A REPORT

TO COUNCIL ON THE REVIEW OF

THE OPERATION AND STRUCTURES OF CHURCHES TOGETHER IN KENT.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

1. The author was appointed in May 2009 to conduct a review of the operations and structure of Churches Together in Kent and to make recommendations.

2. The report is based on data collected by means of:
   a. interviews with denominational leaders in Kent;
   b. a questionnaire sent to members of Council;
   c. a series of local consultation meetings;
   d. meetings and conversations with Denominational Ecumenical Officers singly and as a group;
   e. interviews with County Ecumenical Officers (CEOs), secular partners and ecclesial partners;
   f. attendance at National Consultations for CEOs, the CTEngland Forum and regional CEO meetings.

3. The data was subjected to interrogation and analysis in order to gain an understanding of the past and present operation of CTK so as to establish an understanding of the place whence it might depart - as well as an appreciation of the available options for the future.
4. The research was undertaken with due regard to civil and ecclesiastical regulations and practices and also in a manner consonant with academic best practice; it employed the ethnographical model of the participant observer. The ethical protocols applied by Canterbury, Christ Church University to theological research were taken as an appropriate model for this purpose.

5. The report is divided into three parts:
   a. a theological reflection on the issues facing CTK in this, the one hundredth year of the ecumenical movement;
   b. the reflection is then brought together with the data in order to generate a series of recommendations;
   c. a detailed exposition of the data collected in the form of a series of appendices.

6. The author wishes to thank those who have so willingly co-operated in the data gathering process during the past eight months and also to express particular gratitude to Linda White (PA to the chair of CTK) and Ms. Ellena Addenbrook, who acted as note-taker for the local consultation meetings. Grateful thanks are also due to ministers and congregations across Greater Kent who have given freely of their time, facilities and hospitality to make the work possible.

David van Krieken Vannerley;
Feast of the Presentation of Christ, 2010.

1 Cf. Holliday (2006) Qualitative Research London, Sage: which describes the theoretical background and the methodology typical in this kind of project.
2 e.g. (2005) The Ethical Protocol for the Conduct of Academic Research of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Glossary

A piece of writing of this kind inevitably starts to use some language of its own as a matter of convenience; so here are the terms that have been used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>CLK</td>
<td>Church Leaders in Kent - the regular meeting together for breakfast, sharing and prayer to which the denominational leaders in Kent have committed themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>County Ecumenical Officer - the title of the employed officer of CTK until May, 2009; the usual title for the employed officers of Intermediate Bodies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTK</td>
<td>Churches Together in Kent - is the Intermediate Body. It has legal responsibility as the Sponsoring Body for (formal) Local Ecumenical Partnerships/Projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEO</td>
<td>Denominational Ecumenical Officer - this is the person appointed within each tradition to represent its views within the Intermediate Body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Kent</td>
<td>that is, the whole of historic Kent including the present local government units of the London Borough of Bexley, the London Borough of Bromley, the Administration of the County of Kent and the Medway Unitary Authority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate Body</td>
<td>stands between Churches Together in England and the local Churches Together groups as a channel for information and to give regional identity to some ecumenical work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCTGs</td>
<td>local ecumenical groupings typically called Churches (or Christians) Together in Sandwich, for instance; they are affiliated to the Intermediate Body and thereby to CTEngland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEPs</td>
<td>Local Ecumenical Partnerships are a coming together of Christians in common purpose that may be worship or ministry focused. When a formal partnership, the Intermediate Body has particular responsibilities for their oversight.</td>
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In 1910 representatives of Christian missionary societies met to reflect on their shared objective of taking Christ to the nations. They realised that denominational divisions within Christianity were an obstacle to the effective proclamation of the gospel. From this root, a new movement towards unity grew. We recall this now because the twin causes of mission and unity continue to be at the forefront of our shared thinking about Kentish Church life.

A recent national ecumenical speaker likened mission and unity to the two wings of a bird - for many that image brings to mind the dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The notion of partnership between mission and unity is, however, deeply rooted in Scripture: and especially in Our Lord’s prayer that his ‘people should be one ... so that the world might believe’. From this it follows that part of the call of any instrument of unity is to give visible expression to our search for the unity for which Christ prayed.

Scripture teaches us that Christ and the Father are perfectly united in will; it follows that when we read that prayer of Christ’s, we are not merely rehearsing a pious intention but that we hear the command of God. We are therefore bound actively to seek the unity that is in the mind of God for the people of God. Our search for unity should be expressed in prayer for each other and with each other, following the example of the Lord; our search for unity should be expressed in study with one another and it should also be expressed by our coming together to work for the extension of the Kingdom of God in the world.

We are conscious of the gifts the traditions bring to the gathering of Christians but we are also conscious of differences in understanding. In the last fifty years the Holy Spirit has brought English Christian people to an increasingly shared understanding of our commonality. We may now say that we seek to work together because of our differences, not despite them. We meet, not to repeat the mythologies that we each hold about other Christian traditions, but to engage with one another and so “de-learn” those mythologies; we seek to learn from one another about one another.

There is a clear consensus, supported by the research data collected by this project, that our shared activities have the most impact when they concern practical engagement with mission. They have the most impact on non-Christians because they do not expect to see us working collaboratively - and they have the most impact upon Christians because they wake us to the possibility of receiving the gifts of our sisters and brothers.

We should not be surprised that we are drawn together by working together; Scripture’s understanding of God’s creativity is that it is an active, performative impulse. As God’s children, we should have the same creative and performative character. When we do things together we model our collective childhood within the love of God. This insight is reinforced by our own experience.

Scripture offers us a range of models for the Church’s role within God’s saving mission in the world. The model explored in the research is that of Ephesians 4.17. In that model, ministry has five dimensions - it is apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and didactic. If we are to describe the work of Churches Together in Kent as being a work of the Church, then we should be able to recognize it as performing within that range of descriptors.

So, we may conclude that if CTK is being faithful to its calling as an instrument of Christian unity, we should be able to recognise it as:

- United in purpose;
- Receptive to the diverse gifts of the various Christian traditions;
- United in action;
- Identifiable as fulfilling a part in the mission of God to the world.

These reflections bring us to a point where we may say that there are, broadly speaking, four options for the future of CTK:

- We could **continue as we are** - but this would not address the questions that have been raised through the research nor the manifold dissatisfactions that are clear from the data;
- Maintain the **existing structure** but ask the CEO to work harder to make it work better - this is, at least, a ‘do something’ option but the dissonance between an un-reorientated CTK and a re-visioned CEO.
post would be likely to create unsustainable tensions for all parties;

c. Adopt a simpler structure following those Intermediate Bodies which found this to be an effective route with three main strands: a meeting like CLK, an enabling group and an Employed Officer who would together execute CTK's mission role;

d. We could shut down: it is not clear that this is really an option as there would still need to be a locus for the legal responsibilities regarding LEPs as well as leaving LCTGs without a means of affiliation to CTEngland; it would also give a message that Kentish Christians were not interested in fellowship with one another. A lot of money and time would be saved but it would probably leave a gap in the churches' shared lives that would be unacceptable and inefficient.

10. The case that is argued in the following sections is that CTK would be best served by the adoption of a simplified structure, as indicated in 9c above, but that there also needs to be a means of addressing the weak relationship between the centre and the LCTGs. The main energy for ecumenism seems to be at the local level and this should be taken into account. So it is suggested that a Forum bringing all the elements of CTK together should be part of the scheme.

3  The Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 1920. (See the Edinburgh 2010 pages on this website)
4  The Revd Dr Martin Atkins, General Secretary of the Methodist Church, addressing worship at the 2009 CTE Forum.
5  John 17:21
6  John 10.31
7  Cf. Genesis 1 and 2
8  The Ephesians model was used because it is the one that seems to relate most directly to the dimensions of the Church's ministerial task. The description in 1 Corinthians 12 seems to be focused in worship and the life of the congregations and other descriptions in the Acts and Epistles seem to refer primarily to particular office holders rather than to the generality of the Christian ministerial endeavour.

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One: Strategic Management

1. The meeting of the denominational leaders in Kent for breakfast, fellowship and consultation has become a source of strength as the relationships within the group have deepened. Some leaders have a wholly Kentish focus, while others have a wider view and are able to bring the experiences of other Intermediate Bodies to bear. On a number of occasions it has been possible for the group to act collectively through the agency of one of its members, showing a growth in mutual trust.

2. The research has shown that there is a need for a prophetic role to be exercised on behalf of the Churches and it seems natural that such a role should be focused in the Leader's Group. For example, when it was clear that there was a need to speak out over the possibility of large-scale casinos being established in Kent, one leader was asked to speak for all, adding weight to what was said.

3. Recent experience has been that it is helpful to have more than one person acting in a leadership role; the present Chair and Vice-Chair have divided the work more flexibly than their titles suggest. There is an ecumenical model of having a number of Co-Chairs and it would be beneficial for that model to be imported into CTK.

4. The data suggests that it is important for the group to be supported in its work. Issues affecting the shared work of the Churches in Kent need to be analysed and brought before the group in a programmed and organised way. Clear lines of communication need to be established and maintained between CLK and the instruments of ecumenical action as well as the instruments of unity.

5. Amongst the neighbouring intermediate bodies it is normal for there to be regular direct contact between the leadership group and the Denominational Ecumenical Officers through shared time - typically by both groups meeting in the same place at different times of the day with an overlapping period of fellowship.

6. One of the central questions of the project is concerned with widening of CTK's membership and some exploratory steps have been taken which, it is hoped, will lead to wider engagement - especially with the New Church Traditions. A welcome development is that the Elim Pentecostal Church has now appointed a member of their national leadership team to membership. This raises a question, however, about the way that the name of the Leadership group has evolved because it has connotations that do not sit well with the ecclesiology of some New Church Traditions.
7. From this it is concluded that:

a. the natural focus of leadership lies with CLK but that leadership needs to be exercised flexibly, so the Chair of CLK should also be the Chair of CTK. However, it will be helpful to have at least two people in this role as co-chairs, modelling co-operative working;

b. there need to be times of direct contact between CLK and both the DEOs and also those charged with leading the shared ministry in Kent (i.e. organising chaplains, the leadership of KWM, etc.);

c. there needs to be further work done to establish contact with the New Church Networks which have congregations in Kent;

d. there is a need for a 'staff officer' role to be formulated that should include the preparation of material to go to the leadership group, the recording - in as light a way as possible - of the decisions made and the conveyance of those decisions to the instruments of unity within Kent12.

9 The Elim Pentecostal Church (Elim Four Square Gospel Alliance) became full members of CTEngland during 2009 and an invitation to them to be represented at regional level was made by CTK in December, 2009.

10 What the name might be is more problematic: it is difficult to use the expression leader when some people are actually more akin to spokespersons; while the group is concerned with strategy, calling it a strategy group does not give credit to it as a place of prayer and fellowship. Calling it the 'board', as some Intermediate Bodies do seems unduly formal; it may be that repeated use of CLK may give the term a life of its own and make it acceptable, even though inaccurate.

11 Or, indeed, with that of the Religious Society of Friends, who are existing members.

12 See Section 3, below.

Two: Operational Issues

1. CTK, alone in the South-East Region, continues to have a Council, meeting in a formal and infrequent way. A regrettable level of dissatisfaction was evident in the data concerning the operation of Council. Observation of Council and the DEOs meeting made clear the duplication in their agenda items. An important difference was noted that items came to the DEO meeting for action but to Council only for information.

2. Council, however, has one role that is irreplaceable: it is where the broader sense of the ecumenical endeavour can be located. The representative role is inappropriately weighted, though, because it is the Churches that are represented in Council whereas the observed data suggests that the energy for ecumenical co-operation lies at local level. The Churches are already represented by their local leaders in CLK and by their DEOs - the local level is not represented in any explicit way. We note how local groups voice their sense of isolation and their sense that CTK is of little direct value to them13.

3. The DEOs hold delegated responsibility from their appointing Churches for the care of the LEPs14; they are well placed to take responsibility for carrying forward actions to meet the needs of the LEPs. This would be enhanced by each of them taking an advocacy role for a small number of LEPs, spending some time to develop relationships with them15. The ecumenical identity would be stronger if the DEOs were to act collectively in this regard and mentor LEPs chosen without regard to denominational affiliations16.

4. There is a particular task to be undertaken with regard to the oversight of LEPs and the arrangements for regular reviews of their life and witness; these matters are the legal responsibility of CTK as the Sponsoring Body. The data suggests that the systems for collecting information and for ensuring that the review process is undertaken are not sufficiently robust. The natural focus for this work is within the DEOs group but they need to be enabled and encouraged to carry out that work in a systematic way.

5. The DEOs have now begun to evolve an organisational model in which they take shared responsibility for the organisation of their meetings. One DEO agrees to act as facilitator for the following meeting and sets the agenda as well as issuing such post-meeting notes of decisions as are needed. This is working well and has the advantage that it does not depend on their being a CEO to run - in some sense - the group. The DEOs have shown that they have capacity to be an operational or 'enabling group' for CTK17. However, it has become apparent that the group needs to have some level of support available both to carry forward actions from the meetings and also in terms of liaison with the agreed facilitator to assist in continuity between meetings.
6. There are areas of ecumenical work in Kent that currently are not well tied into the operations of CTK. These would include the Public Service Chaplaincies and the County Show Churches’ Tent Committee. Several of these bodies have expressed a sense of isolation from the structure even though they are carrying out work that is amongst the best news in Kent’s ecumenical story.

7. From this it is concluded that:

   a. the role of the Council needs to be recast, expanding its representative role but also freeing it from formal administrative roles that can be vested elsewhere;

   b. the DEOs’ meeting needs to be recast as the Enabling Group of CTK, and people such as the Organising Chaplains, the Chair of the County Show Churches Tent and the Webmaster need to have a more clarity about their relationship with it;

   c. there is a need for a similar kind of staff officer to the DEOs as to CLK in order to ensure that they have the support to put their decisions into effect;

   d. urgent attention needs to be given to the systems for the review and support of LEPS.

   13 The data from the local consultations does acknowledge that there are issues that need to be dealt with at a regional level and are therefore beyond the reach of LEPs and LGCTs.
   14 The question of the Job Description for DEOs has been raised several times during the research; such descriptions are available from the Churches appropriate to their own needs and there is also a generic description available on the CTE website, see Appendix 9.
   15 A similar arrangement was used to exist with Council members befriending LEPs but this has been allowed to lapse.
   16 Because of the numbers involved, each DEO might need only to develops a mentor relationship with two or three LEPs; generally speaking the relationship will be light touch, unless there are difficulties with the LEPS. The review process will be greatly facilitated by there being prior knowledge available with the DEO group.
   17 Enabling Group is an established term within CTE and neighbouring Intermediate Bodies.
   18 Including the Kent Workplace Mission

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Three: An Employed Officer?

1. Until May 2009, CTK, like other Intermediate Bodies, employed an officer as CEO and Secretary to Council. These roles were suspended at the end of April 2009, releasing resources for the research project. However, it has not, in fact, been possible for the Researcher to avoid acting as CEO from time to time. Issues have arisen and work has needed to be done that showed a need for the facilitation of work by CLK and the DEOs.

2. The research found a sense within all areas of CTK that, while the work has been conducted in an admirable way in the past, the time has come for a change in the job description of the Employed Officer's post. Typically this is articulated by describing the past approach as being primarily pastoral but seeing a need for something different in the future that can be described as evangelistic or apostolic.

3. The primary weakness that has been identified in consultations with LCTGs has been their sense of remoteness and disconnectedness from CTK, even though the focus of energy and engagement now clearly lies in the local groups. We may say that there is an urgent need for relationships to be re-established.

4. Sections 1 and 2, above, identify particular work that might be described in terms of the provision of ‘staff officer’ services to CLK and the DEOs group. The choice of this description bears a particular burden because, in military parlance, the staff officer is charged with advance planning, with identifying areas where action is needed and also identifying the resources with which the need might be met. Primarily, the role is concerned with ensuring that leadership has the right information in order to make effective decisions.

5. In the light of these considerations, it seems clear that CTK cannot fulfil its ambitions for its own future without a person to act as the animateur within the instruments of unity. Such a person will need to be:

   a. staff officer to the Leader’s Group

   b. staff officer to the DEOs

   c. the friend and encourager of local CTGs
d. the friend and encourager of LEPs

e. ready to engage in work to extend the spheres of CTK’s operations.

This work seems too large and important a role for reliance to be able to be placed on a volunteer officer(s) or persons offering a 'sixth-day ministry'.

6. Until now the Employed Officer has been remunerated by analogy with a stipendiary Anglican minister working on a limited time basis. For this reason, a significant element of the annual budget has been assigned to pension provision. There are a range of models of employment within the Intermediate Bodies; none of the equivalent officers in this SE Region are employed full-time and most are not employed on a basis similar to CTK. CTSussex, for example, employs their officer on a consultancy basis and this method has a number of advantages. Neighbouring CEOs are generally employed for more hours.

7. From this it is concluded that:

   a. there is an urgent need for relationships and trust to be restored between the regional and local strands of the ecumenical work in Kent;

   b. both the DEOs and CLK have a need for a staff officer function to support the work that they are undertaking as the instruments of unity in Kent;

   c. past models of employment and deployment no longer seem to be appropriate to the needs of CLK and do not match the emerging vision of a proactive, mission-focused body.

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10. The writer is glad to acknowledge the assistance of the United Reformed Church’s Thames North & Southern Synods’ HR specialist, Ms. Carla Watts, with the technical issues around the employment questions.

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Four: Local Ecumenical Partnerships

1. A major reason for the existence of Intermediate Bodies is that they hold the oversight of Local Ecumenical Partnerships within their areas. They are the sponsoring bodies and should be consulted concerning the constitution of each LEP; when there is a staffing vacancy in an LEP the Intermediate Body should facilitate the process of identifying suitable persons and they also have an obligation to ensure that LEPs are regularly reviewed.

2. Greater Kent has thirty formal LEPs. In addition there are seven joint bodies that have a similar relationship with CTK, principally covering areas of chaplaincy work that are conducted ecumenically. Additionally there are about sixteen informal LEPs where Christians have agreed to undertake particular work together, such as running a counselling service in a particular locality. There are known to be a number of informal church building sharing agreements in operation that have no particular formal status and are unrecorded by CTK.

3. Given the importance of this area of work it was disappointing to find how difficult it was to establish contact with LEPs as the information that was held centrally was often quite out of date. Work has now been done to establish an electronic distribution list for LEPs. While it is acknowledged that there is a life cycle for LEPs, so that they have times of growth and of decline, it was disappointing to see how little awareness LEPs have that they should be in contact with the sponsoring body.

4. The DEOs have a good working knowledge of the LEPs that involve their own traditions but there is no evidence that they have been particularly tasked as mentors; instead, they seem only to become directly involved at a time of staffing vacancy or of difficulty in the partnership. The relationship with CTK seems not to be sufficiently close or supportive.

5. LEPs face particular issues at this time because of the changing regulatory framework within which they work. The DEOs have been alert to these issues and have arranged for special training to be offered to help LEPs ensure that they are correctly registered.
6. From this it seems that:

   a. there is a need for greater clarity about the relationships between LEPs, CTK and the DEOs;

   b. there is a need for an improved flow of information between CTK and the partnerships;

   c. there is a need for the DEOs to give careful collective thought to their role, having due regard for the expectations of their appointing Churches\textsuperscript{20} and of the ecumenical instruments\textsuperscript{21}; a shared Job Description needs to emerge from that thinking as soon as is practicable.

\textsuperscript{20} As illustrated by the Job Descriptions issued by partner denominations.

\textsuperscript{21} As illustrated by the model Job Description available on the CTE website.

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Five: Local Churches (Christians) Together Groups

1. There are about forty LCTGs within CTK. Coverage is good although there are significant gaps. They vary in size from the very large to the tiny: CTMedway covers more than seventy congregations and is a quasi-federal body bringing together a number of LCTGs into a single body matching that of the Medway Unitary Authority. In contrast, CTMinster & Monkton is a small, informal village group bringing together just five congregations, from four traditions. Information held centrally was often inaccurate and considerable work has had to be done to establish contact with all the functioning LCTGs.

2. A survey for this research showed that responding LCTGs have done well in recruiting New Church tradition\textsuperscript{22} congregations into membership. We know that there are about eighty congregations from New Church networks in Kent\textsuperscript{23}; the data shows that often they are in local membership even where their national networks are not in membership of CTE\textsuperscript{24}. There is no secure data on congregations that are completely free standing.

3. Although the local consultation meetings affirmed the value of regional projects and accepted that these address issues that are beyond the reach of LCTGs, this was accompanied by a degree of puzzlement as to what CTK might be for. Each of the local meetings had at least one person say that they had not previously heard of CTK.

4. A few LCTGs have never affiliated to CTK, others are affiliated but do not pay any subscription. There is no clear method for the collection of subscriptions and a lack of clarity about what the subscription might be\textsuperscript{25}. The subscription income is a significant income stream for CTK so it is all the more concerning that LCTGs are unclear about the reasons for and the benefits of subscription.

5. Data from adjacent Intermediate Bodies suggests that they are generally closer to their LCTGs. The CEOs have a proactive relationship, going regularly to LCGT meetings and seeking out information from them. There is generally some kind of newsletter or magazine that goes regularly to LCTGs\textsuperscript{26}. CTLondon South runs a small grants scheme to support new, mission orientated projects\textsuperscript{27}.

6. At the same time, it is clear that there is great energy for local co-operation between Christians; a good example would be the number of Street Pastors schemes that exist or are planned in Greater Kent. Another LCTG has brought together support for a night shelter scheme. Several have excellent websites that give a real insight into the work of their member churches individually and co-operatively. CTK does not need to organise or harness these initiatives but it should be seen to be active in support of them and should also spread news of these local success stories among the Christians of Kent.

7. From this it is concluded that:

   a. there is urgent need for work to improve the relationship between the local and regional strands within CTK;

   b. the issues around the level and value of subscription need to be resolved in a way that will enable CTK to have a positive relationship with its constituent local groups;
c. there is a need for proactive engagement between the regional and local strands with clarity about the support that is offered by CTK and its officers.

22 The expression is a little vague, it generally means those networks that evolved from the House Church networks of the 1960s and later. However, some commentators would include the Elim and Assemblies of God churches amongst their numbers, turning its meaning to something like ‘post-Victorian’.

23 Information on New Church Networks was supplied by Ian Chisnall, and used as the basis for a web survey of the situation in Kent. Elim and AoG churches represent a significant proportion of these, something like 30 out of 80. See Appendix 7.

24 As indicated above, particularly in Section 1, engagement at the regional level is more problematic.

25 This information was actually available on the Website but was not easy to find. The subscription is £4 per member congregation. In CTSussex the subscription is £17 per congregation but includes the cost of producing a regular magazine. In CTLondon South there is no subscription but the grant income of that body is higher than that of CTK.

26 Members of Council will be aware that the Researcher has established a monthly bulletin for LCTGs in CTK as an interim measure. This has been extended to cover LEPs also.

27 The maximum grant is £500 and match-funding is not necessarily expected.

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Six: Participation in Secular Partnerships.

1. CTK is currently engaged at different levels with a range of partnerships that bring people together in the interests of the improvement of society, in the widest sense. Prior to his retirement Bp. Stephen Venner, with the support of the leadership group, had taken a high profile role in speaking for CTK in the Kent Children’s Trust and the Kent Strategic Partnership. CTK officers have also had seats in some of the local strategic partnerships as well as having contact with the Kent Voluntary Youth Services Council. Individual Christians have played roles in bodies such the North West Kent Racial Equality Council.

2. Partnership Managers were interviewed as part of the research for this report with a particular emphasis on their expectations of us as a partner and the contribution that they felt we could make to their work. We must be clear, however, that where the organs of local government seek to have a Christian voice in such partnerships they will be doing so from the perspective of their own need to be able to show that they are consulting in the community and with faith groups. Further, they will be interested in hearing one Christian voice - not a range of denominational views.

3. The benefits of such partnerships for us are considerable but we have to ask what the perceived benefits from the other partners might be. There is a general sense that such engagement enables our partners to show that they are consulting with a wider group of people than would normally be the case. The religious content of society is varied and has deep impact so our engagement gives the agencies greater insight into our perspectives, so helping to avoid decisions that might bring about any sense of animosity or disengagement. Christians are also seen as being able to bring our experience of joint lobbying - ecumenical action as we would describe it - to the table from which other people of faith may learn. The fact that we present as Churches Together makes an important statement about co-operation and cohesion from which others may learn.

4. There is an emerging consensus that this work is an essential element of CTK’s role and one that should be expanded in the future. LCTGs have acknowledged that this is a significant area of work that needs to be dealt with at Intermediate Body level. CTK has the potential to develop this work in a number of directions, for example to work towards representation on all of the local development partnerships. To do this, Christians will have to be brought together at sub-regional, rather than local level and the best available agency for that purpose is CTK.

5. The sub-regional work takes on a different aspect in three areas, namely the Medway Unitary Authority and the two London Boroughs. CTMedway has already developed a federated model that means it is well placed to respond to its local authority. The Bromley LCTGs are being encouraged to work to a similar model through the actions of their local authority. Such developments suggest that the resources of CTK should be committed to working with those LCTGs to help them to develop further expertise. Partnership work of this kind has been a particular feature of CTSussex and it would be sensible to seek assistance from them.

6. From this it is concluded that:

a. there is a need to commit resources to developing further engagement with the local strategic partnerships;

b. there is a need for CTK to assist the development of sub-regional structures that will help LCTGs relate to the units of local government that cover their areas;
c. there is a need for our structures to reflect those of local government in order to simplify their access to us, and ours to them.

28 A clear exception to this is the statutory arrangement for consultation with different Christian tradition in the Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education, established by the four Education Authorities within Ecumenical Kent, which is outside the scope of this report. SACREs have certain duties with regard to RE and Collective Worship under a range of legal provisions.

29 The Local Strategic Partnerships are entering a period of development which is likely to see more of them joining into sub-regional bodies. There is ecumenical representation on Ashford LSP through CTAshford and the West Kent Partnership (Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks) through CTK; there is none on Dartford & Gravesend LSP, the recently formed East Kent Partnership (Canterbury, Dover, Thanet and Shepway), Maidstone LSP, or Swale LSP. There is a developing contact with Bromley Borough but not with Bexley.

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Seven: The Aims and Objectives of CTK

Finally, it seems helpful at this point to restate the Aims and Objectives of CTK and to show how the structure that is being recommended to Council would relate to those aims. It should be noted that the Aims and Objectives have been slightly modified where the language is no longer appropriate.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims and Objectives</th>
<th>Appropriate instrument</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>The Employed Officer acting in support of LCTGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>All - but especially through CLK modelling shared leadership and through Enabling Group and Forum having worship woven into their actions and planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Study and sharing through LCTGs and the Forum; issues of ministry properly lie with CLK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Enabling Group to hold the legal responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>DEOs to support congregations; Employed Officer to offer technical advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Employed Officer to offer technical advice and facilitate the process of covenanting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Employed Officer to be in regular contact, to visit and offer resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Employed Officer in Staff Officer role; Enabling Group to support, e.g. by being a speaker resource or sponsoring adverts on radio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>CLK should hold the prophetic role supported by the Enabling Group and Employed Officer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Back

Eight: Recommendations.

In the light of all that is set out above, the following proposals are commended to Council:

1. An Employed Officer should be appointed on a self-employed basis. The Employed Officer should be staff officer to CLK and to the Enabling Group and responsible for arranging the Forum. The Employed Officer
should be the budget manager for CTK. The Employed Officer should have clear targets, with agreed modes of delivery and evaluation, particularly with regard to ensuring the effectiveness of CTK; arrangements for line management must be absolutely clear in the recruitment documentation and in the contract. The Employed Officer should be the budget manager but not hold the cheque books. A person should be sought who will be able to bring energy, focus and knowledge of modern culture beyond the Church, into the role which is best described as that of the animateur. This person should be a proactive, mission-orientated supporter of the LEPs and LCTGs.

2. CTK should take immediate action to establish a secure and effective relationship with the local Churches Together groups (LCTGs), particularly making provision for the support of those LCTGs that are in difficulties and also taking steps to promote the formation of new LCTGs in those parts of Greater Kent that do not presently have them. CTK should also use its good offices to encourage the LCTGs in Bexley and Bromley to form loose associations, on the lines of CTMedway - so that there is a single voice addressing the borough councils as potentially there is to the Medway Unitary Authority.

3. The LCTGs should continue to pay a subscription at the rate of £4 per member congregation. They should be given a clear written notice of request which should include the CTK budget for the year and a statement of what they receive in return for their subscription. CTK should establish a grant system which would offer LCTGs matched funding for new, mission orientated projects up to £250. This would be funded by the windfall sum arising from their having been no expenditure on the Employed Officer’s Pension from May 2009. The Employed Officer should be active in supporting their efforts to engage with Christians of the New Church traditions.

4. Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs) should form specific partnerships with a small number of Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) each to act as a focus of communication and concern. This is intended to allow the choice of appropriate means of review, the responsibility for which will lie with the DEOs, the Employed Officer acting to ensure that timely reviews are carried out. CTK should take immediate steps to fulfil its obligations to LEPs particularly in terms of ensuring the proper conduct of reviews through effective deployment of the resources available in the DEOs group and offer other active support as required. A clear Job Description of what it means to a DEO in Kent should be developed by them as soon as possible.

5. The Church Leaders in Kent (CLK) should continue to meet regularly and be in active contact with the instruments of unity; two, or more, of the group should be elected bi-annually as Co-Chairs both of CLK and CTK, on the understanding that one of their own p.a. staff will need to give about one hour a week administrative support to the work of CTK; this might include holding the cheque books. The Employed Officer should act as Staff Officer to CLK.

6. A new instrument called the Enabling Group should be established, including the DEOs, Employed Officer & Webmaster and attended by either one of the Co-Chairs and/or Vice-Chair. The Employed Officer should act as Staff Officer to this group which will make its own arrangements for regular, focused meetings particularly in order to fulfil the obligations to LEPs, but also to have regard to such other matters as the Employed Officer or CLK might refer to them. They will give oversight to the Webmaster and support to the Employed Officer and make recommendations as the Employed Officer’s priorities.

7. CLK and the Enabling Group should meet jointly at least once a year to set priorities for CLK, the Enabling Group and the Employed Officer, to endorse the Employed Officer’s budget proposals, and to maintain good relationships between the three strands of CTK’s operations. CLK should also meet annually with the Organising Chaplains of the public service chaplaincies.

8. A new instrument called the CTKForum should be established, including the Co-Chairs, Vice-Chair, DEOs and representatives of LEPs and LCTGs which will meet annually to share stories of success and challenge, to be nurtured and taught, to pray for unity - and also to have a very short business meeting to receive accounts, elect a Vice-Chair as required and receive the Employed Officer’s report.

9. The roles and responsibilities of the present Council would be distributed between the Enabling Group and the CTKForum, the offices of Secretary and Treasurer ceasing. Council, as such, should be subsumed into the CTKForum.

10. From time to time the instruments of unity should come together in an Assembly that would engage with Christians at regional, sub-regional, local and congregational levels to celebrate what has been achieved, to pray for greater things to come - and have fun and fellowship together. This might be annual or in alternate
11. CTK should actively seek to grow. The Employed Officer should work with LCTGs to encourage New Church tradition congregations to affiliate locally and should seek means of engagement at regional level through membership of CLK. The Enabling Group should also be grown to include representatives of the new traditions, to share the work of the DEOs even where that title would not be appropriate, so that the widest possible Christian perspective should be available.

12. In the next year, CTK should plan to address the following issues:

a. the poor relationship between CTK and the LCTGs;

b. the potential for extending the present successful Ambulance and Police chaplaincy models to other public services;

c. the potential for extending present good practice in representation in local secular forums, for example the West Kent Partnership, to cover all the local strategic partnerships with a means of sharing information and experience established;

d. the establishment of working LCTGs in the areas of Greater Kent where there presently are none and the establishment of ‘umbrella groups’ in Bromley and Bexley;

e. the questions surrounding the proper representation of Christian interests in the Inter-Faith groups that are being established in Kent and whether CTK is the proper instrument for this work.

Appendix 1: Illustrative Budget based on the recommendations.

Churches Together in Kent


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Web Costs  0  24  0  0
Conference Expenses  204  75  200  150
Radio Costs  300  400  1000  1000
Sundries  115  0  100  100
Grants  0  0  0  1500
Kent Forum  0  0  0  200
Training  0  0  0  200
Contribution Recoverable  0  -500  0  0
14205  13910  17446  15690

Surplus (deficit) for the year  915  962  -1401  -473

Reserves
Opening Balance  9349  10264  11226  9825
Surplus/(deficit) for the year  915  962  -1401  -473
10264  11226  9825  9352

Notes on the Illustrative Budget

1. This budget offers a cost reduction to our donor bodies of about 8% to acknowledge the difficulties that many of them are presently experiencing.

2. The 2009 outcome is likely to contain a surplus for three reasons:
   a. the Researcher is being employed at a lower rate than the former CEO;
   b. there will be no pension expenditure for 8/12 of the year;
   c. Secretarial and office expenses will be much lower than budget.

3. On the other hand, the income from interest and - more seriously - subscriptions from LCTGs is likely to be very low.

4. This is, again, a deficit budget and while that can be sustained for 2010 there is a serious question about the effect on reserves; historically, the intention has been to maintain sufficient reserve to meet at least half the annual cost of the Employed Officer.

5. This proposal makes provision for the recommended small grants scheme; it is not possible to predict what the take-up will be but it might be appropriate to assume that it would absorb the LCTG subscriptions in future years.

6. In the past the assumption has been that the Employed Officer and office costs will be met from the LCTG subscriptions; this proposal, rather, assumes that the former pensions expenditure will be released for these purposes.

7. In the event of the Critical Incident Chaplaincy Service returning to direct CLK agency, the non-training costs for 2010 will have to be met from reserves. In future years the donor bodies should be asked to make a separate ring-fenced grant for this purpose. The training costs have been met by grant from the Kent Peoples’ Trust.
Appendix 2: Structure Diagrams

1. Accountability

![Structure Diagram 1]

2. Relationships

![Structure Diagram 2]

Appendix 3: Summary of the data from Interviews: Denominational Leaders.

**Introduction**

a. The first phase of the investigation into Churches Together in Kent (CTK) involved an interrogation of the available documentation as well as discussions with those who had held responsibility within CTK. From this data, a series of research questions were generated, concerned both with theological metanarrative and with the operational aspects of the organisation. The second phase was to conduct a series of interviews with those who hold a representative or leadership role within the affiliated denominations.

b. The group of Church Leaders in Kent (CLK) meet regularly and have begun to develop means of co-operative working to carry forward areas of practical mission that can readily be shared. Arising from this previous experience of co-operation, a degree of consensus thinking has developed within CLK which has given rise, for example, to the impetus for the present research project and which is also reflected in
the data that arose from the interviews.

c. Nine interviews were conducted in which three areas were explored. Two areas concerned the broader theological issues surrounding CTK and the third area concerned operational issues which were of relevance to the outcome of the research project. The interviews were conducted using the well-established Focused Interview methodology where a limited series of prompts are used to encourage a group of people who have shared experience to reflect upon that experience and the issues that arise from it. The interviews typically lasted sixty to ninety minutes and were mostly conducted at the subjects’ place of work.

d. Interviews were conducted on an Academic Confidentiality basis whereby the responses were made on a non-attributable basis with the proviso that the words and ideas expressed would appear in the Final Report of the Research Project and, also, in possible subsequential academic work. The ethical framework was equivalent to that normally applied in the Humanities Faculty of Canterbury, Christ Church University.

e. In the sections of the report below, a short summary for each issue is set out, which in each case states the question, presents a brief discussion, indicates areas for further discussion and makes a suggestion as to a way forward.

Section One: The Role of Churches Together in Kent

Question: perceptions of the roles of the instruments of ecumenism have undoubtedly changed in the last decade so the time is now ripe to ask, again, what is the mission of CTK?

Reflection: the first thing that must be recorded is the sense of disappointment that something that started in such a flush of enthusiasm has ended up as an ‘administration’. CTK no longer articulates the practice of ecumenism in Kent, which seems to work best and to be most effective where it is a coming together of Christians within their communities to give embodiment to the gospel in new, innovative, mission-focused ways. The structure has played its role well in the past but things have now moved on; the days of the big, top-down schemes seem to be ended. The consequence of this is that much institutional ecumenism now seems to be tired and irrelevant. The existing members get on well with each other but have not reached beyond themselves in an effective way to engage with new movements in the broader Christian community. So we must ask, how is this to be done?

The roots of the ecumenical movement lie in the mission endeavour of the Church. Indeed, if we accept John 17:20-21 as a fundamental text, expressing the will of God that we should be one in order that the world should believe, it becomes clear that mission and unity are inseparable from one another, if we are to be the Church in any real sense. Theologically, Jesus has only one Church and our words and actions should be illustrative of the truth of that notion rather than inimical to it. A question, then, is how we may refocus CTK to be mission-orientated?

The Council of CTK still retains responsibility for LEPs as their facilitator and sponsor but no-one seems very keen on any further developments in that direction. The number of LEPs is slowly diminishing; they no longer seem inspirational and many have issues about their own identities. That is not to say that there are not some that are working effectively, St. Mary’s Island, for example: but, tellingly, this is a mission focused plant into an entirely new community. If CTK is there to look after LEPs and that role is stagnant, where does that leave CTK?

Local mission projects seem to be far more effective at engaging with a broader range of Christian people and this is noticeably so with members of the various New Church networks. Experience in neighbouring counties seems to confirm this observation. This is in tune with the belief of many CLK members that ecumenism is best practised locally, when we unite in Christian witness wherever and whenever we can. The issue then becomes one in which we ask how can CTK’s work be reorientated to support the development of local co-operative endeavours?

The essential role of CTK, surely, should be to enable us to do things better together where we can. We have to be conscious of what we say by our divisions - it is not a good witness to the communities within which we are set, even when what we think we are doing is sharing the richnesses of our traditions with each other. There is now a good store of positive, shared experience that ought to encourage us to be both more appreciative of one another and more ready to admit the way that our mission is undermined through failure to co-operate. In team ministries, the skills of each member are brought to bear as appropriate; as Christian communities we also have a range of skills and experiences that we ought to be able to put at the disposal of each other. So we may ask how CTK can be a place where we continue to learn from one another - and with each other - engaging with one another despite our differences.

People think locally in Kent even today, maybe because of its rural heritage; if this is the case it would follow that CTK’s role is to be an agency that connects at the local level encouraging local co-operative ventures through the active commitment of the Employed Officer. The question here is how may we restore energy to something that is of such primary importance to the life of the Church in Kent as its mission and its unity?

Points for discussion: if unity and mission are two inseparables and of such primary importance to our shared life we must ask how we may restore energy to CTK; this concern can be seen as focused in four areas:
Section Two: A Theological Perspective

Question: what would be an appropriate theological context to set out a plan of development for CTK into the future?

Reflection: the New Testament sets out a range of models of ministry but for the purposes of this project the most helpful seems to be the understanding of Ephesians 4:10-16 where the writer describes a range of ministerial gifts that are given to the Church so that it might come to maturity growing up in every way into Christ the head of the Church. These ministerial gifts properly deployed promote the building up of the body of Christ as it grows in love.

This positive language and imagery has caught the imagination of many who seek to renew the Church and bring it into alignment with the ministry of God to the world. It has become part of a common language across many Christian traditions which impels them towards an incarnational missiology, enabling them to speak into the situations where they are and into situations where they have been silent. Inevitably, this draws the energy of the faith community away from maintenance into mission because we perceive that that is where God's energy is directed; as we are moulded into God's image we should increasingly match our activities with God's.

In terms of the ministerial dimensions expressed in verse 11, there is a broad agreement that CTK has conducted itself in a pastoral (diaconal) role and done it well but that the time has come for it to be realigned. Crucial to this will be the appointment of an Employed Officer who can energise the elements of CTK. For example, the leadership group are broadly agreed that the prophetic role lies within their purview but at the same time it is essential for them to be supported in the role so that they may speak together at the right time, in the right way and to the right end. The Thames Gateway programme was given as an example where this did not take place satisfactorily but other examples are available where it did. Another feature of a prophetic ministry for CLK would be to hold the vision for CTK, plotting its pathway ahead and seeking to discern God's will for the Church in Kent in the broadest sense. They will also need to deploy gifts of discernment to be able to see where God is at work in Kent and enthusiastically join in with it.

From this it follows that the Employed Officer should be one who is cast in the Apostolic role, an energiser who will work with all elements of CTK to encourage, enable and - maybe - even provoke. Ecumenical endeavour should not sap the energy given to us by God; rather, it should flow into mission which is the true partner of ecumenism.

CTK should promote a developing network of contacts with the local groups who will be encouraged to seek out new opportunities for mission to their communities. The Employed Officer will need to know about good practice and support the local groups in their endeavours by being able to engage theologially and practically - having a sound understanding of the call of the Church on the one hand and a good grasp of how to apply for grant aid, for example, on the other.

Points for Discussion: arising from the reflection we may consider the gifts that have been given by God to his people in Kent as being bestowed to promote the maturity of all who name themselves Christians. God's activity in the world is enlivening and all-pervasive; as God's people we should have a similar outlook and the evidence of this will be our seeking to discern where God is at work and putting our commitment and resources in those places and situations. From this it follows that CTK - and the Employed Officer who is its active agent - should be committed to outward-looking and energetic engagement with the community within which we are set, both theologically and in other appropriate ways.

Section Three: Operational Issues.

Having sought to set out the conceptual framework for the operation of CTK, the discussion now moves on to consider a number of questions relating to its operations. Six operational issues were identified in the first phase of the research project. A short summary of these is set out below, which states the question, presents a brief discussion, offers a conclusion and makes a recommendation for further action. CLK is asked to consider the recommendations at its September meeting as part of the process of reviewing this summary.

(1) Public Service Chaplaincy
**Question:** CTK has accepted a degree of responsibility for the provision of chaplaincy to the Ambulance Service but does not have a role in other public service chaplaincies; it must be asked why there is no clear pattern to this kind of provision and no integrated approach to provision.

**Discussion:** The data leaves one with the general sense that strategic issues of public service chaplaincy are not being adequately held by anyone and that there are too many organisations involved, with a lack of clarity about their relationships and accountabilities. CLK broadly feels that provision is best made on an ecumenical basis but it is not clear that CTK is the best vehicle for that provision, especially as, in practice, the meetings of Council are so far apart.

The sense of ambiguity and confusion around this area causes difficulty to those who are seeking to access the system in order to obtain chaplaincy services. CTK could act as a point of contact for enquiries if its role was clarified and the Employed Officer's work redefined to take account of this need (see also below). There are examples of local initiatives taking place, such as the various Street Pastors schemes, where CTK has not needed to have any role at all. It may be argued that if CTK were to accept any role in relation to any chaplaincy organisation it should do so in order to establish a project but then release it into local control.

The model of the Police chaplaincy seems to be strongly supported and positive, where one named person within CLK has been nominated as the focal minister for that chaplaincy. The model has the strength of clarity and simplicity - as well as showing that it is possible for one person to act for the whole leadership group.

**Conclusion:** The lack of clarity in this area leads to a lack of pastoral focus on its importance and presents difficulties for those trying to seek the assistance of the churches. There are a range of possible solutions, such as the nomination of a member of CLK to oversee each chaplaincy, or a redefinition of the Employed Officer's role to lead on chaplaincies on behalf of CLK.

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**(2) The role of the County Ecumenical Officer.**

**Question:** In a situation where the broader ecumenical movement seems to have lost impetus and there is now a presumption against further LEPs amongst some denominations, it must be asked whether the role of the Employed Officer is appropriately orientated for the needs of the broader Christian community in Greater Kent.

**Discussion:** In the past the CEO has been seen primarily as a diaconal officer, servicing the structure of CTK, but there is now a clear consensus among the leadership group that a different approach is needed. The developing vision for the Employed Officer role sees the future as needing an Apostolic or Evangelistic model of work. The person should be one who has drive, energy and commitment to energize new and innovative local co-operative programmes.

One image offered was of the MC in some South African worship whose role is to introduce the right contributions from people in the way that will best move the congregation on through its worship. Another was of the French holiday camp animateur who seeks to engage people with activity without necessarily leading the activities himself. For example, there are serious issues for denominations about maintaining a worshipful and missioning presence in rural areas of Kent - could the animateur actively promote local co-operation, perhaps with the assistance of relevant DEOs (see also below).

The animateur should be one who can actively engage with LCTGs, with LEPs and also with CLK, being the voice between the broader church and CLK but also from them to the community within which they are set. One leader hopes for a person who could meet with local denominational leadership and enthuse them as well. There would need to be a particularly strong relationship between CLK and the animateur who would need to act as in some sense the CLK Staff Officer - while at the same time helping CLK to focus on the developing issues within Greater Kent.

The traditional CEO role does not necessarily fit well with such a newly envisioned model and it would seem important to separate both these two and role of secretary to CTK. For this reason, the remainder of this document refers instead to the Employed Officer of CTK so as not to predicate conclusions about the content of the role.

**Conclusion:** The Employed Officer of the future is envisioned as a very different kind of role to that which has operated in the past. The person will need to be an animateur who can engage with local ecumenical partnerships, the DEOs and CLK to focus their ecumenical endeavours on mission to the broader community.

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**(3) The relationship between CTK, CLK and the DEOs.**

**Question:** If it is the case that a simpler, more effective operational mode is being sought then there must be consideration of the role of the Denominational Ecumenical Officers as they seem well placed to address a number of the operational issues that face CTK.

**Discussion:** The lack of clarity about what the role of the DEO might be has led to some difficulty in identifying proper persons to appoint in some
traditions. There was a general feeling that in reality the DEO group could hold a lot of the issues that currently come before Council and do so more effectively as a smaller group that meets more often.

One contributor said that the DEOs should be given the clear message that CLK trusts them to deal with most matters, especially those relating to the residual legal matters around LEPs. Beyond that there was a feeling that the role of the DEO should be to actively engage in theological dialogue with partners, including LEPs, the 'informal partnerships' and CLK. They should embody the commitment of the churches to continuing ecumenical endeavour being in regular contact with the schemes to which their denominations are party - not only when they are due to be reviewed.

The relationship between the DEOs and the Employed Officer is of great significance and importance. There is a debate to be had about whether the Employed Officer need be the CEO or whether that formal role might be held within the DEO group - perhaps by them filling it by rotation - or whether the Employed Officer needs to be available to them as a neutral figure, not distracted by denominational concerns, who might convene their meetings but certainly ensure that they take place.

**Conclusion:** the role of the DEO group will be of great significance as the new operational practices of CTK emerge and they might be seen as being the focus of much of the work that is currently handled elsewhere, in the Council for example. Denominations will need to consider the kind of role that they expect their Officers to fulfil especially in relationship with new local co-operative work.

(4) The place of Bromley and Bexley as part of Greater Kent

**Question:** the two London Boroughs are historic parts of Kent but seem now to belong more to Greater London; there is a broad issue about our boundaries matching the civic and community boundaries of our time or the ecclesiastical boundaries of the past.

**Discussion:** there was a degree of irritation that this issue has been raised, in the sense that it can be seen as a distraction from the more fundamental questions that face CTK. There will inevitably be some untidiness around such things as boundaries because of the historical experiences of denominations but it should be noted that recent boundary changes within the churches have reinforced the identity of the M25 circle as a suitable marker for London in ecclesial terms, as it has increasingly become for civic purposes. For several of the denominations the unit of governance is in any case much wider.

The most common view was that the decision was really one to be made by the local people concerned and it is to be hoped that when they have the opportunity to meet as a sub-regional unit in the autumn they will express a view that will settle the issue.

The CEO for London South has been consulted and is of the view that a transfer would be in keeping with the very strong south London identity that is developing across that sub-region and would not cause any organisational issues for CTLS, which in any case has a much lighter organisational system.

**Conclusion:** this is a matter that has probably taken up more time than is justified without a conclusion being reached by the LCTGs affected.

(5) Communications within CTK

**Question:** interrogation of the data showed that there are issues around clarity and reporting within CTK and particularly raised the question of how relationships might be stronger between LCTGs and CTK.

**Discussion:** a commonly held view is that big 'top-down' ecumenical initiatives have had their day and what is now needed is an emphasis on Christians at the local level engaging in practical activity with each other. If this is the case, then the focus needs to be on supportive ecumenism at the local level with the intermediate body acting as a resource, enabling local projects and disseminating both news of local achievement and established good practice.

For this to work it is essential that there be good, strong relationships that are in the context of robust systems that do not absorb energy through meeting with each other rather than with the broader community which Christians are called to serve. There is no newsletter (cf. London South) or magazine (cf. Sussex) and links with the forty or so LCTGs are so loose that CTK had in fact lost touch with four of them altogether. There are also significant areas where no LCTG exists.

CTK as it is appears to be uncommunicative, opaque in its structures and operating in a way that makes it difficult to answer the question 'What do LCTGs get for their subscriptions?' Some concern has also been expressed at the way financial information is disseminated.

**Conclusion:** it is clear that LCTGs need to be engaged in a discussion about the model of belonging that is appropriate and that CTK needs to review its structures to make them flexible, transparent and as light touch as possible.
(6) Interfaith Relationships.

**Question:** Churches Together in England has for some time accepted a role in promoting conversation between the different faith groups in our country and regularly holds consultations for County Ecumenical Officers and other interested parties in this area. The question that arose from the initial investigation was whether this was seen as a natural part of CTK's work in the same way.

**Discussion:** While the range of cultural diversity across Greater Kent should not be underestimated, this is not an issue that is seen as a priority, in this area at this time. Where there is some pressure to provide a County level response this is primarily driven by the needs of local government to have some access to a 'faith perspective' - although that local government need is largely undifferentiated in the sense that any faith perspective meets their need and there is not a perceived demand for a particularly Christian perspective. This is seen as a feature of what some regard as the post-Christendom understanding of society whereby Christians should not expect to have a particular voice in society merely because it is a Christian voice that they are offering.

An important consideration is that the other faith communities do not organise themselves in the same way as Christians. There is no equivalent organisational level to the County level Intermediate Body, CTK. It may well be that CTK has a role to play in helping to find appropriate conversation partners for members of other faiths who wish to address particular issues but it was felt that these were more likely to arise at a district or sub-district level, rather than at the County level.

A concern for mutual understanding amongst religious people is clearly a parallel process to that which is at the heart of the intra-Christian ecumenical endeavour but at the same time it is a distinct issue involving dissimilar areas of debate. There does seem to be a need for a level of response amongst Christians in a collaborative way but it was generally agreed that this brief should be held elsewhere - through the work of Church in Society, for example.

**Conclusion:** Broadly speaking the view expressed was that the Inter-Faith relationship question might be better handled at regional level, through the South East England Faith Forum, and at local level through emerging groups such as those in the Medway towns and Thanet.

**Conclusion and Recommendations** The interview data gave clarity to an initial judgement that CLK had already achieved a large degree of emergent consensus about its past and future roles. There was a definite desire to see CTK move from a role of servicing the machinery of the institutional ecumenical endeavour, which in any case seems to have lost all momentum, to a role where it energised relationships and promoted attainable project outcomes. The success of such endeavours would be measured through the clarity of the vision held by CLK, the effectiveness of the Employed Officer as an active agent and through the evidence of local projects bringing Christians together in effective mission partnerships. Crucial to this approach would be a clear change in the role of the Employed Officer of CTK, who would need to be someone who could animate activities and engage potential partners in imaginative new endeavours, rather than being the diaconal upholder of structures.
Section One: The Role of Churches Together in Kent

**Question:** perceptions of the roles of the instruments of ecumenism have undoubtedly changed in the last decade so the time is now ripe to ask, again, what is the mission of CTK and what part is Council to play?

**Discussion:** CTK draws the churches together in recognition of their common mission to the people of Kent and through its networking role helps to draw the constituents together in common understanding. CTK can encourage sharing of resources, knowledge and skills; it should co-ordinate and encourage common mission endeavours across Greater Kent. There is a role in bringing together the Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs) and having oversight of the Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) though there seem to be relatively few of those in this part of the world.

Within this work, the Council has a ‘trustee’ role as well as being a representation body for the denominations; it should be a focal point for fellowship but also be a catalyst for ecumenical endeavour. The Council should have a particular focus on the challenges of Christian mission in the region building a framework for our common response to those challenges. Some saw the need to separate the broader Kentish issues from those associated with the management of particular partnerships.

Council is valued as a representative body which provides a forum for the affiliated bodies to work together in common mission. Its shared concern for Kentish people, friendliness and breadth of membership were all affirmed. At the same time there was a keen awareness of CTK as a remote body having little impact on Christians at the congregational level.

Those who responded were keen to see the Council continue to promote ecumenism locally but there was acknowledgement that it needs to have more focus and move away from having a purely business agenda towards something that encouraged more shared learning together and the development of a stronger, better articulated Christian voice in Kent. It was suggested that we could learn from the South London model where there is better linkage with local Churches Together Groups (LCTGs) rather than being a meeting for ‘specialists’.

**Summary:** respondents hold a positive view of the work of Council but there is recognition that there could be alternative models of work that would work well but with better grounding in the local. The reference to the way that CTSL operates is interesting as their operational model seems much ‘lighter’ without any loss of effectiveness.

Section Two: A Theological Perspective

**Question:** what would be an appropriate theological context to set out a plan of development for CTK into the future?

**Discussion:** this was a difficult area for some respondents who wanted to say that as CTK is not the Church, it is not appropriate to use language about the Church’s ministry to describe it. There was also, however, some acceptance that in modern conditions it is most appropriate that Christian bodies should operate in a way that explicitly relates to the evangelistic and prophetic calling of the Church. Most agreed that CTK had operated in a largely pastoral mode in the past but that there now needed to be a significant change of direction. Regardless of which mode CTK operates in it must, however, have a far higher profile and a much more clearly focused approach.

**Summary:** broadly speaking the view is that the way forward is for a strengthened and revisioned Council to take the lead in bringing the disparate elements of CTK together in a newly focused way, supported by a re-tasked County Ecumenical Officer. There is little reported appetite for a radical revision of CTK’s working, which, as the data shows, is hoped for elsewhere.

Section Three: Operational Issues.

(1) Public Service Chaplaincy

**Question:** CTK has accepted a degree of responsibility for the provision of chaplaincy to the Ambulance Service but does not have a role in other public service chaplaincies; it must be asked why there is no clear pattern to this kind of provision and no integrated approach to provision.

**Discussion:** the views expressed were highly diverse - from those who felt that CTK need only hold an access point, to those who felt that all chaplaincies should be directly within the purview of CTK along with Church in Society and other such bodies. There should be accountability to the Council as well as recognition from it. There was also recognition that such a supervisory role might be fulfilled by the Church Leaders’ Meeting (CTK).

**Summary:** the range of views makes summary difficult: perhaps there needs to be some debate about the merits of the different models of chaplaincy provision, such as the Focal Minister approach adopted for Police chaplaincy.
(2) The role of the County Ecumenical Officer.

**Question:** In a situation where the broader ecumenical movement seems to have lost impetus and there is now a presumption against further LEPs amongst some denominations, it must be asked whether the role of the Employed Officer is appropriately orientated for the needs of the broader Christian community in Greater Kent.

**Discussion:** the CEO was seen as the appropriate person to convene meetings of the DEOs and encourage the sharing of good practice and resources. So far as LCTGs are concerned, the role was seen in a similar way; the post-holder should be a motivator for networking and the sharing of resources. There was a view that there should be an explicit programme of visiting by the CEO so that there could be engagement between CTK and LCTGs. There was certainty that the encouragement of initiatives and the offering of support to them should be far more vigorous; it should be a proactive and promotional role. There was recognition that this re-envisioned role would need more time spent on it and from this the appreciation that there is a resource question - one person questioning whether an employed official could be afforded at all. One respondent maintained that if the churches are serious about ecumenical engagement they will find the resources to ensure that the Employed Officer has the support needed to fulfil a role that is potentially very challenging in the light of the possible new models of working.

**Summary:** Council members are concerned that the role of the Employed Officer is changing; it now needs to be fulfilled in a different way involving proactive support of LCTGs, LEPs and DEOs.

(3) The relationship between CTK, CLK and the DEOs

**Question:** the oversight of LEPs could be held by the group of DEOs rather than Council and the questionnaire sought views on this.

**Discussion:** there was some acceptance of the possibility and it was noted that this worked well in CTSL although their ‘enabling group’ is chaired by a member of the leadership group - giving good contact with their CLK equivalent. There was concern, however, about whether the DEOs group was willing or able to take on such a responsibility. The view was expressed that DEOs have no identity apart from CTK’s Council, although it might be asked whether the appointing authorities would hold the same view. There was a strong feeling that the Employed Officer should be involved in the convening of DEO meetings and offer a supportive role to them as well as being available to advise on shared appointment. Again, it is not clear that the appointing bodies would share this view.

**Summary:** in broad terms respondent are willing to consider this alternative approach even though it has important implications for the future role of the DEOs and the DEO group.

(4) The place of Bromley and Bexley as part of Greater Kent

**Question:** the two London Boroughs are historic parts of Kent but seem now to belong more to Greater London. Respondents were asked their views on this situation.

**Reflection:** there was strong majority support for Bromley and Bexley transferring to CTSL with the proviso that we should be clear that the local people see their location in that body rather than with CTK.

**Summary:** that the resolution of this matter is something for the local people.

(5) Communications within CTK

**Question:** interrogation of the data showed that there are issues around clarity and reporting within CTK and particularly raised the question of how relationships might be stronger between LCTGs and CTK.

**Discussion:** there was a deal of discontent that reports to Council have in the past been ‘sporadic and not satisfactory. Council has not been kept sufficiently informed of the lives of the LEPs and LCTGs. Communication downwards was described as ‘virtually non-existent’ with the hope expressed by several respondents that the website could be redeveloped as the vehicle for such communication. Respondents observed that many LCTGs have little knowledge of or interest in CTK: it was felt that there was a poor level of integration between CLK and Council. This may reflect a sense of the concerns that CLK have about the present arrangements.

**Summary:** there is a clear need for a new approach in this area. A much robust system of contact with LCGTs is called for.

(6) Interfaith Relationships.
Appendix 5: Summary of the data from Local Consultation meetings.

1. A series of local consultation meetings were held across Greater Kent in the early Autumn, 2009. These were based around a similar grid of questions to the previous components of the research project in order to strengthen the triangulation of the data. In addition, the Webmaster asked for opinions about the website. The South London meeting was also asked whether those LCTGs would prefer to be affiliated to CTLondon South. Those present, supported by emails from others, were firmly of the opinion that they wished to remain in Ecumenical Kent.

2. Some 22 LCGTs were represented at the meetings which were also attended by some of the DEOs, some people from areas where there is no current LCTG structure and a number of ordinary Church members who took the opportunity to voice their views on ecumenical issues. The meetings were recorded by contemporaneous note-taking by a neutral person, while the Researcher led the meetings.

3. What do you think CTK is for? There was considerable disappointment - one DEO called it shock - at how little awareness there was at local level about CTK; at every meeting someone said that they had never heard of it, although one person did say that they were pleasantly surprised to find it existed. The sense of ‘not getting enough and not getting our money’s worth’ was very clear. There was a recognition that some ecumenical functions needed to be ‘centrally managed’ but also a great desire to see CTK to be a vehicle by which the local groups could be kept in touch with one another, to ‘satisfy the sense of sharing together’ and so that we may understand ‘what we all have in common on a spiritual level’. CTK should enhance what the local groups do and be a catalyst for local people to engage in more ecumenical work.

4. Ministerial dimensions: as was found in other parts of the research there was an agreement that the work of CTK has been pastoral but also a feeling that it should be more apostolic - ‘We want it to be apostolic in future’. Several people expressed a view on the lines of ‘it was nice to have the pastoral support but this will not work anymore’. This tended to confirm the general sense across the broad sample that people want to see a change in the way that CTK works. Some of the responses had a tone of the evangelistic about them, one person saying that CTK should ‘reach out to more people’. There was a degree of concern about the overall size of the ecumenical county, “how can we be united when we are so widely spread” but this was held in tension with the clearly perceived strength among the LCTGs. Some people expressed the idea that the prophetic role was best held by the leadership group and many spoke positively about the leaders meeting as they do and were glad to hear that this in fact happens.

5. CEO’s Role: the evidence in this area is problematic because of repeated comments that little was known of the role: it seemed to be seen as something that did not impact on the local groups. There were some, however, who did see the benefit of the role particularly if it could be interpreted in the future as ‘someone who will bring us together and help us to look at what other groups are doing’.

6. The opinion was strongly expressed that whatever the CEO does should benefit the local groups but at least one person suggested that the commitment was no longer appropriate: ‘maybe the money could be better spent on Street Pastors’. On the other hand one meeting were quite clear that they needed the CEO to be someone that they could look to, someone with a vision for the future.

7. Model of Belonging: this was another area of clearly expressed dissatisfaction, some of which focused on money issues with uncertainty particularly surrounding the issue of local subscriptions. Some said that they had never been asked for a subscription and others that, while they were willing to pay, had been unable to establish what the amount was supposed to be. A small number questioned the need for a subscription but this seemed to be expressed in terms of wanting to be assured of value for money. There were clear understandings that unity grows from our shared actions and a desire to learn from the experiences of other local groups; there was also a sense that we are wider than the local and need the means to keep in touch but apparent ‘problems at County level’ had prevented that from happening. There
was some suggestion that maybe sub-regional bodies might overcome the problem of distance, especially as some were keen to see CTK organising 'a do' from time to time but accepted that the size of ecumenical Kent meant this was a considerable challenge.

8. Communications: this was a key item for all the consultation groups and again many noted that there seem to have been serious communication problems in the past with one person saying, 'most would not realise CTK was there because it has no impact'. There was a clear desire for more communication and better relationships between the local and the county levels based around a shared answer to the question about what local and county can do to help each other. CTK might also be the means by which local groups have a better idea of what CTE are doing and saying. CTK could be a means by which good news about ecumenical activities could be shared and good practice disseminated - the chance 'to see what others are doing'. Above all CTK should be a source of enablement.

9. Interfaith work: this was an area upon which opinions were fairly consistent. There was a sense of uncertainty about whether it belonged with CTK combined with recognition that both are concerned with bringing people together. There was a clear opinion expressed by at least two of the meetings that the County level was the right place for this work it is going to have sufficient impact and, indeed, the question was asked as to whether the resources might not be better utilised on inter-faith co-operation than on CTK. The views expressed were tolerant with people saying that 'we have to learn to live with differences' and that we 'must learn to respect the faith journeys of others even when we are on a different path'.

10. Have you looked at the website? The Webmaster attended all the local meetings and was able to make important contact with local people as well as finding out more of what they wanted from a CTK website. The comments made it clear that the existing website was not well regarded because it was over-large and seen as difficult to navigate and this had become a disincentive to use. There were questions as to whether a new website might be able to have a news-page or give access to other on-line resources. The comments made were incorporated into the design of the new website which went live in November, 2009. The content of the old website has been retained and may be accessed for archive and record purposes.

Appendix 6: Summary of Interviews with CEOs from adjoining Intermediate Bodies.

The County Ecumenical (Development) Officers of Essex, London South, Surrey and Sussex were each interviewed for this project. The interviews were conducted under the same protocols as the rest of the project and recorded by contemporaneous note-taking, the summaries of the notes then being signed off by the subject as an accurate record. The data supplied by neighbouring CEOs is set out below for the purposes of comparison with the recommendations of this report. The data has, however, been anonymised with the county names removed as well as gender references.

One immediate conclusion is that the Kent role is less well paid and has a smaller time commitment than those of the neighbouring Intermediate Bodies, although it has to be recognised that neither of these issues can be fully addressed within the resources that are likely to be available to CTK. Two of the CEOs interviewed are retained by an ecclesial body to carry out additional, but parallel, work drawing on their own particular areas of expertise.

Secondly, it is clear that the neighbouring Intermediate Bodies have already moved to a much lighter structure, in some cases even more so than proposed in the recommendations of this report, and that the way the work is conducted is quite varied. A striking feature of this variety is that most have adopted a solution that can be described as a 'three-strand' approach where the critical instruments are a Leadership Group, an Employed Officer and an enabling group of some kind. We may also observe that not all have a strong relationship with the local Churches Together groups; one has, based on a regular magazine which is supported from a much higher subscription per congregation. The data suggests that such a level of subscription would not be acceptable in Kent.

A question that arises from the arrangements in adjacent counties is about the extent to which the outcomes of the work are predicated by the particular interests and skills of the CEO. Local arrangements will reflect local needs but if there is to be confidence that all the necessary tasks are covered it is important that there be strong relationships between the instruments of unity. Clear lines of accountability, accurate job descriptions and attainable targets are needed. There also needs to be commitment to the amount of time that is needed to make the arrangements work.

One CEO made a strong case for the regional CEOs working explicitly as a regional team and this has much to commend it: there is a question, however, for the Kent Employed Officer as where loyalties lie. The London Region CEOs meet twice a year to exchange information and plan joint work with the Field Officer CTE (South) as facilitator. The Researcher has attended those meetings on the basis of the Bromley and Bexley
affiliation to CTK. The South-East CEOs also meet from time to time although no such meeting took place during the data collection phase of the research project.

There is an annual national consultation of CEOs which was attended by the Researcher. Valuable comparative data was gathered and an important networking opportunity presented itself. The next such consultation will be after the end of the research project but is being planned by the London Regional CEOs and the Researcher has contributed to that planning process and will, it has been agreed, attend as part of the delivery group for the consultation.

**COUNTY W**

CEO has been in post since 1991 and has worked with SE colleagues, something that could be developed further in future. Could the four CEOs not act as a regional team making their individual strengths available to colleagues in a collaborative way?

CTW is very much a slimmed down organisation with an emphasis on relationships. It is essential to have vitality and not be smothered by needless bureaucracy.

DEOs are joined by some other lay people, forming an Enabling Group, the sponsoring body for LEPs - normally three meetings p.a., one is jointly with the Leaders Group. They share advocacy for LEPs, together hold the ring for appointments and reviews.

Leaders also meet 3 times p.a., and try to hold the strategic role. All meetings were very formal when the CEO first went into post but the emphasis is now on the relational. CEO reports to their chair; very light touch management means CEO has to be a self-starter, but is clear that has the support of the leadership. No annual report as such but does have a regular magazine. CEO is employed for 20 hrs/wk. on a salary related to Anglican stipends, self-employed.

LCTGs - offers a deal: pay a sub of £17/congregation in return for which they get a magazine, visits and CEO on call as required. 40-60 LCGTs (some are federated). No longer needs to visit all of them as some have moved beyond needing that regular support.

LEPs - some traditions very cool on formal arrangements now: it does not seem right to pretend to oversight unless CTW discharges its duties properly and also can make some resource available.

Local Strategic partnerships are important places to be - CEO has been on most of the local ones and has chaired. They fit well with the county level strategic role; this is an area where skills should be shared across the region.

Presence of New Church traditions tends to be localised in particular districts - the more urban ones - very important to be in strategic networks with these Christians as there are people who are aware of ecumenical issues and have energy to pursue them. Should be able to co-operate over mission and possible shared use of buildings.

**COUNTY X**

The formal elements of CTX are:

- The Church Leaders Breakfast that happens twice a year; there is no formal role, agenda or constitution.
- CEO holds the operational issues.
- A council that meets twice a year bringing together the LCTGs (or equivalents); about 40 people typically attend but the more mission focused it is the more come to the meetings. 30 minutes business and an hour on a special theme - the last one was on Prison Chaplaincy and has led to some local community projects in prisons - the next one will be more theological in nature (two bishops speaking on receptive ecumenism).
- An enabling group that has CEO, a secretary, treasurer and the DEOs - this holds the formal role as the sponsoring body for LEPs.

Additionally there is a triennial forum which picks up a really big theme: the last one was the abolition of the slave trade and actually took place in Wilberforce's own church. The next one is on mission and unity.

CEO works ten days a month and is paid £12k - there are no subs for the LCTGs now, they are represented on the Council and receive six newsletters a year.

Grants from the member denominations are large enough to cover the stipend and expenses as well as to allow a small amount each year to be given as grant aid to small scale ecumenical schemes, e.g. advertising Back to Church Sunday on buses. Maximum grant is £500.

There are three key ideas in the approach: LIGHT TOUCH INITIATIVE SUPPORTING EVENTS.

**COUNTY Y**

Arrangements for the intermediate body have been stripped down to the absolute minimum: there are three elements -

1. The Church leaders in Y meet regularly four times a year. Two of these are solely business meetings and a further meeting take place before the annual conference, at which they are joined by the DEOs. The final meeting is held jointly with leaders of the local authorities operating in Y. There is a high level of commitment to these events which are designed to be purposeful and promote the work of CTY effectively. The chair rotates triennially.

**COUNTY Z**

The formal elements of CTZ are:

- Full CTZ meetings consist of the seven denominational leaders and one person who attends as the voice of the New Churches.
- The DEOs also attend as a matter of course and others may be invited to be in attendance as appropriate.

Such formal governance as there is in place satisfies the legal
Appendix 7: New Church tradition congregations in Greater Kent.

This list is derived from the information publicly supplied by the Networks correlated with information from our own LCTGs.

* means that they are in membership of the appropriate LCTG.

n means that there is no appropriate LCTG to which a congregation might affiliate.

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Network/Tradition</th>
<th>LCTG</th>
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Fig. 1: New Church tradition local affiliations

![Pie chart showing local affiliations of New Church tradition congregations in Kent.]

Fig. 2: Network affiliations of New Church tradition congregations in Kent

![Pie chart showing network affiliations of New Church tradition congregations in Kent.]

The data was obtained by use of a survey of New Church tradition networks carried out by Ian Chisnall, CEO Sussex and made available through the CTE consultation for CEOs. The information for each network was then investigated using their web sites, typically by using a ‘Find a Church’ section.

An all-network list for Greater Kent was derived from the data.

Fig. 1 shows that half the possible congregations are affiliated to their LCTG but also that a number have no appropriate body to join. The map in Appendix 8 gives an indication of the parts of Kent where this applies and which can be regarded as in some sense ‘development areas’ for CTK.

Fig. 2 shows that about three quarters of the congregations belong to five of the Networks. Two of the five, Elim and Ichthus, are full members of CTE and ought therefore to have a formal place in CTK. The Assemblies of God Church is understood to be considering full membership. Regardless of this varied relationship with the national body the data suggests that some form of relationship should be established at Intermediate Body level. The chief difficulty is that the Networks often do not have ministers with regional responsibility as do the other Churches.

There are some issues about the data. In a few locations, a network states that they have a congregation but none is known locally; it has been assumed in these cases that there is an aspiration to establish a congregation with a small core of existing members who currently worship elsewhere. Secondly, not all local secretaries were able to respond to enquiries within the available time-scale so the absence of an annotation may mean that there is no information available, rather than that the congregation in question has chosen not to affiliate.
There are Christian traditions in England that, for their own theological reasons, regard the ecumenical movement as lacking integrity because of a failure to reach prior doctrinal agreement between the Churches. The data suggests a total of 44 such congregations in the CTK area. There are 16 member congregations of the Federation of Independent Evangelical Churches in Kent, most of whom are also belong to Affinity, a major new network of Reformed-Evangelical communities that includes other, non-FIEC churches. The Grace Network members are mostly non-BUGB Baptists.

Perhaps more significantly, there is also a range of independent congregations that do not belong to any wider network. Anecdotal evidence from conversations with LCGT officers suggest that such congregations are no more or less likely to affiliate to LCTGs but that there is also a fluidity about their locations and membership that makes reliable data difficult to establish.

Finally, we should note that there are a small number of congregations in the CTK area who are affiliated to their LCTGs and whose national structures are full members of CTE but for whom there is no practical way for them to take a full formal role in CTK. Examples might include the Coptic Orthodox community in Thanet and the Chatham congregation of the Church of God of Prophecy.

Fig. 3: Chart illustrating the numbers of places of worship for each tradition in Greater Kent: it is important to note that this gives no indication of congregational size.
Appendix 9: The CTE model job description for a County Ecumenical Officer.

Reference should also be made to the Churches' own denomination-specific job descriptions.

(Note: for reasons of Church polity there is no standard description of the role of a Denominational EO. Each tradition has its own but these are all available on the CTE website, listed under Local Ecumenism here, accessed 05.12.09.)

Ecumenical Development Officer for Churches Together in AnyShire

Job Description

This is a half-time post (20 hours a week)

**Job title:** Ecumenical Development Officer for Churches Together in AnyShire

**Location:** The officer will work from his/her home

**Accountable to:** The Trustees of Churches Together in AnyShire (the employer) through the President/Chair who will meet with the Officer on a regular basis and will put into place effective line management and support for the Officer.

**Overview**

The Ecumenical Development Officer shall facilitate and support the churches of AnyShire in their relationships with one another and their wider mission in the world, by encouraging and developing the principles and practices of ecumenism throughout the county.

In particular, s/he will:

- Work closely with the Church Leaders, supporting and facilitating their strategic collaboration and fellowship to enhance the ecumenical life
and mission of the Church in AnyShire.

- Facilitate and work with the team of Denominational Ecumenical Officers to encourage and support local ecumenism creatively, especially Churches Together Groups, and Local Ecumenical Partnerships, in their mission to the communities they serve.

- Work in partnership with other colleagues within Churches Together in AnyShire.

**Tasks**

1. The Ecumenical Development Officer shall assist the Churches at all levels in AnyShire to work more closely together. In particular, s/he will service and manage the work of the core meetings of Churches Together in AnyShire in consultation with its President and in collaboration with the Treasurer and any other officers.

2. The Ecumenical Development Officer shall work closely with AnyShire's Church Leaders, setting up and servicing their meetings as required and enabling their closer collaboration.

3. S/he will relate to denominational structures in AnyShire and to other ecumenical groups, institutions and organisations within the county. The Officer will sometimes be required to liaise personally with these bodies but is encouraged to ensure that others within Churches Together in AnyShire take on some of these liaison responsibilities to build up a network of representation as part of a collaborative style of working.

4. A key group of colleagues for the Ecumenical Development Officer is the team of Denominational Ecumenical Officers within which s/he has a co-ordinating role. His/her task is to facilitate this team, ensuring a collaborative encouragement, stimulus and support for local ecumenical endeavour and initiatives, especially but not only in the form of Churches Together Groups. With this team, the Officer will ensure that Churches Together in AnyShire carries out its Sponsoring Body responsibilities for Local Ecumenical Partnerships, organising reviews and advising on constitutions etc.

5. The Ecumenical Development Officer oversees all Churches Together in AnyShire publications, including any newsletters and the website. A key task is to communicate good news stories.

The Ecumenical Development Officer works in the context of a network of similar officers in the counties of England ('Intermediate Level') and is supported by Churches Together in England most usually via its Field Officer for the South/North and Midlands. As well as attending CTE’s training course for new officers in the first year of appointment, the Ecumenical Development Officer will also attend annual meetings of Intermediate ('County') Ecumenical Officers and will meet with those in his/her region two or three times a year for mutual support, help and collaboration.

**Other requirements**

This is a half-time post and much of the work involves travelling in the AnyShire area and beyond. The Ecumenical Development Officer will work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends - this is not a ‘fixed hours’ job.

20 March 2008

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