unconditional nature of the gift, the attitude of friendship, and community information remained the same. Now as she begins to welcome a new community, there are gifts and blessings in bags as the baskets were too expensive.

Penny wanted to create a gift for a middle-class professional community but had little money to fund such gifts. In wealthier communities the symbolic nature of the gift is more important than something practical. She found simple, but tasteful candles, which she wrapped in cellophane. These were well received.

Stephen and John delivered cakes as a welcome to their local new community. These were made by church members. This a lovely and well received gesture that has been used on many new housing areas. Do check food health and safety requirements before settling on this approach.

Sue was unable to access the flats to visit, as they do not have outside doors. So she worked in partnership with the builder who delivered the welcome packs for her.

Do make sure you include Information about the area, details of local churches and your personal contact details. Invite the new residents to get in touch if they would like to with ideas of ways in which you might work together to make the community a great place to live. Or, if your conversation goes well, arrange to meet for a coffee!

What to say: People sometimes worry about what to say on the doorstep. Ali simply said 'I'm Ali. I'm your neighbour. I'm a Baptist minister, but am here to serve all faiths and none. What shall we do together to make this a great place to live?' You may not be living in the area so explain you live nearby, and you want to welcome the new residents. If you aren't a church leader or pioneer, explain that you are part of a church, but want to welcome everyone regardless of faith.



Tea Coffee Sugar Toilet Roll Bin Bag Washing up Liquid Dish Cloth Light Bulb Bus Timetables Cycle Map Information from the council – travel and Safety.



Ali found that no one turned down an unconditional gift. She also found that this initial unconditional gift often led to friendship sometimes to sharing lives together. Although the gift was given without an agenda, it was this unconditional gift that set the foundation for conversations about faith and people coming to faith in the months and years that followed.

Learning Points

- Some people have delivered welcome cards or blessings to the new residents. Whilst this is a beautiful unconditional blessing, it tends not to have an impact in terms of building friendships unless there is personal contact
- Similarly leaflets inviting people to events without a relationship have not yielded a good response
- Welcome packs that are very 'churchy' can work well with those from a church background, whether or not they attend church now but can be seen as an irrelevant 'church thing' for those beyond church structures, so may not work well if your vision is to bless and engage with the whole community

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Marsh, P., & Boulton, A. (2016). *Pioneer ministry in new housing areas: Personal reflections and a practical guide*. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited

Welcome Bags are available through the New Housing Hub.

Contact info@newhousinghub.org.uk

See also newhousinghub.org/talesfromnewcommunities

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to John Bentley, Penny Marsh, Stephen Rand & Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

B3: How to stay safe – risk assessment, GDPR & safeguarding (Part 1)

Biblical/Practical Intro

- Jesus said: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Mark 12:31 NIVUK
- 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.' John 10:11-13 NIVUK
- Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Mark 10:21-22 NIVUK

At a glance

- If we want to be Christlike, it's essential that we take the well-being and preferences of our neighbours (and team) seriously
- Being creative, pioneering and spontaneous is enhanced by an understanding of how people are kept safe and respected
- Policies written for a structured church context are not always fit for purpose in neighbourhood engagement or incarnational mission contexts

These *How to* guides are underpinned by the principle of seeking to be Christlike in our approach to engaging with new communities. Central to Jesus' attitude and teaching was loving people and respecting their choices. He reiterates that loving our neighbour is essential (and our enemies) and contrasts the lack of care given by a hired hand with the model of the Good Shepherd. Jesus' love for those he met framed his respect for them. He loved the rich young ruler and respected his choices even though they were different from Jesus'. The challenge in new housing engagement is finding ways of inhabiting this attitude of love, care and respect.

For some, part of the joy of doing something new is moving away from structures and tradition and embracing the creative, informal and spontaneous. However, to be released into the freedom of this it is important to have the appropriate structures and policies in place. These policies once named and understood enable greater freedom and security. It's important that we live these policies as attitudes not just file bits of paper.

Risk Assessments

If Covid 19 has taught us anything, it has been about the importance of keeping people safe and the necessity of risk assessments! However, engaging in new housing areas is likely to be very different from established church settings. Established churches often have established risk assessment of buildings and regular activities that remain unchanged for long periods of time. It is likely that most activities on a brand new estate will take place outside (even after indoor space also becomes available) in homes or in ever-changing temporary settings. New housing estates can be especially dangerous places if building work is still continuing. These factors can lead to either missionally engaging in potentially unsafe environments or becoming completely risk averse and withdrawing from missional engagement in the new community.

The process of writing a risk assessment enables potential dangers to be identified and addressed leading to greater discernment of risk management resulting in greater freedom to engage missionally. Learning to think about risk strategically and learning to write thorough but quick and efficient risk assessments is key to safety in this new environment. (See *Links and Resources* for downloadable risk assessment templates and examples.) Once this is a habit ensuring everyone's safety becomes a posture not a piece of admin. With the likely involvement of the wider community in leading and helping at events it is important that risk assessments are shared with all, ideally being developed from a shared set of values about what the event or activity is about.

GDPR

Ali shared that when the new GDPR legislation was first announced, it all felt somewhat overwhelming! 'For those of us in incarnational settings, it felt like a bit of a nightmare! We found ourselves asking what 'data' had been shared because people saw us as friends, and what had been shared because of our roles as Baptist Minister or in my case also Community Association Chair? It was hard to address this because treating people as 'work contacts' who considered me as a 'friend' was offensive but treating people as a 'friend' who saw me as a 'professional' overstepped the law!'

It's easy in incarnational settings to simply think that structural legislation does not apply as it does not feel in keeping with informal missional engagement. However, getting behind the structures and understanding the principles is helpful. The law is about respecting people and keeping people safe. Once this is embedded in our posture, it's easier to live into the legal requirements. Ali has open informal conversations with people now when she swaps numbers about whether it is for a particular activity or to keep in touch as friends. The toddler group sign up book enables people to tick what kind of texts they'd like to receive. The underlying principle of respect and safety is helpful. 'It has reminded me not to tag in people on Facebook as they value privacy and may not want people to know that they are involved in faith or even community activities. It reminds me to think before I text – am I texting purely for my benefit or to bless the recipient? It reminds me to have the highest respect for people's privacy when sharing things for prayer or amongst friends.'

So - do ensure there is a fit for purpose GDPR policy in place and that you live into the values of safety and respect. (See *Links and Resources* for examples.)

Learning Points

Even though Ali takes safety and respect seriously and seeks to live into both their policies and the underlying values, she still makes mistakes. It is easy to get confused between Facebook messenger group chats, where no personal contact details are shared, and WhatsApp groups which automatically shares numbers. Recently Ali was challenged for creating a WhatsApp group for people on a prayer course. She added people to a WhatsApp group rather than inviting them to add themselves. Church culture is often one of 'sharing life' (this can be problematic but not addressed here.) People who are new to faith and church will not necessarily bring this cultural expectation and privacy must be respected.

Policies which do not fit the context may look good but are unsafe. Owen, Ali and the team spent 18 months rewriting their safeguarding policy to make it fit for purpose. Now it honestly addresses the challenges of the context.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see [The Contributor's Page](#)

Risk Assessment Templates and Examples and GDPR Examples: newhousinghub.org/resources

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Owen Green for sharing his story and wisdom.

HOW TO....

B4: How to stay safe – risk assessment, GDPR & safeguarding (Part 2)

Biblical/Practical Intro

- Jesus said: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Mark 12:31 NIVUK
- 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.' John 10:11-13 NIVUK
- Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Mark 10:21-22 NIVUK

At a glance

- If we want to be Christlike, it's essential that we take the well-being and preferences of our neighbours (and team) seriously
- Being creative, pioneering and spontaneous is enhanced by an understanding of how people are kept safe and respected
- Policies written for a structured church context are not always fit for purpose in neighbourhood engagement or incarnational mission contexts

These *How to* guides are underpinned by the principle of seeking to be Christlike in our approach to engaging with new communities. Central to Jesus' attitude and teaching was loving people and respecting their choices. He stresses that loving our neighbour is essential (and even includes our enemies!) and contrasts the lack of care given by a hired hand with the model of the Good Shepherd. Jesus' love for those he met framed his respect for them. He loved the rich young ruler and respected his choices even though they were different from Jesus'. The challenge in new housing engagement is finding ways of inhabiting this attitude of love, care and respect. For some, part of the joy of doing something new is moving away from structures and tradition and embracing the creative, informal and spontaneous. However, to be released into the freedom of this it is important to have the appropriate structures and policies in place. These policies once named and understood enable greater freedom and security to be all God is calling us to in these new communities.

Safeguarding

The importance of robust safeguarding policies and procedures in the church has been well documented over recent years. All denominations have church safeguarding policies for children and vulnerable adults. However, Ali, Owen and the core team on their estate, have noted that standard church safe-guarding policies are not simply transferable to new housing contexts where a contextual or incarnational approach is being taken. One of the key differences is that church safeguarding policies tend to assume that people come into a defined and controlled church space at a particular time, where ethos, rules and expectations are set by the hosting church. Incarnationally engaging on a new estate, however, tends to involve being out in a shared community space or a space into which you have been invited often in informal settings. Ali identifies it as similar to the difference between fostering a child in your home and looking after a child at school.

Ali and Owen approach safe-guarding with the underlying principles 'never secret, never alone.' This *How to* guide deliberately does not suggest what a safeguarding policy should look like in any given situation. This needs

to be agreed within each context alongside any denominational conversations and guidance. However, it is important to be aware of some of the issues that may arise and consider how you are going to ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is kept safe. Be honest about the demands and challenges of the context, name them and address them in the safe-guarding policy and **live the policy**. Don't simply adopt an off the shelf policy that isn't fit for purpose otherwise you will either operate outside your policy – which isn't safe – or you will avoid helping children or vulnerable adults in need – thus forcing them to turn elsewhere, possibly to unsafe people or places.

Some things to consider:

- Informal settings. Do local children and vulnerable adults know where you live? Do they view you as a neighbour or a friend and are therefore likely to turn to you for unstructured informal help? Ali has had local children come to her house when there is an emergency at home. 'I need to decide whether it is safer *for the child* if I close the door and say, 'I'm not allowed to help you', or to help even if I am alone', Ali says. 'Our safeguarding policy needs to recognise the possibility that I will need to help a child in an informal setting and ensure that how I should act is covered in the policy.' 'If I find myself alone, how am I ensuring others are aware what's happening and can join me if possible?'
- Communication and Social Media. Is your missional engagement and 'church' a series of relationships rather than a gathering or activity? Is social media central to the way you relate to others on the estate and the way they relate to you? If so, you need to have a clear policy about social media. Are you sharing things about yourself and others that makes everyone feel safe (not just on community pages but personally too.) Ali never shares anything about anybody else in the community – or tags them in - without permission, even if it's something positive, in order to respect privacy. Just saying no to social media can hugely hinder incarnational engagement but engaging without carefully thinking through how your Christlike values are lived out through the posts can undermine your calling on the estate. Texting can be problematic as it is a private communication. However, it may be important for a child or vulnerable adult to be in contact. Ali says if she doesn't allow contact who else might they turn to? FB messaging enables other people to be brought into a conversation for open accountability, a parent, co-minister or member of the core (team/group).
- Partnering with other local residents. Working with (not doing to) the local community is important. This means ensuring that you are including those who are partnering with you beyond your church/team/core in your safeguarding training, policies and DBS checks.

Learning Points

The core team who were with Ali right from the beginning all underwent checks through the sending church and had CRB (now DBS) clearance to work alongside children and vulnerable adults. A lovely new Christian couple with lots of experience of working with children joined the core in the early days and joined in the work. However, they challenged Ali about the lack of checks and training that they had undertaken and the lack of context specific policy. It is very easy to trust Christians who join in with the local mission if they seem experienced and just fit in and get on with it especially in the early days when building a team is the priority and focus. It is also easy to depend upon known policies from church settings without ensuring that they are contextually appropriate. Ali had to address both.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see [The Contributor's Page](#)

Contact your denomination or network safeguarding team to discuss how policies may be amended for incarnational contexts.

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Owen Green for sharing his story and wisdom



SECTION C: HOW TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OTHERS

Introduction

The New Housing Hub was formed with a vision to share God’s love on **every** new housing area. No one church denomination or network has the capacity to meaningfully engage with every new estate. Although all new housing falls into an Anglican and Catholic parish and much of it is within the missional reach of a free church, this does not equate to meaningful missional engagement in many areas. Large new housing estates often develop their own identity and do not relate to the existing community, especially if there is a well- publicised protest group situated within the established community. Parish or free churches may feel that the new housing is being built in their area, but the experience of those living on the new estate may be quite different. People with no connection to the church are disinterested in ecclesiological boundaries. Instead, the shared experience of moving into a new estate brings a new culture and identity quite separate from the existing parish or community. This is even more apparent if the demographic of the new and existing housing is quite different. Being close to an existing church does not automatically mean that there will be a connection with the new area.

In smaller areas of new housing there may be a feeling that the new housing will simply integrate into the existing mission of the local church. However, the reality is that many churches find it difficult to connect with people beyond the church and those moving the new housing will be no exception. Sadly, this means that that this special Kairos moment – the thin space that emerges when people move into a new community - is lost. (See Kairos moment in links below.) In order to meaningful engage with areas of new housing there needs to be an intentional approach with relationships developing in a contextually relevant way on the estate.

No single denomination has the capacity to meaningful engage with 300,000 new homes each year for the foreseeable future. Thus, to see the vision to share God’s love with every new area become a reality Christians need to work together across traditions and denominations. In large areas churches need to work together to see who has the financial resource to fund a worker, in smaller areas it is about gathering human resource to engage.



HOW TO....

C1: How to work together in your county, town or village

Biblical/Practical Intro

- Luke 10:1-9 Jesus sent out the 72 to different towns and villages with a shared strategy.
- After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. Luke 10:1 NIVUK

At a glance

- If you have a vision for new housing in your area aim to bring together people from all the churches to develop a county/town/village wide strategy in order to make a greater impact
- Find out where and how many new houses are coming to your area
- Facilitate networking and training
- Connect with other who have a heart/ calling to this ministry
- Work with established structures and pioneers – lay and ordained
- Pray!

The New Housing Hub and Churches Together in all Lincolnshire (CTAL) have been working together since early 2018 to share learning and see how the vision to love *every* new housing area might be realised in Lincolnshire. John Rose from CTAL, Pete Atkins pioneer practitioner and facilitator, and Richard Steel, Mission Team Leader for Lincolnshire Diocese shared their reflections on how churches of all denominations, both pioneers and members of more established churches, might work together alongside local councils and other stakeholders to make a difference within new housing areas. It was fascinating to note that whether we were talking about pioneers, established church structures or the council a key principle kept emerging about the importance of gathering the right people together to make a difference.

Pete noted the importance of identifying people who feel they have a calling and heart for this work rather than bringing people together based on their role. He stated, 'We need people with a heart and a call rather than a job.' This was echoed by Richard who noted that the diocesan new housing group was working because it contained people on the ground, people who were enthusiastic about being engaged with new housing. Gathering the right people strategically and spiritually within and across denominations and networks is key to making a significant impact. It is clear that John is one such person who, in an ecumenical role, is helping to facilitate a strategic response to new housing in Lincolnshire.

John's Story

John wanted to encourage the churches in Lincolnshire to work together to missionally engage with *all* the new housing throughout the county. He began by finding out where all the new houses were to be built. The local plan was his starting point. John explained that everywhere has a local plan and they can be accessed via the local authority. These plans are available and in the public domain and local residents are entitled to see them. John noted that not all councils are keen to share the information, however, and therefore some do charge. Some plans are early and aspirational, but they give a clear indication of the direction of travel of the local authority. John invested a considerable amount of time, along with a willing helper, in researching all of the plans for new housing throughout the county, from the large estates of over 11,000 down to a single house, seeing the work as an opportunity not a burden. Armed with this hard data he was able to share the nature of the changing landscape with denominational leads and pioneers alike and begin to explore how the church of all traditions could respond. He is seeking to encourage a church, network, denomination or pioneer to take responsibility for engaging missionally in every area of housing however big or small.

John notes, 'the information about where all the houses are planned needs to be kept up to date. Some time

needs to be expended in ongoing monitoring of council plans because they change with some rapidity. This can affect the 'shape' of new developments or the character – and character is important to assess the type of community which is intended. For example, in one of our large new developments, there is an ongoing process between the council and the developers to push the building of affordable homes right to the end of the 15-20 year project.' Thus, during the formative years of the community, the housing will be expensive. 'This has an impact on our strategy. By the time the affordable houses are built the essential character of the community will be fixed and the folks in affordable houses will be unwanted outsiders.'

Working across the denominational divides, John has been able to deliver several conferences and new housing events, initially bringing together county stake holders and the New Housing Hub to raise awareness about the new housing and to foster conversations and develop vision, then to provide training and networking. John keeps abreast of planning and networks with council members and MPs. He is the voice of the churches to the councils which is helpful. (See *How to work with councils and developers*).

John and the different denominations and networks have worked well together to work out who is able to engage with different areas of new housing. Different denominations have responded to the new housing challenge and are working to ensure they play their part in the bigger picture. For example, the URC are planning to fund a pioneer that will work collaboratively with other churches and the Church of England has developed a new housing group. This consists of church leaders with a heart and calling to engage in this area of mission and ministry. They are bravely exploring new ways of looking at mission and how they can use their historic buildings creatively. John facilitated a New Housing Hub visit which included delivering a training session with people from different denominations and a conversation with an ecumenical group who were developing an integrated approach to the new area of housing being built in their area.

It is noteworthy that John and Pete, who brings together pioneers from across the county in ecumenical gatherings, also work together. Pete has a vision to make a significant difference in rural areas (both in Lincolnshire and the wider country) and recognises the impact of new housing on villages. Pete believes that at least 100 new pioneers – of all kinds - are needed across the county. Pete is equipping pioneers and John is researching what is happening in terms of pioneering and has proposed how many new pioneers each denomination needs to release to cover the new areas. Both John and Pete noted the importance of prayer in connecting with the right people and developing the vision.

Having a person in a strategic role with a vision for new housing is key to building a county, town or village wide strategy. Identifying the houses, engaging ecumenically, working with denominational leads and structures as well as pioneers, and facilitating networking and training are useful steps. If around the country churches, denominations, or networks agree who will take responsibility for each area of new housing the vision to share God's love with **every** new community may become a reality.

Learning Points

It is difficult to develop a dynamic strategy if the people with the paid roles do not have the capacity to engage in this area. Connect with those with a calling and vision and offer to feedback to those who do not have the capacity. Many will be grateful for the added input.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

<https://newhousinghub.org/resources/> Fuelcast Video – A Kairos Moment

Ali suggests that this is significant moment in the life of this country when Christians have an opportunity to share God's love with those beyond the church.

Read more of Pete's reflections here <https://learningnetsi.org.uk/blog/dreaming-beyond-pete-atkins-threshold-church-lincolnshire>

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Pete Atkins, John Rose and Richard Steel for sharing their stories and wisdom and for Dan Simpson for his help with the interviews.

HOW TO....

C2: How to choose an ecumenical model and employ a worker together

Biblical/Practical Intro

- After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means. Luke 8:1-3 NIVUK

At a glance

This guide explores three different ecumenical approaches

- *Dividing the new housing area(s) between the churches/denominations who are keen to respond missionally*
- *Lead Denomination Model*
- *Fully Ecumenical Projects* – including employing an ecumenical worker

In many places where there are large areas of new housing, churches of different denominations and traditions work together to create a unified approach to missional engagement. There are three key ecumenical approaches.

Dividing the new housing area(s) between the churches/denominations who are keen to respond missionally

In Bicester thousands of new homes are being delivered on several different housing estates. Each estate has a different identity including the UK's largest self-build housing area and an area of eco housing. Churches Together in Bicester (CTiB) initially worked together to welcome residents onto the first new estate. However, as the numbers of housing has grown the different denominations in CTiB have agreed that different churches/denominations will head up the missional work on different developments. This gives each church the opportunity to work within their own denominational and accountability structures, whilst retaining good relationships for those working on different developments to pray and share together. This model does however require trusting relationships between the different denominations and a willingness to be open handed in building God's kingdom rather than a particular church. It is also worth noting these agreements are only valid between those churches/denominations who choose to be part of these ecumenical groups. Others who are not part of these groups may decide to independently engage in a new housing area 'designated' to another church. (See also *How to call someone to work on a new housing estate.*)

Lead Denomination Model

In Swindon an ecumenical prayer group was formed from the local church leaders surrounding a large area of planned new housing. During the period when they were meeting for prayer different denominations and traditions sought to create a plan for moving a person or a church onto the new estate once built. After a number of unsuccessful plans, the Baptist minister in the prayer group shared the vision with the wider Baptist network. This resulted in a Baptist minister sensing a call to move to the area and the Baptist family providing some financial resource to lead the work in the area. Friendships between the local leaders remained; the other churches continued to pray and support events, but the Baptists resourced and led. Like the first model this enables the missional engagement to operate within denominational structures which often simplifies matters if/when a church emerges. It may develop a greater loyalty and longer commitment to funding from the lead denomination. As with model one a willingness to be open handed in building God's kingdom rather than a particular church and others who are not part of the ecumenical group may decide to independently engage in a

new housing area. It is important that understanding of the lead denomination goes beyond the local churches and is supported by the wider denominations in order for wider relationships to remain strong and the ecumenical relationship understood.

Fully Ecumenical Projects

In New Lubbesthorpe and Cranbrook churches from different denominations have worked together to resource and employ a worker to serve the new area. Churches Together in Leicestershire (CTiL) decided in the early days of council consultation that they would work together to ensure there was Christian missional engagement with the new development. They organised a symposium five years before the new area would be inhabited and explored possible strategies.

As a result, the Baptist Church, the Church of England, The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church combined their financial resources and advertised for a pioneer community worker to serve on the estate on behalf of them all. Representatives of these sponsoring churches formed the Lubbesthorpe Action Group to oversee the appointment and ongoing role. The purpose of the role was: to develop community and to be a welcoming Christian presence; a third subsidiary task was to birth a Christian community with the expectation that members would join the pioneer in their missional engagement on the estate. (A sample role profile and job description may be found on the New Housing Hub website. See links below.)

The churches in Devon reached a similar decision for Cranbrook albeit by a slightly different route and with slightly different denominations. They are now on their second appointment who was called with a mandate to continue to grow a worshipping and witnessing Christian community contextually appropriate to the new development. Both contexts have an ecumenical group which oversees and evaluates the work on the estate. This model is the most obviously ecumenical of them all and can enable greater resources and support for the work in the new community. This model works extremely well as the community engagement/listening/serving stage of the missional engagement. It can be more complicated if a worshipping community/church emerges as this can highlight different denominational approaches and may lead to complex constitutional agreements which can detract from the missional imperative.

Learning Points

It is essential for all the churches/denominations involved to share an understanding of the ecumenical model being adopted on the ground. In a fully ecumenical model, it's important that the community worker/minister /pioneer and ecumenical overseeing group share the same aims and expectations in terms of outcomes. (See *How to have a clear vision for outcomes*)

Ordination approaches, pay and benefit structures need to be addressed and understood across denominations if people are being employed within a denomination of which they are not a part.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

See Sue's story <https://thejazzgoat.wordpress.com/2020/05/14/sowing-in-concrete-ales-of-church-taking-shape-in-new-housing-areas-new-lubbesthorpe/>

Pioneer Community Worker sample job description and person specification newhousinghub.org/resources

See Lythan's story here: <https://urc.org.uk/media-news/2392-building-a-cornerstone-of-community-at-cranbrook.html>

Bicester context Self build https://baptisttimes.co.uk/Articles/547764/A_Grand_Design.aspx

Eco town <https://www.hopebicester.org.uk/index.php/blog/>

The New Housing Hub has a vision to *work together across denomination and traditions to share God's love in every new housing area*. For a variety of resources and events see newhousinghub.org

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Helen Baker, John Bentley, Lythan Nevard and Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

C3: How to work together as established church and missional new housing engager

Biblical/Practical Intro

- So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.' This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. Acts 6:2-6 NIVUK

At a glance

- If there is a large new estate, it may be impractical to expect an existing minister to simply add this mission to their existing ministry. Calling a worker to the estate can be transformative
- There is a huge strength in missional new housing engagers and established churches working together, both benefit
- Creating equal roles for the established church leader and new housing engager shows that ministry and mission in different contexts are equally valid and significant

Often a strong case may be made for calling someone to work specifically within the area of new housing. Most Priests, Ministers and other Church Leaders are already very busy with their existing ministry and expanding their mission to incorporate a large new housing area may simply be impossible.

Further, if the vision is to make a real impact on the new community, there are some challenges in simply adding it on to the ministry in an existing parish or area. Large new housing areas can be distinct, bounded communities that develop their own ethos and culture. Even if new housing is geographically close to existing residential areas, they may be culturally and demographically far removed from each other. Some areas of new housing bring affordable or social housing with younger people and families alongside expensive established villages properties with older residents. Conversely sometimes new housing is high end and expensive alongside a poorer indigenous population in social or smaller properties. Making meaningful links and connections between the old and the new can be difficult. It's important to be aware that church geographic boundaries are often of little interest or relevance to those outside church structures; Just because the new housing falls into an area where a particular church or churches are ministering, an automatic relationship with the new residents cannot be assumed, especially as it is likely that members of the existing residential community has protested against the new build. As well as immersing themselves in blessing and building the new community, an important part of a new housing missioner may be to seek to build relationships between two disparate communities – this is kingdom building.

When calling someone to work on the estate it is really important to have a clear idea of expectations and outcomes for their mission and ministry right from the outset. [See *How to have a clear vision for outcomes and expectations*]

A Church Leader's view

Steve is the minister of a church with new housing in the area and led his church through the process of discernment regarding calling someone for the new estate. Members of the church had previously worked on another estate alongside ecumenical partners and through that he had become convinced about the importance of having someone dedicated to the new housing area and living on the estate.

Steve led the church through a spiritual and practical process. The church explored the call to mission and saw that mission really takes off when there is a dedicated person living on the estate. They also explored their desired outcomes. Seeing this as a missionary appointment freed them from the expectation of quick results such as church growth, a new faith community or financial return. They made the significant decision not to seek to dictate what should happen. There was not a prescribed plan, they would allow the person working on the estate to discern that.

Despite the necessary sacrifice and commitment required by the Minister, leadership, and members, they caught the vision to raise the funds, through grants, church funds, and congregational giving, to both buy a house and pay a Co-Minister to serve as a Community Minister on the estate. This financial commitment, and the faith behind it, was significant. Yet the church decided it would commit to paying the Community Minister for at least five years. Steve shared about a pivotal church meeting; at the beginning there was a sense that the vision was asking too much of them all, but during the meeting together they sensed God saying it was the right thing, everything turned around. They then had to decide whether they would employ a community worker or somebody who had undergone spiritual formation either as an ordinand or another process of spiritual formation. They decided that the ability to reflect theologically was an important part of the call as they would be ministering to the new residents in the area, and therefore felt spiritual formation was important.

The church also hopes and expects to learn about mission from the ministry of their Community Minister that will impact their mission in other contexts.

A Community Minister's View

When Helen arrived, she noted how helpful it was that the church had undergone such a good spiritual process. Right from the beginning she shared a vision with her Co-Minister, leadership team and wider church. Helen did not have to begin persuading the church about the importance of her role, they were already fully behind her, and putting their money where their mouths were! The new community also know that, whilst Helen is at the vanguard, there is a whole church committed to loving, blessing and serving this new community.

Being a Co-Minister, equal with the existing minister was also significant. This shows that there is a parity between church ministry and mission beyond, the established and the new, pastoring and pioneering.

Learning Points

Helen has noted the strength of working alongside an established church with a supportive congregation.

If both sides approach this in an open handed gracious way, as in this context, this approach can give a strength and stability to the new housing engager, and develop the discipleship and mission of the existing congregation.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see [The Contributor's Page](#)

Read about Helen's self-build context here https://baptisttimes.co.uk/Articles/547764/A_Grand_Design.aspx

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Helen Baker and Steve Barber for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

C4: How to work with Councils, Developers and other Stakeholders

Biblical/Practical Intro

- Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Luke 22:25-26 NIVUK

At a glance

- Approach your council or other stakeholders with Christlike humility and genuinely offer to serve
- Immerse yourself in the community before it is even built!
- Plan to love and serve the whole community; not just secure a space for Christians and Church activities
- Be Informed about terminology and language
- Be prepared to invest time and whatever resources you have before expecting support from others
- Have the right people in place

Building up relationships with the council, developers and other stakeholders is key to be able to serve a new community effectively. This needs to start long before the houses are built. Start as soon as you find out about the proposed new housing.

Approach your council or other stakeholders with Christlike humility and genuinely offer to serve.

It is essential as with all aspects of new housing engagement to approach these relationships with a Christlike attitude of serving rather than seeking to gain inroads to power.

Honestly modelling Christ's attitude of servanthood also makes an impression on stakeholders. One minister responded to news from the council that there was going to be a large new estate near their village, by asking what they, as Churches Together in the area, could do to help. This was the only positive response the council had received, they got in touch with minister and a fruitful relationship began. [If you don't know where new houses are planned see *How to identify areas where new housing is planned.*] Local people will always be included in housing consultation so share the vision with Christians who are local to the new housing.

Immerse yourself in new community before its even built! [See also *How to Unconditionally Bless the Community.*]

Ali attended every community meeting during the planning stages. Sue was employed before a house was built to engage with developers. Penny sat on the development board.

Plan to love and serve the whole community not just secure a space for Christians and Church Activities

Often Stakeholders assume that Christians are just like any other group or club who want to serve their own needs. If you are genuinely going to serve the whole community of all faiths and none, do make that clear. Ali explained to the housing association that they were going to deliver Welcome Baskets and listen to the community rather than bring a set agenda. This made a huge difference and the housing association decided to partner the work practically and financially.

Be Informed!

Use language that relates to the industry and community development. Use terms such as 'place making', Section 106 money, stakeholders, social capital, flourishing communities, wellbeing and community development. Understand the difference between outputs and outcomes. Ditch all Christian jargon! For example, Ali, whilst 'called to bless' used the term 'serve and love' the community whilst building relationships with stakeholders. One developer repeatedly mentioned the importance of placemaking and the desire to partner with churches but that churches weren't even talking about that.

Be prepared to invest time and whatever resources you have

Once churches have proved themselves, funding becomes more likely. One developer stated that 'money follows activity'. He felt some churches were waiting for funding to start anything. The developer had money, but it was public money so they had to be shown activity in order to be confident that a church would deliver what they were offering. Penny started a coffee morning: 'The [denomination] underwrote it so we could open every week even at the beginning, now the developers fund'. All the stakeholders that were interviewed for this project expressed enthusiasm for partnering with Churches/Christians/Faith Groups. They just wanted the partnership to be viable and successful.

Have the right people in place

- Pioneers

Interestingly, one developer noted the difference between working with pioneers and Christian leaders with a church to lead. They stated, 'because you're a pioneer, you haven't come with the baggage of a church to maintain', and 'we need to work with people who have time to work on an area.'

One Voice - Both developers and council noted the importance of one voice speaking for the churches on a particular development. For example, in Lincolnshire, the ecumenical administrator for Churches Together in All Lincolnshire has established good relationships with the local councils, and this has proved to be really helpful in creating initial contacts.

- Grassroots people

One council is exploring a Church/Council Charter. The council was intentional about wanting to engage locally. 'Churches have a unique ability to bring people together'. The council and the church brought together people who genuinely led within that place. Find out if your council wants to bring local people together and offer to help.

- Activists who live locally

One council stated that activists can pull things together on a local level, 'you need activists who live in community; those people are really important'. Ali found that when her stakeholders knew she was moving in, they engaged with her seriously in a way that they hadn't with the Church as an organisation.

Learning Points

- Sometimes there was lots of talking about strategy but not any actual action. We just need to be active and show how we make a difference by loving, serving and building community
- There was a reticence to fund Churches for community activities as there was a lack of clarity about the church's finance. We need to be open and be willing to use our own money before asking for more
- Making friends locally and engaging at a grass roots level doesn't cost anything, so even with no finance, start actively serving the community.
- Church needs to be clear to stakeholders that we are actively placemaking
- 'If you hammer home your faith, you risk developers never working with Christians again'

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see [The Contributor's Page](#)

Marsh, P., & Boulton, A. (2016). *Pioneer ministry in new housing areas: Personal reflections and a practical guide*. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited

For more resources see newhousinghub.org

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Sue Steer, John Rose and Penny Marsh for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews. Thank you to all the stakeholders who were happy to share their experience so openly.



SECTION D: HOW TO PLAN AND EVALUATE

Introduction

The call to test, discern examine if and how God is at work are clear principles throughout the bible. The Psalmist is constantly coming before God to be tested and examined (For example Psalms 26:2-3). Paul and John in their letters exhort their readers to examine themselves and test what people think the Spirit may be saying (2 Corinthians 13:5-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22, 1 John 4:1-2). In Colossians 3:16-17 Paul makes it clear that this is not purely self-examination but that together we should teach and admonish one another. Even Jesus is happy for people to evaluate his ministry alongside Scripture (see Isaiah 35 particularly verse 5 and 6) in order for people to decide whether he is 'the one'.

John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' When the men came to Jesus, they said, 'John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"' At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, illnesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, 'Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.' Luke 7:18-23 NIVUK

The principle and practice of testing, examining, and discerning is a good one. There are many models of project evaluation from different fields and disciplines that can helpfully inform our practice.

As with all areas of these guides, in this aspect too, it is important to ensure that the theology of who we are and the purpose of our calling is central to the practice of planning and evaluation. As Paul writes, 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.' (Romans 12:2 NIVUK) Where is God in this work and what is the Spirit revealing to us? This avoids functional atheism where God is excluded from the process and opens us to the possibly of Spirit led unexpected directions and outcomes.

As with all the guides, this section is an introduction to engaging with these complex areas.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11 NIVUK

HOW TO....

D1: How to have a clear vision for outcomes

Biblical/Practical Intro

So the king asked me, 'Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.' I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, 'May the king live for ever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?' The king said to me, 'What is it you want?' Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, 'If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.' Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, 'How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?' It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time. I also said to him, 'If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?' And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. Nehemiah 2:2-8

At a glance

- Open and honest conversations about vision calling and expectations between all involved is very important. Reflect on Nehemiah's approach above. Clarity between him and the king about the vision, the timescale and the resources enabled the project to thrive
- Don't over plan! God may lead in a different direction...

The majority of mission within new housing areas involves partnerships and teamwork. There may be an ecumenical partnership, a denominational partnership, and/or a partnership between an individual or team on the ground and a church/denomination/ecumenical body. Many of these partnerships have funding as a key element; relationships are always more complicated when money is involved!

In order to maintain good relationships within the partnership, it is essential to have a clear understanding of outcomes and expectations of the new housing engagement. Assumed and unspoken expectations either from individuals or the partners as a whole towards what is expected is incredibly unhelpful for both the partners and those on the ground. It can create friction or even destroy the partnership and put a stop to the mission altogether. In her book, *Dare to Lead*, Brene Brown states that 'Clear is kind', being vague for the sake of artificial unity, doesn't work and isn't kind. Openness is key. Nehemiah, despite being scared of the king and his reaction, states clearly what he feels called to do and the outcomes. This is a good model.

There are three key expected outcomes that are often voiced by churches, pioneers, teams, partnerships and funding bodies. It is helpful to question and discuss these expectations openly when forming partnerships.

- A. Is the expectation to start a church gathering on the estate as soon as possible? Is there a plan to build a gathering of people from elsewhere to worship and be church on the estate and then impact the local community and invite local people to church?
- B. Is the objective to impact the estate to transform the culture of the new housing community in line with kingdom values, and engage in community development.
- C. Do you want to impact the culture of the local new housing area, and see a new culturally relevant community of faith emerging from local people new to church coming to faith even if this takes time?

All of these aims and expectations have pros and cons [See table of *Outcomes and Expectations – Theology, Opportunities and Pitfalls*] but the key thing is to ensure that everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet. Sue and Helen both note the importance of the partnership sorting out their aims and vision before calling a lay or ordained person or team to engage on the ground so that they are clear about their remit. [See also *How to call someone to serve on the new estate*]. Sue was pleased that the ‘storming and forming’ had happened before she arrived!

When Helen arrived as Co-Minister of the church and Community Minister funded by the church and Denominational grants, the parameters and expectations were very clear. There was an expectation that the funding would go beyond a traditional three-year funding package, to at least five years. The church had agreed that there would be no expectations of a quick or immediate results such as financial return or church growth or new community. The existing Co-Minister, Steve, stated ‘We needed to free ourselves from that and view it as a missionary appointment.’ Using missionary language was helpful in terms of considering what might/might not happen. Helen walked into a church which has already caught the vision and owned it for themselves. They were unified in their call to reach out to the new estate, but there wasn’t a prescribed plan; this was something that Helen would discern as she lived and ministered on the estate.

Learning Points

- Unclear is unkind! Being vague about the outcomes and expectations in the interest of unity is not helpful
- It is important that everyone involved in funding or enabling missional engagement on a new estate agrees the vision, aims and outcomes for the venture. This may be a number of different churches in an ecumenical Church Together group, or a church where members are giving money to fund the work. The biggest issues seem to arise when one group of people is expecting a new church worship service to start quickly, whereas others are expecting community transformation or friendship building with local unchurched people to take priority
- It is also very important that the people on the ground, whether a lay team or an ordained minister or anyone in between, agree and understand the vision and expectations before accepting funding or relocating. There are big differences between a church planting, community activism and incarnational pioneering, even though they may all look very similar at the outset. Failure to be clear about the expected outcomes and how the mission will be evaluated can lead to painful issues and/or a thwarted project.
- Be realistic about expectations! There is no silver bullet for lasting individual or community transformation – especially amongst an unchurched community. Targets for numbers of new Christians or church attenders tend to be unhelpful and rely on the Holy Spirit rather than purely human activity (See *How to evaluate New Housing Engagement* and *How to join in with what God is doing*)
- Be open to the unexpected! Whatever our human expectations, remember that God may do something that we have neither asked nor imagined.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor’s Page

Brown, B. (2019). *Dare to Lead Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*. Vermillion London

Understanding Inputs, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact – a helpful blog <https://impact-evaluation.net/2013/06/10/difference-between-inputs-activities-outputs-outcomes-and-impact/>

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank You to Helen Baker, Steve Barber, and Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

D2: How to make an impact by identifying the right people

Biblical/Practical Intro

“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’”

Acts 6:1-4 NIVUK

At a glance

- Calling is important
- Gathering the right people who have a calling, heart and vision to bring about change strategically and spiritually is key to making a real difference in new housing
- Identify a key person to act as a catalyst in the area – whatever the size from village to county
- Work together across denominations to maximize the impact

It is the vision of the New Housing Hub (NHH) to ‘Work Together to share God’s Love in Every New Housing Area’. One of the ways this vision might be realised is by bringing together people who might make an impact.

Firstly, there needs to be someone with a passion and influence to drive forward the vision within a particular area. John has been working for a county wide Churches Together group. He has a vision for missional engagement in new housing across the county. He has identified where every new house is going to be built within the county thus enabling a strategic overview of which churches, denominations or networks might be able to take a lead in any particular area, whether large or small. He has been able to act as a catalyst within the county highlighting the importance of mission within new housing areas, nurturing relationships across denominations and enabling conferences and training events. A housing developer in another county noted the importance of having a key person to connect with from the churches.

Secondly, by working across denominations and networks there is a greater possibility of having the human and financial resource to cover every area of new housing across a geographical area. Not even the largest denominations have the resource to meaningfully engage with EVERY area of new housing, but by working together as the body of Christ across the nation the vision may be more attainable.

John and Pete (a rural pioneer practitioner and national enabler and national Fresh Expressions leader who has a vision for the county) explained how churches of all denominations, both pioneers and members of more established churches, might work together alongside local councils and other stakeholders to make a difference

within new housing areas. It was fascinating to note that whether they were talking about pioneers, established church structures or the council, the key principle they kept emerging about the importance of gathering the right people together to make a difference.

Pete noted that it's important to identify people who feel they have a calling to this work and a heart for an area rather than bringing people together on the basis of their role. He stated, 'We need people with a heart and a call rather than a job.'

This was echoed by Richard who noted that the diocesan new housing group was working well because it contained people on the ground, people who were enthusiastic about being engaged with new housing and chose to be part of the group. This group was playing a significant role in helping the Bishop create a strategic response.

The CEO of a local Council described the meetings that had developed between the council and local Christians. The strength of the group was that it had emerged organically – the CEO couldn't remember if it churches or the council had instigated the group, it had formed by people who had a heart for the flourishing of the local community. This is a relational gathering of people who wanted to be there. The CEO noted 'The moment it has minutes it will die!'

Finally allowing the right people to lead in order to make an impact means that leadership must be shared across churches so that those with the resources and calling make take a lead on different estates. In Bicester the CiB (Churches in Bicester) are working together as there is so much new housing so that different denominations and churches are heading up the mission on different new housing estates. This denominational lead model is working well within CiB. The different individuals, teams and churches engaging on the different estates are also able to share ideas, prayer together and practically support each other. Together they are making a greater impact on the town's new housing estates.

Learning Points

- Having people with a call and heart for new housing being at the forefront of the vision seems more effective than a group of people with more powerful roles but without necessarily a call to or involvement in new housing. The proviso for this that those with the authority give permission to these people to drive forward a vision, as with the example above

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Hear Pete's story of gathering people who have a call to follow God's heart.

<https://www.premier.org.uk/Across-the-UK/The-Midlands/Pete-Atkins-and-following-God-s-heart>

See Helen's story here https://baptisttimes.co.uk/Articles/547764/A_Grand_Design.aspx

See Chris' story here <https://www.hopebicester.org.uk/index.php/blog/>

Read more of Pete's reflections here <https://learningnetsi.org.uk/blog/dreaming-beyond-pete-atkins-threshold-church-lincolnshire>

The New Housing Hub has a vision to *work together across denomination and traditions to share God's love in every new housing area*. For a variety of resources and events see newhousinghub.org

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Pete Atkins, Helen Baker, Steve Barber, John and Many Bentley, Chris Hunt, John Rose & Richard Steel for sharing their stories and wisdom, to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews and to members of local councils and developers for their time and openness.

HOW TO....

D3: How to evaluate new housing engagement projects (Part 1)

Biblical/Practical Intro

- Luke 19:1-10 Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus
But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.' Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house...' Luke 19:8-9 NIVUK
- Mark 10:17-31 Jesus' encounter with the Rich Young Ruler
Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Mark 10:21-22 NIVUK
- Luke 10:1-24 Jesus sending out the 72 and evaluating their experience
'When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal those there who are ill and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God has come near."'" Luke 10:8-11 NIVUK
The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' Luke 10:17-18 NIVUK

At a glance

- Evaluating human interaction and behaviour is complex
- A Christlike perspective should underpin the evaluation of both the individuals engaging in new housing mission and the projects themselves
- Starting from biblical and theological reflection prevents working from a functionally atheistic perspective
- Functional atheism ignores the presence of God and the work of the Spirit and operates purely pragmatically.

Evaluation and assessment in any area that involves human interaction is complex. Especially if this is linked to funding and resources. Christian mission is no exception and these short *How to* guides will not resolve all the issues or tensions surrounding this issue. The purpose of these two guides is to introduce the issue of evaluation and encourage an approach which fully integrates the spiritual and practical/legal. It would be useful to read this *How to* guide in conjunction with *How to have a clear vision for outcomes*. These two guides (D2 and D3) address firstly spiritual questions and then practical approaches.

Given that the underlying principle of these *How to* guides, as laid out in Section A, is being Christlike, it is helpful to consider Jesus' missional engagement and the visible result. Jesus' two encounters cited above – one with Zacchaeus and one with the Rich Young Ruler had very different responses. One man is transformed, one walks away. Did Jesus effectively communicate the good news in one instance and ineffectively in the other? Similarly, when Jesus sends out the 72 he instructs them on their attitude, that they must bless the town or village, heal and proclaim good news, but he expects that in some places their message and presence will be welcomed and in others rejected. Finally, it is interesting to note the feedback between Jesus' and the 72 when they return.

Lk 10:17-18 makes it clear that the 72 have been involved in a spiritual activity beyond simply their actions. It is useful for those evaluating and those being evaluated to have honest discussions about what the mean by 'church', 'mission' and 'success'. These words can mean very different things to different people. (See also D3 – part 2 of this guide)

When seeking to assess those missionally engaging on new estates it is useful to consider from a theological perspective what we are seeking to measure:

- Are we measuring the input of those missionally engaging or the output (response) of local people? Would Jesus have had his funding continued if he were assessed in relation to Zacchaeus and removed if in relation to the Rich Young Ruler? It is a truism that people can only be held accountable for their own actions.
- The posture and practices of those missionally engaging can be evaluated to discern whether their attitude or gifts fits the missional calling to new housing (See Section A How to be Christlike..). However, it is also important to identify what is the work of the Spirit. it is unhelpful to impose targets or limitations on the Spirit as God may do something unexpected! (See *How to join in with what God is doing.*)

It is also helpful to question:

- In the light of Luke 10 is right to walk away? Is this a place where the blessing and good news is simply not welcomed? As well as advising the 72 to 'wipe the dust from their feet' both Jesus and Paul walk away from unfruitful places (see Mark 6:1-6 and Acts 13 note v51)

Finally, it is helpful to honestly consider the principles driving the evaluation

- Is it driven by a spiritual or a financial outcome? Signs of spiritual fruitfulness or the need for financial sustainability?
- Is it driven by the need to save the institution of the church or save local people and communities through the good news of the kingdom?

Learning Points

- Jesus response to the returning of the 72 reflects the theological nature of their mission, spiritual activity beyond their actions – Some pioneers and those missionally engaging in new housing have noted that both target setting and evaluation can be undertaken from a functionally atheist perspective outside of a theological and spiritual framework which can feel disconnected from their experience of joining in with the mission of God on their estate.
- Those evaluating have also noted the complexity of managing the legalities of funding, and the need for robust evaluation alongside the desire to support missionary activity.
- The relationship between those on the ground and funders can be fragile because of misunderstandings. Starting with theological reflection - perhaps using the passages above as a starting point - and some honest questions may help evaluate in both robust and Christlike ways.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Dunlop, A. J. (2018). *Out of nothing: A cross-shaped approach to fresh expressions*. London: SCM Press – a reflection evaluating the author's experience of missionally engaging on a new estate

Hollinghurst, S. (2013) *Starting, Assessing and Sustaining Pioneer Mission: A Guide for Pioneers, Permission-givers and Local Churches*. Cambridge, England: Grove Books

https://grovebooks.co.uk/products/ev-101-starting-assessing-and-sustaining-pioneer-mission-a-guide-for-pioneers-permission-givers-and-local-churches?_pos=1&_sid=04e9af4fc&_ss=r

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to all the contributors and Revd Mike Fegredo, Baptist Regional Minister for the East Midlands Baptist Association, who have reflected upon the complexities of evaluation with me.

HOW TO....

D4: How to evaluate new housing engagement projects (Part 2)

Biblical/Practical Intro

- Luke 19:1-10 Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus
But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.' Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house...' Luke 19:8-9 NIVUK
- Mark 10:17-31 Jesus' encounter with the Rich Young Ruler
Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Mark 10:21-22 NIVUK
- Luke 10:1-24 Jesus sending out the 72 and evaluating their experience
The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' Luke 10:17-18 NIVUK

At a glance

- Gather both quantitative and qualitative data for a fuller picture of the missional engagement
- In planning and evaluating be clear by using specialist terms
- Measure impact using social impact measuring tools
- If 'church' is a desired outcome, explore what is meant by the term and what it may look like on a new estate with those not from church backgrounds.

Quantitative verses Qualitative Data

The first issue to address is the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to access the data you require. It can be easy to rely on a quantitative approach as that generates numbers that seem factual and solid. However, this can mean reducing the missional engagement that is happening on the estate to how many people attend a defined 'church' gathering or who have become Christians. This can assume a Christendom model of church which may not be culturally relevant to the context and may ignore many ways in which the community as a whole and individuals within it may be undergoing transformation. Qualitative data captures the breath and complexity of the new housing engagement but can be difficult to analyse and lack the structure needed to evaluate the effectiveness of a project. Those funding can often favour quantitative evaluation whereas those engaging on the ground favour qualitative. This can lead to misunderstanding and even suspicion on both sides.

Ali has noted ways in which the local housing association evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement. The use of a qualitative structure with the integration of numerical data helps to create a more rounded picture of what is happening. Numbers are significant but it is important to count the right things! In a culture where committing to regularly attending an activity is not the norm, measuring the number of friendships, conversations, and people who have engaged spiritually informally will be more significant than the number of people at a church gathering. 40 at a church gathering compared to 15 elsewhere might look impressive. But if the 40 are the only people on the estate with whom the team or pioneer have a relationship compared to 300 that the team with 15 who gather have, a different picture emerges. Lythan names the importance of stories when evaluating the effectiveness of the missional engagement. Qualitative stories are essential for unpacking the truth behind the quantitative numbers.

Understanding the Language

It is helpful to understand the difference between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact – the blog in the links below simply unpacks the definitions. Using specific terms is helpful when setting up the project to reduce confusion when evaluating projects.

Measuring Impact

Those engaging in new areas will often experience transformation and know that something good is happening but find it hard to articulate. Measuring impact using social impact measurement methodology can highlight change that is happening within the community and individuals. Lythan notes the importance of people making friends within the community thus reducing isolation. ‘When I have helped people meet, I know I have done something good’. It is hard to quantify the practical or spiritual impact of such encounters. Social impact measurement can highlight a journey of change or discipleship before any measurable signs such as baptism or attendance at faith gatherings. See the links below for ways to evaluate using social impact measurement methods.

A word about ‘church’

‘Church’ is often cited as a desired outcome from new housing engagement. Ali and John both note the complexity of this seemingly simple word. If contextually and culturally relevant ‘church’ is to be allowed to emerge in these new communities, it is important to engage with the meaning of the word. Churches that emerge amongst those with no church background are unlikely to look like inherited churches. Both John and Ali are intentionally *being* church on their new estate which is as important to their missional engagement as gatherings. John states ‘Some people think I don’t do church, but Sunday community breakfast is church and Sunday’s fun run is church’. Although churches emerging from local communities are unlikely to look like more established models of church, they will change and evolve over time. Knowing where a church is in its life cycle is helpful.

Part 1 of this guide explores evaluation theologically.

Learning Points

Evaluating missional work is a hugely sensitive area and something that is problematic for both those being evaluated and those evaluating. It can be hurtful and damaging. An openness and willingness to listen and learn from one another is essential. Seeing evaluation as part of spiritual discernment within a context of hearing God speak acknowledges that mission is not simply a human activity.

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see [The Contributor’s Page](#)

Hollinghurst, S. (2013) *Starting, Assessing and Sustaining Pioneer Mission: A Guide for Pioneers, Permission-givers and Local Churches*. Cambridge, England: Grove Books

Understanding Inputs, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact – a helpful blog <https://impact-evaluation.net/2013/06/10/difference-between-inputs-activities-outputs-outcomes-and-impact/>

Measuring Impact

<http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/files/8113/4996/6882/>

[Getting started in social impact measurement - 270212.pdf](#)

<http://www.inworkproject.eu/toolbox/index.php/glossary-resources/resources/evaluation-and-impact-measurement>

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to John Bentley, Lythan Nevard and Revd Mike Fegredo, Baptist Regional Minister for the East Midlands Baptist Association for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his help with the interviews



SECTION E: HOW TO ENGAGE IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Introduction

Every new housing context is different. These *How to* guides draw on stories from towns, villages, cities; the new houses form new suburban estates, new towns, and areas of new urban apartments. Some of the areas are social and affordable homes, some are high end. People are engaging with these new residents, making friends, and building community in a whole variety of ways. Some are particularly focussing on sports and fitness, others arts and crafts. Many are reimagining what 'church' looks like in their context, often alongside those with no link to the existing church usually without a building. Some live within the area of new homes, others are finding ways of sharing God's love with the community whilst living elsewhere. This resonates with the mission of the early church as they worked out what it looked like to be a Gentile Christian in new contexts and cultures (see Acts 15.)

Although many underlying Christlike remain the same, they are embodied differently in different contexts. This section considers these different approaches.

Engaging through the arts



Engaging through sports and games



Reimagining church



HOW TO....

E1: How to work in dense urban areas with flats and apartments

Biblical/Practical Intro

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to **every** town and place where he was about to go. He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.' Luke 10:1-2 NIVUK [My emphasis]

At a glance

- Areas of new apartments or flats are almost impossible to access directly – but don't avoid these areas
- Friendships can be developed with residents over time by connecting creatively with local stakeholders, businesses, and organisations
- God is at work in these areas as with all new areas – the stories below show how two pioneers were inspired by God and made an impact in their areas building community and sharing faith

Many of the underlying principles of these *How to* guides, such as being Christlike, listening to the community, being led by the Spirit, are transferable to all different contexts. However, the practical realisation of the principles can look quite different in different areas. One of the biggest differences is between new areas of housing and areas of flats and apartments. Accessing apartment blocks to visit or deliver welcome baskets is almost impossible if you do not live there as external doors are locked, and door knocking contravenes social etiquette if you do live there. Betsy and Hasna however, have both found ways of pioneering into these hard to access new build areas by taking a creative and indirect approach to connecting with the community. Neither could connect directly with residents in their homes but worked with others to impact the community and share faith in creative ways. These are their stories.

Betsy's Story

Betsy is in a densely populated area of London and the new builds are high end. The building strategy is complex involving many different developers over several years and the area itself crosses council boundaries. It is impossible to identify who was moving in and there are so many new residents and no access to the apartment blocks which are intensely private. Betsy believed that God gave her a vision for an arts ministry in the area, which was confirmed by the creation of a new post by Southwark Diocese. This was both contextually relevant as the development was on the South Bank – and there was an expectation in the plans that each developer would have their own cultural policy - and drew on her previous experience working in the arts including for the National Theatre. Betsy connected with stakeholders, and 'anyone who had connections.' Although she resisted being co-opted onto local committees, she connected with lots of groups and networks and became known for being committed to the community and started to be seen as a key person. She also began to make connections with people engaged in the arts and arts organisations. She felt that God led her to connect with the right people as joined in with the vision he had given her to establish Nine Elms Arts Ministry, focussed on arts, spirituality and social justice.

Betsy had no building for the ministry, so she began pop-up events. Given the demographic of the area these had to be high quality credible events. Working with a number of Christian creatives she ran: a series of Arts wellbeing events, an Easter Hope installation and a large-scale Advent Calendar project involving around 50 organisations. These helped develop stakeholder relationships and connect the existing and new housing. Betsy notes that it was nearly two years before she could begin to directly connect with residents through the events

and organisations she had connected with. In her context it was essential to work with organisations. There was a sense in joining in with what God was doing as she saw resources multiply. The artistic credibility of the events enabled the emerging ministry to reach more of the public, begin to bring together the existing and new residents and embody the good news of the gospel.

Hasna's Story

Hasna was in area of apartment dwelling in the south of England. Like Betsy physical access was an issue so she also engaged by taking a creative approach by connecting with stakeholders, organisations, businesses in the area. She states, 'I spent the initial 6 months building up trust with key stakeholders and people of peace. This involved connecting with people as humans. This included, developers, estate management, local businesses and residents. The people of peace included key people in the community. All this work was the equivalent of laying the foundations.' She particularly connected with the cafe on the estate and within the first six months she was able to produce and direct the first ever 'alternative Nativity' with social justice carols in the café. This was so well received that she was repeatedly invited back. 'Entering a community space like a local café or library as a guest won the trust of key stakeholders which meant I could show case anything I wanted in [the café] because of the mutual respect.'

Hasna similarly connected with the local library and through this was able to serve local children. On the day the library was closed, Hasna asked the main librarian to deliver story time at the café. This meant that children who would not have had visited the library were able to access these sessions.

During her reflection time one day, Hasna noticed some raised beds in the communal garden area. Hasna shares that she 'wondered if the developers would let me use them to get residents to grow produce for the whole community of Centenary Quay. A week later, there was an advertisement for the same plots free of charge. So I adopted a little patch for the community, it was blessed by Bishop Jonathan. No wonder it was so successful! Residents became involved in the care of this patch and produce was distributed to the community free of charge.'

Hasna concluded that 'the mission work in this area flourished despite the physical access issue in apartment buildings.' Unfortunately, the ending to Hasna's story is that this was a three-year post. The work within the new apartments has now ceased, leaving no opportunity to continue to build on the solid foundations.

Learning Points

Both Betsy and Hasna noted that it takes a considerable amount of time to make a lasting difference in these communities. This requires longer term posts and funding. The Fresh Expression trajectory suggests 7 years. Culturally connecting with high end city apartments requires considerable financial investment. Obtaining grants from other stakeholders and organisations operating in the area maybe key to the sustainability of these projects. However, match funding may be required from the denomination or supporting body in order to secure these financial partnerships. Hasna notes that in her case, despite match funding, and her post being funded from elsewhere, it was decided to terminate this work and start a different project because of a change of priorities. Hasna advocates a longer commitment to make a lasting difference.

Other Links and Resources

Read Hasna's story in full on newhousing.org/talesfromnewcommunities

Hasna's story may also be found at <https://churchmissionsociety.org/resources/video-pioneer-ministry-new-housing-projects> This project is at the following time slots: 8.20, 12.04, 13.06, 14.10.

Read more of Betsy's story <https://southwark.anglican.org/help/giving/southwark-vision-development-fund/difference/new-worshipping-communities>

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank you to Betsy Blatchley and Hasna Khatun for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.

HOW TO....

E2: How to serve on the estate if you don't live there

Biblical/Practical Info

- After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go...When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house." If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. 'When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal those there who are ill and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." Luke 10:1, 5-9 NIVUK

At a glance

- Move onto the estate if you can but be assured that God still works through those for whom it is not possible!
- Being a guest is a powerful embodiment of the Gospel
- Have an incarnational posture whether or not you live on the estate – find ways of being with the community and being part of the space
- There may be strategic reasons for moving on later

Theologically and practically there are many advantages to living on the estate that you are called to serve. Theologically living on the estate models something of the Incarnation of Christ – a God who dwells amongst us. Living on the estate creates a sense of solidarity, of being fully embedded in the life of the community, of journeying together, of being one with one another. Practically it enables friendships to grow naturally, as neighbours, encountering one another in the everyday. Being a resident also brings privileges such as being part of the residents' association or having access to community consultation events.

Spiritually, it's important to lay down our lives and be both willing to move but also accept when that doesn't happen. There are many reasons why living on the estate simply is not possible, even if we are willing or eager. This How to guide addresses how we might still serve the community in authentic and helpful ways if we live off the estate.

Penny shared the importance of being a guest and how Jesus was usually the guest rather than the host. If you don't live on the estate, always approach the community as a guest. Resist any temptation to behave as if you are 'in charge'. [See *How to have a Posture of Servanthood*] Even if the church has appointed you to leadership, remember that that this holds little sway with those beyond the church and may even alienate people. If you join any community Facebook pages, be extremely sensitive. Many don't welcome 'outsiders'. However, if you have joined because you are genuinely willing and able to serve or partner the community in some way, make sure you are open about not being a resident and be authentic in your service.

Penny found that she began to receive invitations to people's houses, and she felt that inhabiting the role of guest powerfully modelled something of the Gospel. When the community Facebook group decide to ban non-residents, they chose to keep Penny.

Seeking to be incarnational in approach remains important even if you cannot live on the estate. One of the ways to achieve this is to find different ways of inhabiting the space and orientating yourself within the community. Both Fiona and John found that walking their dog through the estate was a good way of being present. (This can also be combined with prayer walking!) Fiona found that as she walked her dog she smiled at people and that

opened conversations. 'I've got into very deep conversations just by smiling at people' she shared. As she walked around the estate, she 'bumped into people' and this was a way of immersing herself in the community. Fiona also joined the local WI.

Sue incarnationally inhabited the space through a community hub. By being employed early she had been able to build a relationship with the landowners and together they negotiated a temporary building as a Community Hub. She stated that 'You need a base. A place of hospitality.' In some ways the hub was better than using her home as it a neutral space. 'It's not **my** hub although we paid bills. It serves the community'. Sue further noted that within her community it was not the cultural norm to visit people at home and so again in that respect the Hub was a better place of incarnational connection than a private residence.

Fiona's community 'hub' emerged as she began to get to know people. She started a weekly pop-up café at the local school. This is a space which intentionally has no spoken Christian content, but it enables her to be present and get to know people. This unthreatening incarnational presence has enabled faith conversations to develop and some of those people are now part of a group exploring faith. [See *How to start a faith gathering/birth a church*].

It is significant to note that you can work with a group that is already on the estate, by joining in with activity (see *How to have a Posture of Servanthood*) or envisioning existing Christians who live in the new housing. Being incarnational is as much about posture as a place of dwelling. Even if you cannot live on the estate you can still join in with the mission of God in an authentically incarnational way.

Finally, Penny and Ali, in their book *Pioneer Ministry in New Housing Areas State*, 'It may be strategic not to live on an estate immediately, for example if the first houses are being built on the remote edges..' (8)

So, if you can not leave there for whatever reason, do not be discouraged, keep following the vision God has given you - as a guest rather than resident.

Learning Points

- Living on the estate makes joining in with God's mission easier. But new houses are expensive! Many missionaries/pioneers lay or ordained struggle to buy a house on a new estate. Denomination bodies and large churches need to explore what they can do to purchase, part own or raise funds to enable these missionaries/pioneers to live in the area that they are called to serve
- Short term contracts or three-year funding mean that those who would be willing sell up and use their own money to purchase a house don't have the job security to do so
- Missionally engaging on a new estate that you don't live on needs a posture of humility and servanthood. Remember that people beyond the church aren't interested or impressed by our internal church job appointments!

Other Links and Resources

For details of contributors, see The Contributor's Page

Marsh, P., & Boulton, A. (2016). *Pioneer ministry in new housing areas: Personal reflections and a practical guide*. Cambridge: Grove Books Limited

Read more of Sue's story <https://thejazzgoat.wordpress.com/2020/05/14/sowing-in-concrete-ales-of-church-taking-shape-in-new-housing-areas-new-lubbersthorpe/>

Read more of Penny's story Sunday Active see <https://freshexpressions.org.uk/connect/local-pioneer-centres/sunday-active-ebbsfleet-garden-city/>

Read more of Fiona's story www.haywoodvillagechurch.org

Author: Alison Boulton. Thank You to John and Mandy Bentley, Penny Marsh, and Sue Steer for sharing their stories and wisdom and to Dan Simpson for his support with the interviews.



ANNEX: LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The Rev'd Alison Boulton (Ali) has led this project exploring the theology and practice of missionally engaging in new housing areas and creating these *How to* guides, on behalf of The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and Community. She is passionate about mission both as a practitioner and consultant seeking to inspire and equip others to engage incarnationally in local communities with those beyond the established church. She specialises in developing mission within new housing areas and has lived on a new housing estate for over a decade, blessing residents, sharing faith and birthing a community relevant church, The Stowe, which she now co-Ministers with Rev Owen Green. Along with Rev Penny Marsh she has co-founded the national ecumenical New Housing Hub where she and Penny are now co-directors. She is a Baptist minister and Pioneer Ambassador for the Baptist Union of Great Britain; is part of the national Fresh Expressions core team and is currently undertaking Doctoral research into missional engagement in new housing. Ali is hugely grateful to all those who have shared their wisdom and stories and supported the project in a variety of ways.



Pete Atkins is part of the Fresh Expressions leadership community with a particular interest and involvement in rural communities. He leads Threshold - a Church in Lincolnshire which is active in a number of villages including several with new housing estates. He and his wife, Kath, lead the Lincolnshire Pioneer Community and Pete chairs the Lincolnshire Fresh Expressions Area Strategy Team under the auspices of Churches Together in All Lincolnshire. These bring involvement with other leaders in the county who encourage new Christian communities to develop including in the many new housing areas now being built or planned. He works closely with John Rose.

The Rev'd Helen Baker – I work out of Orchard Baptist Church in Bicester, Oxfordshire, where I am co-minister. Unlike most ministers my responsibilities are not within the church, but within the community of Graven Hill housing development where I live and minister. I have been the community minister for 2 years listening and building relationships in order to join in with God's plans here and serve our residents as I am called. The Mission statement for this community ministry is 'building kingdom values into the foundations of this community'.

The Rev'd Steve Barber - I am co-minister at Orchard Baptist Church in Bicester, where I have served for 10 years. My gifting and calling are as a traditional pastor-teacher. I have the heart of an evangelist, but am not skilled in this area, and so am delighted to work alongside others who have such passion and gifting. For ten years I regularly visited China and saw how the church thrived even when it was impossible to meet in traditional ways. I feel the UK church today needs both traditional and new forms, with the traditional enabling and supporting the founding of these new expressions.

Captain John Bentley - My journey with God began as an emergency engineer at British Gas. After a dramatic conversion, I joined Church Army, a 'home mission' organisation linked to the Anglican church. I was commissioned in 1994 as a Church Army Evangelist. My ministry within the Anglican structure has included being Youth Pastor, Prison Chaplain and now the Community Minister. All have involved working inside and out of the established church as a Pioneer, which reflects the vision of Wilson Carlile when he created Church Army to serve those sat outside on the steps of the church. The past 26 years of ministry have taught me that the '*church needs to change for the Gospel to remain the same*'.

Mandy Bentley (Children and Family Mission Lead) I was aware of God from childhood, even though I wouldn't have had the language to express this. As a dyslexic I struggled with the education system and left school with few qualifications and low self-esteem. I found the courage to attend 'church' when I was pregnant with my first daughter. My first vicar was significant on my faith journey saying I was 'wasted and should be a teacher!' Two degrees later plus my teaching qualification my life is unrecognisable to my early years. The past 30 years have been an incredible faith journey, I have had the privilege of working with and discipling people within schools, colleges, prisons, the established church and church as a missional community.

The Rev'd Betsy Blatchley is currently Pioneer Minister in the Arts working in Nine Elms on London's South Bank, one of the largest redevelopment areas in Europe with a potential population increase of 25,000. She has ministered in several urban parishes across London and Southwark Diocese. Before ordination Betsy had a long career in professional theatre, initially as an actor/ singer, then as a producer, culminating in several years working at the National Theatre. Much of her work in theatre was aimed at creating accessible work for new audiences from classics to new works and from serious drama to musical theatre. Her current role, establishing a new community in Nine Elms around arts spirituality and social justice, brings together her two vocations.

The Rev'd Owen Green - I co-minister at The Stowe Church alongside Ali Boulton. The Stowe is based in an area of new housing in Swindon and focusses on joining in with the mission of God in this specific geographical context. I am called to live into the DNA of The Stowe which includes unconditional blessing and laying down my life. Ministry has seen me take on paid roles at the local pub and CoE Secondary school where I act as board member, badminton coach, mini-bus driver and chaplain. I also help lead the local community running club. All of this is part of what ministry looks like for me, and I love it.

The Rev'd Tina Hodgett is Evangelism and Pioneer Team Leader at the Diocese of Bath and Wells where she helps foster a holy rumpus at the grassroots of church life. In 2011 Tina was recruited as pioneer team vicar in Portishead, a target town for new housing developments, and her ministry involved (among other things) engaging with communities in the areas of new housing area. Tina studied Russian and German language and literature as an undergraduate and learned the skills of cross-cultural engagement in Soviet Russia. She taught languages for 12 years in Hertfordshire and before ordination was a senior leader and consultant in education.

Chris Hunt is an ordinand, training for pioneer ministry in the Church of England. He lives in Bicester with his wife Autumn whom he met in Memphis TN playing blues and folk music – along with 3 children and a lively cockapoo named Snowball. Chris is currently church planting; Hope Church Bicester on an Eco town in rural Oxfordshire, seeking to reach residents and modern eco warriors with the gospel through creative means and a shared passion in creation care and one planet principles. Chris believes in the centrality of incarnational ministry and runs a pop-up cafe for residents as well as various community and church initiatives that aim to engage people in thought, creativity and through intentional spiritual conversation.

The Rev'd David Johnson - David was ordained in 2013 before which he provided business and enterprise support through his own business and other private and public-funded agencies. This entrepreneurial spirit is now being put to use as a pioneer 20s-40s minister in Northallerton as part of the Diocese of York's Multiply programme. Based on one of the new housing estates in this vibrant market town, David is working with others to build a community to which people feel a sense of belonging in which they feel safe to ask questions and hear the gospel of Jesus.

The Rev'd Hasna Khatun – a Pioneer Minister who thinks that the ills of Barbie and Ken can be redeemed. Hasna came to follow Christ in 1995 after the witness of her Jewish best friend. Pioneer Ministry started for her in the night-time economy of Birmingham in 2001. She raised several teams of volunteers to work alongside her in various establishments in the night-time economy. Then in 2011, she went to Ordination Training College where she was the only BAME Ordinand. She has an MA in Theology from Queens Foundation and is passionate about God's Mission. She has a particular interest in Liberation Theology, Pioneer Missiology and the Discipleship of ex-Muslims.

The Rev'd Dr. Jill Marsh is a Methodist minister currently working as Mission Enabler for the Northampton Methodist District. She has been involved in beginning and supporting work on new housing estates across the district, in an enabling role, particularly using a Community Chaplaincy model. She is especially interested in the diversity of human life and how to help existing and new churches witness to the Christian conviction that absolutely everybody is made in the image of God.

The Rev'd Penny Marsh, along with her family, has been pioneering in new housing areas since her ordination as a Baptist Minister 22 years ago. Penny's primary focus as a mission enabler for the South Eastern Baptist Association, is pioneering in the new Ebbsfleet Garden City in Kent. Penny has experienced both incarnational living and 'being a guest'. Being involved in this area prior to the first home being built means Penny has worked with other denominations, council, developers, and planners. She also chairs the Churches Together in England New Housing Areas group. Penny loves the opportunities and challenges that new housing developments present and is keen to see missional communities emerge that witness to the love and transformational power of Christ.

Fiona Mayne leads a Church plant on a new housing estate in Weston Super Mare with an amazing team. She is a Pioneer Ordinand with the Church of England and started the outreach work in 2014. She now runs a pop up café called Take 5 based in the school as well as Tea and Toast Church which is a monthly informal café style Church. She has also set up youth work in the area and also runs a weekly discipleship group called Rooted. She is passionate about hospitality and gathering people to form a loving community.

Nat Moody - I am a Baptist Pioneer Minister in training in Year 6 of Spurgeon's college. I specialise in Holistic ministry. In other words, I seek to look at what it is for us to be whole emotionally, spiritually and physically, challenging people to grow and develop in emotional maturity and cognitive development - as well as being a qualified fitness instructor and exploring what it is to physically train as active worship. I also specialise in addiction recovery work, leading, training, facilitating and consultation, and developing aftercare and recovery communities that can flourish in active service in giving back. I am a happily married father of 5, from Sevenoaks in Kent

The Rev'd Lythan Nevard - official title "Minister for Cranbrook" but known as Revnev, as that is much easier than pronouncing my name! Cranbrook is a new town being built on the edge of Exeter. There are currently about 2,500 houses but it is set to grow to about 8,000 in the next few years. The demographic is young, with huge numbers of families and also a rising tide of teens as people tend to move in and stay here. Our fresh expression of Church is a project of the Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed Churches. Cornerstone does not have its own building so meets in a local school, online, anywhere we can, to share God's love with our community.

John Rose - Pam and I have been privileged to spend almost our whole lives in evangelism and mission. For 26 years we were leaders of a large international mission organisation working in almost 60 countries. Coming after retirement to Churches Together in All Lincolnshire (CTAL), I have become passionate to see the church engage in the very many new housing developments which are transforming this primarily rural county. CTAL's role has been to provide stimulus, information, training and encouragement. In particular, we are encouraging churches to work together to reach new communities, and to work in partnership with our (mostly very willing) local authorities to develop holistically sustainable lifestyles.

The Rev'd Richard Steel is Mission Team Leader for the Diocese of Lincoln. Richard is the first point of contact for anything to do with the mission and outreach of the Church, including evangelism and social action. He leads the diocese New Housing Group. Along with other members of the Mission Team he also leads Leading your Church into Growth (LYCiG) within the diocese, aiming is to encourage churches to think about 'growth' in its widest sense – not just numbers, but also spiritual development and joyful service. Richard is a 'critical friend', who 'walks alongside' everyone involved in the life of the church listening and talking about new approaches or ideas on how to lead their mission.

The Rev'd Sue Steer is a Baptist Minister with an ecumenical and community heart, she currently works as an ecumenical Pioneer Community Worker in New Lubbethorpe, a new housing development. Having worked in community engagement for 15 years, her previous experience includes setting up a new community centre in refurbished church buildings. Since arriving in Lubbethorpe in 2016 Sue has welcomed new residents and together they have created activity groups and established a Community Hub to help residents connect and make friends. Hosting large community events has also helped create a sense of 'place' in this new community. Supported by the developer, an ecumenical Christian Community, Heart and soul, and an outdoor family Church have been seeded along with Lubbethorpe Alive CIC.

Jade Zerk is a Baptist Pioneer Minister in Training at Hope Baptist Church in Highbridge. A role which allows Jade to serve both community and the local church, alongside training at Bristol Baptist College and study of a diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission. Prior to this role, Jade served as a Community Engagement Worker on a New Housing Estate and as an administrator for the New Housing Hub, for three and a half years. Jade is a writer for the Seventy-Two Network and a FORGE Coach. Jade is passionate about journeying with people wherever they are at and doing life together.