

# How we can help parishes to flourish

**Q: HOW can we prioritise the work that the Portsmouth Diocesan Council for Social Responsibility (CSR) does with parishes?**

A: The CSR is a separate charity that is run by a board of directors/trustees. The recently agreed vision is for the development, renewal and flourishing of local communities for the common good.

Its work includes specific parishes within this diocese, but it has also worked with parishes in dioceses as far afield as Truro and Bristol. It is led by the Director of Social Enterprise and Engagement - Canon Nick Ralph.

Its values are based on a strong social vision of living the gospel, working alongside Anglican communities to identify new opportunities to spread the gospel. This includes working collaboratively with parishes and their local communities to achieve transformation; promoting outwardly-focussed engagement with the community; inspiring people in communities to serve one other; and finding ways to

## frequently asked questions

**Last year's Archdeaconry consultations gave you a chance to ask central diocesan staff questions about their work. Those questions were noted down and are the basis of this Pompey Chimes feature – in which we try to answer the questions that you're asking.**

make this more sustainable.

Typically it has done this via a process called the 'rapid development programme' (rdp), which involves working with our parishes to identify opportunities for engagement with more people and that also have the potential to become self-sustaining. That might involve not just launching new activities, but using assets such as finances and property more creatively.

One of the parishes that has benefitted from this approach is St Michael's, Paulsgrove, where the church was at the heart of a new campaign called 'Proud to be Paulsgrove', celebrating all that is good about that community.

It enabled the church to bring community leaders around

the table to talk about ways in which local residents could be inspired to become prouder of their community, and many local organisations now want to be part of the campaign. The Church was the one trusted and independent organisation that was able to make this happen in a positive, open and useful way, involving local businesses and schools.

CSR also manages the Good Neighbours Support Service (GNSS), which advises 123 good neighbour groups across Hampshire. Typically, these groups encourage trained volunteers (now numbering over 4,000) to drive the elderly or infirm to medical appointments, do shopping for or with them, befriend the isolated and

lonely, or help with practical tasks around the house. This is a collaborative project across the three Hampshire dioceses of Winchester, Guildford and Portsmouth and is funded by the county council and local health commissioners.

CSR would also like to develop the work of the GNSS, potentially expanding it to other dioceses as an Anglican-sponsored social franchise and potentially also as a new wider Anglican social brand.

CSR has now put together a three-year plan for 2016-18, which seeks to develop its work, including rdp and GNSS. It will focus initially on those parishes which have already been through the 'rapid development programme', and are focussing on building their impact locally. It will also involve finding new parishes where there are similar opportunities, mainly in areas of disadvantage.

CSR also wants to help parishes to create and develop new socially enterprising activities. These are business opportunities making a commercial return so they often need to charge something for their services in

some way, but they also aim to offer a social benefit at the same time. This might be in the use of profits, ploughing them back into the local community, or the way they employ people who might struggle to get into a job, or by charging a lower rate in the first place for services to certain groups.

Where appropriate, CSR supports new and creative approaches to leadership, management and engagement which has led to some long term collaborations with the University of Portsmouth – with the School of Architecture and the Centre for Enterprise, and with the Kaospilots School in Denmark.

Among recent developments is that for 50 per cent of his time, Nick Ralph has a new role assisting our neighbouring diocese to develop and run the new Winchester Social Enterprise. The work there has a different emphasis but there are useful points of connection and potentially collaboration.

If you would like to know more, contact Nick Ralph on 023 9289 9674 or nick.ralph@csrnet.org.uk

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