



# Transforming Norwich

**Making Norwich a Fine Community**



## A year of Progress



*Churches Together in Greater Norwich*

Annual Report '07





# A year of progress

This year has been my third year in office. It has been a year of progress.

The executive took time out to wait on God and consider what we are here for. The result was the vision which we have written based upon Isaiah 58. We sought to answer the question, what would Norwich look like as a fine community? After careful thought and prayer our conclusion was the vision statement you will find on the centre page. We will do everything we can to see the fulfilment of this statement. One thing is certain, only a church united in mission, functioning at the heart of the City, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will succeed.

Subsequent to the appointment of the new executive at last years AGM we have been working as a team of people who each have a role to play. It is a great team, working in a variety of ways, to fulfil our mis-

The occasion of the Sheriff's invitation to church leaders to meet him and to hear from Peter Brierley of Christian Research Institute was an outstandingly worthwhile time. Between John Drake's reminder of our history and heritage in Norwich and Peter's presentation of the status quo in the church in England, and in particular in Norfolk, as well as his pointers to the way ahead, we had a feast. The Salvation Army generously allowed us to use there premises for this event. The only disappointment was in the numbers of those attending. (May I personally congratulate John Drake on a wonderful year of service to the city as Sheriff. I am certain he has sown into Norwich seed for the kingdom which will bear fruit over the years to come.)

As I look forward to our new year of serving the church in Norwich my prayer is that we shall move forward, even more significantly, in our united mission to serve Jesus in ways which make Norwich a fine community.

John Betts

Chair of Transforming Norwich

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sion and vision. You can see for yourself what they are doing though the pages of this report. I would like to thank all of them for there commitment and active participation throughout this year. I feel we have made a significant move forward.

We have continued our long standing activities such as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the Good Friday service. The procession of witness was well attended this year, over two hundred people walked from Chapelfield Methodist church to the Anglican Cathedral, ably accompanied by the Salvation Army band. The service itself was a powerful act of united worship. Our thanks are due to all who made this event the success it was. However, maybe the time has come to consider the way we conduct corporate Christian witness to the city in which God has placed us. We are living in a new era which challenges us to communicate the old, old truth of the gospel, in new and exciting ways appropriate to this generation. We should not however change just for the sake of change. Therein lies the challenge.

## Transforming Norwich

There are three types of membership

### 1 Congregational members

Membership is open to any congegation within Greater Norwich area which affirms the basis and objectives within the constitution.

### 2 Christian Organisations

Membership is open to any Christian organisation within Greater Norwich which affirms the basis and objectives within the constitution

### 3 Individual Members

Membership is open to any individual worshipping in one of the congregations, or working in one of the Christian organisations in the Greater Norwich area, who affirms the basis and objectives within the constitution. Associate membership. Any congregation, organisation or individual which cannot subscribe fully to the basis of the constitution may be an associate member at the discretion of the Executive Committee.



## Communications

The communications department of Transforming Norwich has been run out of the office of St. Luke's church in Aylsham Road since January.

Before then it was run very efficiently by David Roberts for many years.

We are very grateful for all the work he put in.

His legacy is a database of members and people who have expressed an interest in Transforming Norwich.

Nicholas and Heather Vesey have taken on the task of developing this, and have set up a system where members can now be reached by email as well as Royal Mail.

We have about 300 people with whom we are regularly in touch.

The 'diary of events' that David Roberts used to send round is now sent, by Transforming Norwich, direct from the Network Norwich Website under the name 'EventWatch'.

Members of Transforming Norwich are able to use the database by ordering labels for their own projects. A small administration fee enables us to develop the functionality of the system.

We plan to expand the database over the next year.

**Nicholas & Heather Vesey**



*Nicholas and Heather Vesey*

## Membership

At the end of the Financial Year 2006/7 year the membership of Transforming was 44 churches, 10 organisations and 1 individual, bringing the total to 55. However, there were a number of movements behind these figures – 5 churches joined for the first time, 1 new organisation and 1 individual membership. Against this there were 4 churches and 1 organisation who didn't renew membership, as well as 3 organisations which ceased to operate. Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 three more churches have become members.

**Our desire is to encourage all Christian churches and organisations in Greater Norwich to come on board and embrace a common vision of making Norwich a Fine Community, where Christians are serving Christ in the heart of the community and working together with everyone who cares about the quality of community life.**

**John & Jean Easton**



## Hope '08 and Young People

It's great for Norwich Youth For Christ to have the opportunity to be involved with Transforming Norwich, and widen our efforts to promote unity and help churches engage with young people in their communities.

One of the key initiatives we are promoting through this partnership is Hope 08, a national initiative designed to help the whole church engage more with its communities. With its well-resourced and yet flexible framework Hope offers an enormous opportunity for the whole church in Norwich to celebrate our unity, and our role as Christ's ambassadors in our communities, in a way that can leave a lasting legacy and a different spiritual landscape in its wake. It is a call to all ages to, "Do more, do it together, and do it in word and deed," in 2008. As an executive we want to help the church to build on the tremendous work that already goes on in community engagement, investing it with a clear sense of purpose and a focus on mission.

As the executive member with responsibility for youth I

am excited about the possibilities of seeing the youth of the church engage, but Hope is actually a much wider vision than that, extending to all age groups.

The task of turning the vision of Hope into action on the ground has had its ups and downs, but there is a growing sense of momentum in the City and the region, reflecting the increased awareness across the nation. We're excited to be holding a Hope Workshop on 7<sup>th</sup> June, which represents a real chance for cross-denomination discussion and planning for 2008.

Once again NYFC is running a Reality event this Summer with the support of Transforming Norwich. A key aim of this year's event is to prepare young people and their churches for 2008's year of engaging with their friends, their families and their neighbours, all in the context of being a vibrant and important part of their congregation.

**Mark Tuma**







## Best Regional Religious Website

The [www.networknorwich.co.uk](http://www.networknorwich.co.uk) website has now been online for 20 months.

Its primary aim is to act as a first port of call for anybody wanting information or news about the Norwich Christian community and to be a two-way channel of communication and connection for that community. It is branded on the home page as Transforming Norwich.



*Website editor Keith Morris receives the award from CMC president Prunella Scales.*

Over 80 greater Norwich churches are listed in the directory alongside 27 Christian projects. Hundreds of news articles, forum posts and poll votes are now on the site from all sections of the Norwich Christian community.

Partner sites within Network Norwich have been developed for: Transforming Norwich, NCCT, Dreams & Visions, Alpha Norfolk, Norwich FGBMFI, Call to Prayer, Thorpe & Heartsease Christian Forum and Norwich Area URCs with Good Work to follow shortly.

Visitors to the site have been growing rapidly and page views have increased to around 85,000 a month or 2,800 a day. Over 1,100 people are receiving the weekly e-news bulletin and the site is very well ranked by search engines such as Google.

Last June, the website was named as the Best Regional Religious Website in the entire country by the Churches Media Council national awards for radio, TV, press and websites.

If you would like to submit any news or information for the site or to sign up for the free e-newsletter simply email [web@networknorwich.co.uk](mailto:web@networknorwich.co.uk) with details.

**Keith Morris**

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity & Community

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2007 The chain of Prayer for Christian Unity was held in St.Lukes Chapel Norwich Cathedral from 9am to 5.00pm concluding with Evensong at 5.15pm.

The theme this year was based on the healing ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Mark Chapter 7. Over 100 attendees from 8 denominations signed in on the day and many of these wrote a contribution to the list of prayers. A prayer from the Corrymeela Community proved popular: "God whose spirit works peace among us, you have called us to be your people and joined us together in a family of faith. We thank you for every word or act that makes our unity more real, for open hearts and minds, for patience and understanding, for caring and sharing. Above all, we thank you for Jesus, who is the source of unity and in whom we gather"

Graham Fletcher has continued to represent TN on the Norwich Area Committee of the Norfolk County Council. Examples of the matters on which senior officials gave presentations, followed by questions and discussions included the following.

(August 2006.) Methods of **dealing with the growing problem of WASTE** in our 'throw away' society set against government targets and penalties if those targets are not reached. Waste reduction initiatives, waste treatment methods, land fill allowances and recycling were outlined, but the emphasis was on the need for every person, business or organisation to be aware of their own responsibility to reduce waste.

(January 2007) A general overview of **transport planning and delivery in Norwich**. The Bus Strategy for

Norwich, including the investment in the new bus station and the new Park & Ride sites. Priority given to increase bus services to deprived areas of the city. The demise of the Orbital Bus Service.

**"God whose spirit works peace among us, you have called us to be your people and joined us together in a family of faith. We thank you for every word or act that makes our unity more real, for open hearts and minds, for patience and understanding, for caring and sharing. Above all, we thank you for Jesus, who is the source of unity and in whom we gather"**

(March 2007) Under the general heading of **Regeneration Activity**, it was noted that under the 'Investing in Communities' scheme **Norfolk has been awarded £16m over the next 4 years to tackle deprivation and social exclusion**. In Norwich the focus of the programme is on: Raising the skills, aspirations, and achievements, together with raising the employment prospects of people from disadvantaged communities. A further focus is on encouraging an enterprise culture in disadvantaged communities.

At the same meeting a report was presented by the NELM Development Trust which has delivered the New Deal for Communities Programme in North Earlham, the largest public funded neighbourhood renewal programme in the UK. The scheme has been trying to address the multi-deprivation issues in the area.

**Graham Fletcher**





## Street Pastors

A year ago Norwich Street Pastors was still very much in the gestation period. The Steering Group was set up and was seeking to strengthen links with the Police and with the City Council, and to find the way forward in working in partnership with these bodies. Public meetings were held in an attempt to gauge the level of interest and support amongst the churches and individual Christians of this area. It would be right to say that there was considerable interest and commitment to the project, but from only a small number of people.

On the strength of this, and after much prayer from those involved, the conviction was that the project should be taken forward. It was strongly believed that the church must be

represented on the busy streets of Norwich's "night time economy". The estimate by Norfolk Police is that between 10 and 15,000 young people can be around Norwich's club land on the busiest Friday and Saturday nights, and it has to be that some of these will value the Christian love and care that Street Pastors are there to offer.

In October of last year Val Dodsworth was appointed as the local co-ordinator for Street Pastors and began to make the project more widely known. From the initial six names of those who had registered an interest in being involved, the numbers gradually grew until by January this year, when training was scheduled to commence, there were sixteen people from a wide cross section of churches who sat down to learn just what they had let themselves in for!

Alongside the Street Pastors, Jill Gower was recruiting the Intercessor team of those who would gather

at home base (URC in Princes Street) to pray for the team out on the street.

After an inspirational Commissioning Service in March, our first teams of Street Pastors went out and our Intercessors gathered to pray for their activities and contacts. Every Friday since then, a team of four Street Pastors in their distinctive uniforms has been out and about in Prince of Wales Road and Riverside, and a team of Intercessors has spent several

hours in prayer for this city and its residents.

Is it a success? We have been asked. The answer is that its success is quite immeasurable. Who can say whether the long conversation with a young woman recently bereaved, or the short cheerful exchanges with apparently sceptical youth, or the regular listening ear given to homeless men on the streets have any long term effects for good? But we are all completely convinced that God would

have us where we are and are thankful to Him for the privilege of the opportunity to offer a cup of hot coffee in His name; to give a pair of flip flops to a young woman whose state of inebriation means that stilettos are no longer the appropriate footwear or to hand round chocolates and the calming effect they promote when the atmosphere is tending towards the aggressive.

Street Pastors work in conjunction with the SOS bus, the Police, paramedics and club staff. Good relationships are being established all round and as soon as enough volunteers come forward we shall be training up the next group so that we can be "out there" on Saturday nights as well.

For more information or to be part of the Street Pastors scheme contact Val Dodsworth on Norwich 472753 or [v.dodsworth@ntlworld.com](mailto:v.dodsworth@ntlworld.com)

**Val Dodsworth**



## Transforming Norwich

### VISION

Norwich is a fine city

People experience it as a fine community, a place where people look after each other. Where injustice, exploitation, loneliness and oppression are sought out and eradicated. The hungry and homeless are cared for. Families in crisis have someone to help them. Everyone understands where to turn in times of need. Christians are united at the heart of the community working together with everyone who cares about the quality of community life.





## Call to Prayer

Call to Prayer is a prayer ministry which was birthed out of the Living Water event in the year 2000 and which has been growing ever since. It exists to encourage and facilitate prayer across the body of Christ to see the Kingdom of God advance. Call to Prayer has been instrumental in several prayer initiatives in the East Anglia region although it now has both a local and national focus. It is headed up by Jill Gower and an ever increasing team, who are dedicated to see believers understand not only the power of prayer and to enjoy it, but to meet with the living God so that His will becomes our will, and we can see His Kingdom come on the face of the earth.

### Local

- **Each month we send out a monthly prayer diary via Network Norwich which reaches Approximately 500 people.**
- Over 100 Lighthouses of Prayer were raised up during the J. John event in 2002 and following on from this there are several monthly area prayer meetings where people gather across the churches to pray for their area and outreaches
- First Friday Prayer Groups run in different areas on the first Friday of each month giving opportunity for churches to come together in their area to pray for unity and for their own villages, towns or city.

- The ministry now covers intercession for Street Pastors, Alpha, Hope 2008 and often any large events that come to Norfolk.
- **Across the region as well with East Anglia Prayer which is a coalition of prayer leaders throughout the eastern counties. Usually twice yearly there is a gathering of the counties to pray and seek God for the whole region.**

### National

- On a national scale Call to Prayer relates to major prayer ministries across the nation, including prayer for Parliament, the World Prayer Centre, Prayer for the Nations, the Deborah Company, Sharon Stone's Ministry, Arnold Muwonge's Ministry and Holy Trinity Brompton.
- We have twice organised a coach to the Trumpet Call Prayer at the NEC in Birmingham.
- **We also have a full size Tabernacle which we are wanting to use for Prayer schools and teaching sessions. We believe this will become a very valuable asset to the prayer ministry.**

The ministry is currently moving into a new phase and we are expanding the ministry to work more effectively with churches to help them with their prayer meetings and intercession.

Jill Gower

## Building the kingdom here on earth – in Norwich no less!

Under God's inspiration, the Christian community are uniquely placed to help to bring this about. Indeed many congregations are currently working hard towards that end. They have a desire to impact their community by reaching out in love to their neighbours and yet as the Shaftesbury report "Challenging Church" points out "we are failing to have a widespread, sustainable impact on our communities."

The problem lies in the fact that we are too often working in isolation from each other; even sometimes working the same patch but separately. This is costly in resources,

**For a common fund to be established by the church in Norwich will take sacrificial giving, trust and real unity.**

both physical and material. The strong inference in John 17 is that we cannot fulfil our purpose as disciples without unity; without working together.

But once the concept of the church being the body of believers in an area is understood, the dream of transforming our community into a safe place where people are released into abundant life through serving God and each other comes much closer. Indeed, the Kingdom of God is then at hand.

There is a story in the second Book of Kings Chapter 12 that tells of how King Joash repairs the temple. He has a chest placed at the entrance into which all the offerings went. The craftsmen were paid from this one pot of money. They are trusted to carry out the work without

extensive monitoring and within a short space of time, the repairs are completed. The theory here is to simplify the process of giving and enabling the work to go ahead without a lot of bureaucratic red tape and unnecessary oversight. Substitute the temple for "the Kingdom of God" in our communities and have one organisation which would be responsible for collecting the finances, allocating the funds, and monitoring performance.

Good work is being done by the Christian agencies in the city, but they mostly have a hand to mouth existence, making it hard to plan for the future, let alone expand. A major problem faced is that of not wanting to adapt the projects away from core priorities in order to make them fit someone else's funding criteria. Nor do they want to have to compromise on their Christian ethos.

Regular, covenanted giving by the Christian community in Norwich into one centrally administered pot would enable the social justice arm of the Church to plan ahead, and expand.

For a common fund to be established by the church in Norwich will take sacrificial giving, trust and real unity. We have a precedent from our forebears in this city who increased giving to the poor by four fold in one year. The idea formed the basis of the Elizabethan Poor Law. This came about because of the fear of those living impoverished lives rising in rebellion because they did not have enough to eat. This time, let it be the love of God that releases the funds that we have at our disposal, either corporately or individually.

Biddy Collyer





## Christian Aid goes on air

This year Christian Aid has been getting a message of justice out into the public spaces, including the public spaces of the media.

The greatest opportunity to capture the public's imagination arrived in March with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for William Wilberforce. We are indebted to the Holy Spirit and the creative mind of Jenny Skivington for the idea of releasing 25 white doves on the steps of City Hall, to symbolise the release of modern-day slaves. The release brought our first opportunity for an interview on Radio Norwich, and a clip on Anglia Television news. Radio Norfolk couldn't get enough of the story, and eventually put us on air five times.

A small beginning had already come to birth at Christmas with a nativity play at Wroxham Barns. They say never work with children or animals; we attempted both at once. It was a new experience to speak in a barn surrounded by a herd of goats, but around 240 people – many of them new to Christianity – heard a message about our work in Sudan, and BBC Radio Norfolk picked up the story.

Early in the year we finally outgrew our little room at Princes Street United Reformed Church, and we accepted an invitation to move to the Kings Centre. Kings Community Church has treated us very generously, and the move is opening up new friendships within the New Frontiers network.

At the end of March Jenny Skivington gave birth to her first child Cameron, who by all accounts is gorgeous. Maternity leave meant a big loss to the team, but it brought a new asset in the shape of Pete McAllen, who has picked up the youth work.

Pete led worship in the youth tent eXpect at the final Living Water festival. He has travelled widely as a Christian musician, performing gigs in Switzerland, Kenya and Dubai. He comes to us after several years with Derek Princes Ministries, combining a rare talent for composition with a searing sense for justice.

We are really grateful for all that our collectors do for us in Christian Aid Week (13 to 19 May this year), which provides the core funding for our development work. Last year the total raised in Norwich was up, and we are hoping for another rise this year.

Nationally Christian Aid is now taking up the challenge of climate change, which is becoming the greatest threat to the world's poorest communities. Locally we hope to work with churches and seize the opportunity to lead the way, just as the Clapham Evangelicals led the way on so many social issues two centuries ago. With Norwich being one of the world's leading centres for the study of climate change, it is a great opportunity for Christians to come to the forefront.

**Eldred Willey**



*Building flood defences in El Salvador*

## City/Church Dialogue

This group was born out of the research initiative in 2003 when we found that the Church in Norwich puts in the equivalent of £650k resources into social action in the City each year, that is 155,000 volunteer hours, or the equivalent of 79 full time workers. Since then, the City Council has continually been extremely open to meeting with us to further areas where our agendas overlap. This last year we met five times, and we have around a dozen of us in the room. The theme of our meetings recently has been :



**building community,  
being community,  
being active citizens,  
and being visible  
consultees to the public  
services – City, Police,  
etc..**

We have put effort into making congregation leaders and the Council

aware of each other with relation to the spending of the **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund**, and we were able to make early links with the new Community Engagement Officer, Stephen Dunstan, whose job is to foster strong community involvement in the spending of this fund. Similarly, we have made good links with the police regarding their *Safer Neighbourhoods* initiative. The existence of the City/Church Dialogue gave a ready context to being able to meet with the Council's new Chief Executive, Laura McGillivray, shortly after she came into post – out of which came the invitation to come and speak to this year's Summer Conference. We remain very appreciative of the goodwill shown by Bob Cronk, our lead contact in City Hall.

**Howard Green**

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**CHURCHES TOGETHER IN GREATER NORWICH  
(TRANSFORMING NORWICH)**

**SUMMARY OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR**

	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions Member Churches 2006/7	1870	
Subscriptions Member Churches 2007/8	145	
Subscriptions Member Organisations 2006/7	500	
Bank Interest	38	
Contributions to AGM 2006	648	
Contributions to AGM 2007	50	
Subscriptions/Donations HIV Aids Training Day for Church	250	
Contributions/Donations for Street Pastors Ministry	250	
Sale of Computer Labels	70	
		3821
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Cost of AGM 2006	787	
Cost of HIV Aids Training	78	
Contribution to Street Pastors Ministry	248	
Contribution to cost of Network Norwich	500	
Churches Together in England Affiliation Fee	60	
Week of Prayer - Resource Literature	27	
Chain of Prayer for Christian Unity	25	
Operating Transforming Norwich Computer System	417	
Office Expenses - Secretarial	65	
Office Expenses - Printing, Postage, Stationery, Telephone	186	
Norfolk and Waveney Churches Together - Donation	132	
		2525
<b>Surplus of Income over Expenditure</b>		1296
<b>FUNDS</b>		
<b>Balance at Bank 1/4/06</b>		
Barclays Current Account		410
Barclays Business Premium Account		57
Standard Life 10-day Notice Account		1637
Surplus for 2006/7		1296
Total Funds		3400
<b>Represented by:</b>		
<b>Balance at Bank 31/3/07</b>		
Barclays Current Account		968
Barclays Business Premium Account		58
Standard Life 10-day Notice Account		2374
		3400
<b>John Easton, Treasurer</b>		

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