CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY AUDIT

A resource for Mission Action Planning

Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway

Conducting a Community Audit

'Mission is seeing what God is doing and joining in'. Rowan Williams

1. Why?

Conducting a 'community audit' or 'profile' is a way of coming to understand better the resources and needs of the area in which your church building is set: by looking and listening; by having preconceptions challenged and misconceptions corrected. It is about getting in touch with reality. Liberation Theologians talk about the need to '*hacerse cargo de la realidad'*; literally 'to realise the weight of reality'. Thus we might say it is about *acquiring a* ***profound*** *knowledge of what is in front of us.*

> *"What are the pressing needs in our local area? How has the area changed in the past decade? Who are the marginalised/most at risk? What's going on already? What is the area proud of/good at? What resources does it have? If the church/hall were to become a more flexible space, who might use it through the week? "*
>
> These are the kind of questions that a Community Audit seeks to address.

But it is not simply about learning about what makes the area tick, but about understanding the setting, and confronting the negative *in order to change it for the better.* As Christians, we are called to be conscious and active agents of the transformation of history at God's behest; to take the Kingdom seriously, now. Jesus marked the beginning of His ministry by reading from Isaiah 61, 1-3. His coming pointed to the presence of the Kingdom hidden in the fabric of life on earth and to its future fulfilment elsewhere. This Kingdom was not an abstraction or simply about spiritual renewal in the individual heart. It was - and is – a condition of social relationships based in justice, realized in and through Him in a time of violence, alienation and oppression. Faithfulness to the Kingdom involved the transformation of the world by God's love and justice.

So the object of engaging in a Community or Neighbourhood Audit is to join in the task of transforming society, of creating a more just society, one in which social relationships express and foster Gospel imperatives and prefigure the fullness of the Kingdom. Those steps on the way of transformation – small, medium or large - can then be detailed in your MAP.

In the *Faith in the Countryside Report* (Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas 1990, 22-3) we read:

> *It is part of our response to God to help create conditions where others in community can experience care and well-being. For the Church to be truly committed to enabling persons to grow will involve the task of ensuring that society is organised in such a way that human beings can enter fully into these relationships of spiritual and material exchange that we call loving relationships.*

But in order to bring about such transformation the Church - as a body and as individual Christians – must first *understand* the issues, processes, structures and consciousness of the society in which it is set. **Effective pastoral action requires adequate social knowledge**, otherwise what congregations offer will fail to address real needs or else duplicate what some other agency is already doing. In order to respond intelligently and effectively to situations of need, imbalance and injustice in our localities, we must investigate the social reality confronting us - and this requires careful data collection and analysis. The following resource offers some methods for conducting such an Audit, and lists further helpful materials.

2. How?

The first stage of the Audit is that of "**description**", the building up of a picture of what the area around your church is like; of amassing facts, maps, statistics etc. This could be approached in an impressionistic way simply by sitting down and describing the area as you know it, mentioning its most prominent features, relating a few stories about it and so on. But such a description would be built solely upon *existing* knowledge of the area and thus would be partial and subjective. The Audit aims rather to help you to look at your area with new eyes; to look and listen with attentiveness, openness and humility.

So the first thing recommended is that you walk round the locality you are studying together. Open your eyes and really look. How does it strike you? Warm and welcoming? Threatening? Cared for? Do people take pride in it? Or is it run down? Perhaps take a camera with you; as Thomas Merton found when he was given a camera by Howard Griffin, taking photos is a brilliant way of making you stop and focus in every sense of the word. And listen too. There is a lovely story that when Martin Luther was preparing to translate the Old Testament into German, he first stood in the market place in Wittenberg for two weeks in all weathers just listening to the locals as they went about their business, listening to the vernacular.

Listen to Kenneth Leech speaking about a wonderful Franciscan friar whose ministry lay in the Cable Street area of London's East End; and as you listen, replace the word "clergy" with the word 'congregations' in your mind.

> *Like Neville we need to identify with the place in which we are set. One of the most wonderful things about Neville was the way in which he seemed to blend into Cable Street. Maybe his faded cassock was the same colour as much of the brickwork! So often clergy stick out in the most painfully anti-incarnational way. Everything about them cries out that they do not live there, they are just doing good to the natives. They are "working among" people. (What a dreadful thing it is to be "worked among"!) When I was a parish priest I used to suggest to my curates that they spend the first month in the parish doing nothing except wandering around, familiarizing themselves with the map of the district, getting it into their system. Discovering the shops, the pubs, the street corners, the faces at the bus stops and park benches, absorbing the smells, listening to the neglected voices of the neighbourhood, feeling its pulse: these are the vital prerequisites of good pastoral care. You cannot effectively minister in unfamiliar territory.*

It is also useful to see **where the congregation stands in relation to the neighbourhood**. For example, where does the congregation live? Do members live in the community or commute to church? It is important to know this, because it often tests the commitment to the particular community in which the church building exists.

Obtain a map of the area (as suggested on page 7) and ask everyone to put a sticker beside where they live. Also ask some searching questions of the congregation, such as

- What resources in the community do you use? Be specific and list them.
- Which community figures do you know by name?
- Which leaders in the community have been invited to worship with you at any point?

It is also important to find out about the involvement of members of the congregation in **voluntary work in the local community;** this may not be well known, if at all.

- Devise a method of finding out 'who does what in the local community?' and display the results of this search prominently in church, with photographs of the volunteers and illustrations of the various agencies, if possible.
- Think of ways of embedding this voluntary work in the life of the congregation: through regular prayer in the Intercessions on Sunday; addresses devoted to/given by the various agencies; specific retiring collections, and the like.

A community audit should take seriously the issue of how those volunteers – and also the ones who work *within* the church - are looked after, managed, recognised and helped to develop; if it is clear that there is good practice in this area of the congregation's life, this will send a powerful signal to others outwith the church with whom you may wish to partner, so it is worth spending time considering these issues.

The relationship between volunteers and the organisation for which they work is a relationship of trust and commitment on both sides. Nothing guarantees that volunteers will continue in their commitment to their work, but there are numerous factors that contribute to maintaining and developing that commitment:

- Use of a range of skills
- Scope for seeing tasks through to completion
- Freedom to make one's own decisions
- A friendly atmosphere
- Good relationships with colleagues
- Opportunity to take part in new initiatives
- Opportunity to progress in levels of responsibility
- Unoppressive supervision
- A sense of being valued
- Receiving recognition for good work
- Being neither over- nor under-worked
- A pleasant physical environment
- Team-working.

Volunteers who experience these factors are likely to maintain their commitment over a period of time, and may well develop and increase their commitment.
Assess your practice against these criteria. How are you doing as a church?

The ways in which volunteers are managed will vary according to the various circumstances of their work. These circumstances will include:

- level of responsibility
- amount of time they offer
- period of time to which they have committed themselves
- level of skill in relation to the work they are doing
- any special support needs

Management processes will need to be appropriate to these circumstances. Short-term volunteers will need only brief one-to-one sessions to ensure that they are delivering what has been agreed, that they have the facilities necessary to do the task/s and that their general work environment (including relationships with other people) is appropriate for their needs. Longer-term volunteers should in principle have the same opportunities for supervision as paid staff.

Appendix 2 contains helpful material about the recruitment, induction, management and reimbursement of volunteers.
Again, assess your practice against these criteria. How are you doing?

Having spent time on that kind of exercise, then - and only then - begin the process of **data collection**. This stage needs to be done systematically, using some sort of a framework. Societies can be described as being composed of three facets:

- *the organisation of the material basis of existence* (economic and social structures of society)
- *the organisation of collective life* (politics/government)
- *the organisation of symbolic life* (culture and religion).

Society is seen to be a dynamic interrelated structure made up of 5 categories: social, economic, political, cultural and religious. Below is a list of questions relating to each of the five areas, offered to help you amass data about every aspect of the life of your neighbourhood.

Questions to help organise your data collection

Economic
- What is the general economic profile of the area? (major industries; agricultural situation; natural resources, new technologies)
- What is the economic situation? (inflation; cost of living; income distribution; unemployment)
- What are the key economic problems? (flight of capital; population displacement; housing; public services)

Social
- What is the demographic character of the area? (present population; growth rate; geographic concentration; projected shifts; dominance of particular age groups)
- What is its racial/ethnic character?
- What types of housing are found in the area? (age; type; ownership; number of people in average household)
- What are the dominant social problems in the area?
- How and where do people meet in the area? (buildings of community importance; location of public amenities; availability of transport)

Political
- What is the political profile of the area? (party/ies represented at Westminster and Holyrood); political persuasion of local government; relationship of political groupings; interest in local politics)
- What is the nature of its informal leadership? (influential local people; active interest groups and lobbies)
- What non-political factors have influence on political life? (religious groups; media; business groups)

Cultural
- What is the cultural character of the area? (character of the people; strength of community ties; state of the arts; predominant values; variety of lifestyles)
- What proportion of school-leavers go on to tertiary education?

Religious
- What is the religious character of the area? (percentage of different faiths and denominations; degree of interfaith and ecumenical co-operation; patterns of schooling; involvement of religious groupings in the community)

Another, and perhaps more straightforward, way of gathering data is detailed in the Appendix to the Archbishop of Canterbury's report *Faith in the City* (1985), an amended version of which is reproduced below: (see App. 1 for more information)

Faith in the City method

1. The Map

A large map of the area in which the church is situated should be made showing:
major roads or other transport routes
major meeting places – post offices, shops, schools, leisure or health centres
hospitals, residential homes
housing (mark the different types)
places of worship, of all denominations and faiths

Take photographs of these places if possible for your display.

2. The People

A profile of the people living in the area broken down by:
age
gender
employment
ethnicity

3. The history of the area

How has the area changed through time?
what were the major forces to cause such change – depopulation, unemployment, new industry etc?
what signs of the past are visible in the landscape?

Again, photographs showing such changes will enhance your final presentation.

4. What do people feel about the area?

One way to do this is to ask people in the area to write down the ten things they dislike about the area, and the ten things they enjoy or value about it. It is helpful to get the views of different groups and ages of people.

Are there conflicts in the area?
Who makes the decisions which affect the area?
What changes are being made? (roads, housing development, amenities etc)

You may wish to draft a questionnaire for use with people in your neighbourhood. A sample one is offered overleaf; if you do use one of your own design, then please read the advice on questionnaires in Appendix 3 adapted from Oasis Faithworks material, or the 'Community Research Toolkit' from the Transformation Team (Faith in Community Scotland), available for borrowing from the Diocesan Centre.

I have to go back and instead of taking the people as the object of my research
I must try on the contrary to have the people dialogically involved as subjects,
as researchers with me. Thus in doing research I am educating and being educated
with the people.
Paulo Freire

Sample questionnaire (this one is asking specifically about issues of neighbourliness; in writing questionnaires, you need to work out who the questionnaire is for and what you wish to discover from them. Be specific.)

1. Age: …under 21 …21-45 …45-65 …over 65

2. Sex …Male …Female

3. Occupation ....…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Do you/does your partner work locally?

   …within one mile …2-5 miles … further

5. How long have you lived in this area?
   . ..1 year …1-5 years …6-10 years …longer

6. How many people do you talk to face-to-face in a day from outside the home? ……………………………………..

7. Would you and your neighbours visit one another?
   …several times a week …occasionally …rarely …never

8. What sort of area is this generally? …friendly? …unfriendly?

9. What do you see as the main problems in this area? ……… ………..

10. What facilities do you think are lacking in this area? ……… ………..

11.Where would you go/have you gone for help in a time of crisis?
…cope(d) on your own …doctor …friend …family member …religious community …other (specify)

12. What would you like to see churches do in this area, if anything?
……… ………………………………....

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire; please return it to ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Your aim in this 'data collection stage' is not to amass the information for a thesis but to find out information about your area which will surprise and motivate other people in the congregation to take more seriously the issues in the local community. What surprises you or makes you think is probably a good indication of what will make an impact on others too.

Examples of things to took out for are:

• the number of elderly people living alone
• the number of single parent families
• the number of substandard accommodation units
• the number of people living on or below the poverty line
• the number of unemployed
• the rate and nature of crime
• the proportion of failing schools.

Draw in people from the church and from the local community to help you find out information:

- teachers/parents to find out about the state of the schools
- youth workers to find out about facilities for youth
- police to find out more about local crime
- nurses and GPs to find out about the local health issues
- older residents to discover how the area has changed through time

Ask them too 'what do you most like about this area? What are the main challenges in this neighbourhood? What are the barriers to developing this community? What are the opportunities for improving this community? What would you most like to do to help this community? What gives you most hope or energy for improving the neighbourhood?'

Also, find out what other community initiatives are already in existence. What is their purpose? What issues and needs do they come across? Who are they run by? What are other churches doing in the area? Are there groups or churches which could benefit from additional support? Are there significant needs which no group or church seems to be meeting at present?

Tools for data collection
Whichever method you choose to use for collecting your data, you will find the following tools helpful in eliciting information from a number of perspectives:

Census information
Census information normally provides the basic skeleton for any community profile. Information is available on a wide range of key statistics, e.g. age, ethnicity and employment. These are often collated to provide a figure for other key figures such as a number of single parent households and a number of pensioners living alone. Census figures are available from government websites, and local authorities often do useful work on them, posted on their websites.

http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm/index.html 2001 census
http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/preparations/consultation-and-research/formal-consultations-supplementary-work/feb-2011.html 2011 census
http://www.scrol.gov.uk/scrol/common/home.jsp Scotland's Census Results On-line

Data is available at various levels: national, regional, local authority and ward. It is also available at the smaller scale of so-called 'output areas'. This can be very useful for identifying, for example, the nature of a particular estate, but it is less readily available and requires considerably more work.

Other official statistics
The government collects a wide range of statistics and is increasingly making this available at the neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood statistics for Scotland are available at http://www.sns.gov.uk/

Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD

Other sources for useful statistics are
- the police http://www.scottish.police.uk/
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations http://www.scvo.org.uk/

Also housing associations, adult education departments, statutory bodies like Social Services and Health Boards
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/NHS-Scotland/Boards

For easy profiling of the neighbourhood, go to http://www.upmystreet.com/ To access the database you need to provide a postcode from within the area (or a town name) You will then be able to review details concerning house prices, local schools, local councillors and political representatives, council departments, raw populations numbers and unemployment, policing and crime and local public transport.

Maps
Drawing up a map of your neighbourhood is generally an indispensable part of doing a community profile. These can be produced in a variety of ways – hand drawn, traced from large-scale maps available in libraries - and then annotated with relevant local information such as key buildings and demographic concentrations. A good map makes an excellent display, especially when used together with photographs. If the local council has plans for developing the neighbourhood, sometimes the research on the area is available on large maps. Major public libraries also have local studies departments which carry historical and most current planning documents. Visit http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/ for more information on how to obtain a map of your area.

Documentary research
It is always worth trying to find out what has been written about the area previously. The local library is generally the best place to start. The council and other organisations may also have various reports and profiles.

Surveys
Surveys are perhaps what people first think of when wanting to understand the community. They can have value, but are very labour-intensive, often requiring a team of volunteers or students. Some limited door knocking can be a useful way of getting a flavour of an area.

Snowball interviewing
A more useful way of talking to people face-to-face and putting some flesh on your statistical bones can be to identify key people in the community – the local policeman, local councillors, head teachers and health visitors, for example. These professions should also be balanced with local residents such as chairs of tenants' associations and other locally active people. As you talk to people they will often suggest others that it might be worth talking to – hence the term 'snowball interview'. You should check with your statistics, however, that you are meeting a cross-section of the whole community and not missing out, for example, a significant ethnic minority.

Other ways of talking to people
A forum open to local people can be a useful way of engaging with people about their area. Otherwise you can go to where people are already meeting – public meetings, clubs and other places where people just hang out. What works often depends on what you feel comfortable with.

It will also be important to contact the local planning authority and find out what is the Local Authority's Community Strategy. Look at the Unitary Development Plan (now being replaced by the Local Development Framework). Is there any Area Action Plan, Master Plan, Planning Brief affecting the area? Is the church situated in a conservation area? Is there an Estate Renewal Programme? All of these may reveal potential for local funding partnerships. It will be important to liaise with local agencies and charities already operating in the local community. One of the best ways to do this is to invite them to a working lunch, at which you outline your ongoing commitment to the local community, detail the contribution already being made, and share ideas for the future. It will be important to listen to their expertise regarding local need and gaps in the current provision. It may be that this exercise leads into new working partnerships and potential income for the charge. At the very least it will have heightened the profile of the local church as a confident and serious potential partner for other agencies sharing similar concerns.

Who will do the work?
There will be members of the congregation or of the group conducting the MAP-ping work who would run a mile from interviewing people face-to-face, but who would enjoy researching facts and figures about the locality. By contacting the local authority, the local council of voluntary service, the office of national statistics, they can help to build an important picture of how the community has developed and changed over the last twenty or so years, where the areas of real need are today, and which agencies are attempting to meet those needs. Others may have skills in local history or photography which will be very useful. Do try to discover - and then utilise - all the talents at your group's disposal.

3. What next?

Although it might at first seem daunting, it is not that difficult to amass a lot of data about an area. What really counts, however, is *making sense* of this date – comparing different bits of data and seeing how they support or contradict each other; trying to discern what God is saying to you through what you have been learning; learning to read the patterns in the chaos of neighbourhood life.

And so we move now to the next stage of the process, that of "**analysis**". Once the data has been amassed, we need to make sense of it all so as to understand the issues, structures, processes and consciousness operating in the area under consideration. Just to collect facts under the five listed headings is not enough. Social facts do not speak for themselves; indeed a simple accumulation of facts may be both misleading and confusing. We need rather to make *links* between the data collected by asking as many probing questions of the information as possible.

In order for the Audit to provide you with meaningful information that will act as a springboard to future action, you need to ask the following kinds of questions:

- What is life like here?
- What is life like for specific people?
- Who benefits most from this area?
- Who benefits least from this area?
- What are people's needs?
- What are their opportunities?
- Where are the gaps in provision?
- Who wins? Who loses? Who decides?

Once again it is best to use a *framework* of some sort to help make linkages between the various disparate elements. The advantage of doing this part of the Audit in a systematic way is that it does begin to open up the situation and reveal causes, consequences and trends. It provides a holistic picture which also has a historical perspective to it. Remember, however, that this stage is purely *diagnostic*, not therapeutic. It offers broad parameters within which specific tactics and strategies can be suggested, but it does not formulate them. Social analysis is not designed to provide immediate answers to the question "what do we do?" That comes later.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The following method of analysis has been adapted from that offered by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot in their book *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Orbis 1983).

First work through the following series of questions about the history, structures, values and direction of the community you are analysing.

what experiences in the past have shaped the present?

- what have been the major stages through which the area has passed?
- what patterns of development can be observed?
- what have been the key turning points?

what are the major structures which influence the area?

- what are the major economic structures which determine how the community organises resources?
- what are the major political structures which determine how the community organises power?
- what are the major social structures which determine how the community organises relationships?
- what are the major cultural structures which determine how the community organises meaning?

what are the key values operative in the area?

- what/who are the carriers of values in the area – people, role models, institutions?
- examples of various sets of values: age/youth; individualism/community; competition/co-operation; freedom/law and order; progress/stability; innovation/tradition

what is the future direction of the area?

- what are the most significant trends revealed in the present situation?
- if things keep going in the future the way they are now, what will be the situation in ten years time?
- what are the sources of creativity and hope for the future in the present situation?

Now try and draw some conclusions, discerning the most important elements operative in the area. Rank within each category the most significant factors influencing the situation, using a colour code or system of symbols

- which one or two events most shaped the present?

- which economic, political, social and cultural factors are most significant?

- which values have the most impact on how people act?

- which trend seems the most likely for the future development of the area?

When the various elements have been prioritised, make a second effort at ranking and then draw some conclusions

- what are the two or three root elements most responsible for the current situation and in whose interests do these root elements operate?

- what are the key issues you need to be addressing?

This **analysis** stage of the Audit will involve a lot of hard work and may seem quite long-winded. Increasingly our culture sees laborious analytical efforts as a waste of time; we are much more orientated towards the immediate attainment of goals and a quick-fix approach to problem solving. But we mustn't allow ourselves to fall into this trap. We all know how counterproductive, even destructive, it can be to engage in feverish activity for activity's sake alone without first doing the groundwork. Doubtless you can think of examples at all levels of church life where people overwhelm themselves with meetings, action plans and projects which derive from a need to be seen to be helping rather than being based upon a determination to engage incarnationally with God in the world. We are called not to fritter our lives away but to risk them faithfully in the service of the Kingdom, and if our actions are to be faithful and just, then we need to do this kind of demanding work first.

At the end of the analysis stage, we should have a clearer and more complete idea of the dynamics of the area being studied; the Audit should have revealed the underlying elements that have actually shaped or are still shaping the locality being considered. It may have revealed whose interests are the most likely to be overlooked, and whose are the most powerful. It should be pointing to deep-seated causes, revealing consequences, pointing to trends and highlighting issues requiring attention. It will certainly have moved you away from the anecdotal, impressionistic sketch you would have started with or the tendency to come up with knee-jerk reactions to perceived problems.

4. Writing up the Audit.
Now write up your conclusions as a report in a clear, accessible and imaginative style. Use visuals, maps, and diagrams so that the information you have gained will be easily understood.

Distribute the report/communicate its findings to the whole congregation - and even more widely. Make the most of contacts gained through doing the Audit by sending a copy to anyone you talked to, or invite them to a follow-up forum. You may wish to share your findings with the wider community through the local newspaper or an exhibition; this is a way of thanking people who contributed to the exercise as well as communicating the outcomes.

The information gathered from this process will be key to the shaping/updating of your MAP, and should help to ensure that the challenges which that document contains are appropriate and attainable.

Further Resources

(i) Books and pamphlets

The following are available for borrowing from the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Library.

Community and Ministry: An Introduction to Community Development in a Christian Context Paul Ballard and Lesley Husselbee SPCK (2007) Photocopies of Chapter 4 'Turning Towards the Community', a chapter which contains material on 'making a community profile', are available.

Skills in Neighbourhood Work Paul Henderson and David Thomas Routledge 1987
This textbook explains the skills, knowledge and techniques needed by community workers and other practitioners to work effectively in and with communities, and has an excellent appendix detailing how to go about conducting a community audit. . The Diocesan Mission and Ministry Library holds two copies

Discerning Church Vocation: A Listening Exercise for the Local Church Springboard (The Archbishops' Initiative for Evangelism) Resource Paper 3 (multiple copies in diocesan library)

Community Research Toolkit: Empowering Communities to Bring Lasting Change Andy Whittet et al. The Transformation Team. Faith in Community Scotland 2010
The Transformation Team works alongside faith communities to tackle poverty and make a difference in the poorest areas of Glasgow. Copy in the diocesan library

(ii) On-line resources

Community Audit Oasis Faithworks has developed a series of practical guides to equip churches and organisations to serve their local communities in a way that is consistent with their Christian ethos. One of these resources is a 'Community Audit Pack' containing all the necessary tools and advice to carry out such an audit. The Diocese has paid for a pdf copy of this very helpful tool, and this can be e-mailed to you on request. It is not currently downloadable from www.faithworks.info

Community Mission is a partnership started by Tearfund and Livability, organisations that believe in faith in action and see mission as being at the heart of the gospel. Community mission is the outworking of that commitment. Both organisations have decades of experience of working alongside people affected by poverty, and pursuing justice in the UK and across the world and both are passionate about the unique role that the local church plays in continuing Jesus' mission to bring good news to the poor. They have come together in partnership to help churches and Christian groups grapple with issues of injustice. Helpful resources here:
http://www.communitymission.org.uk/resources/practical_tools/default.aspx#Listening

Church Community Value toolkit is different from a community audit; it is a way for churches to calculate their financial contribution to the community, and demonstrate their distinctiveness. The toolkit has been developed by the Church Urban Fund in conjunction with the Commission on Urban Life and Faith. Different versions have been developed to reflect the different financial arrangements of different denominations. Currently C of E, Baptist and Methodist versions are available.
http://www.cuf.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Churches_Community_Value_Toolkit.pdf

Appendix 1
Faith in the City

The entire volume can be accessed by means of the following link: http://www.churchofengland.org/media/55076/faithinthecity.pdf Here we simply reproduce Appendix A in its entirety: 'An Audit for the Local Church'

Why do It?

1. The audit should be used to help the local Church to understand itself in its situation, to reflect on its purpose, and then to make plans for becoming a more effective, outward-looking and participating Church.
2. It should have wider benefits because it will help the deanery and diocese to develop better strategies to support the local Church.
3. It will be an important part of applications to the proposed Church Urban Fund.

How to do it?

This will vary from parish to parish. However we suggest:

(a) The PCC should come to a common mind as to whether it is prepared for an audit. If it is, it should ask a small group to organise the audit. The group should:

  be as representative of the congregation as possible (by age, sex, length of membership, etc);

  include one or two 'outsiders' sympathetic to the Church and representative of the locality

  involve an outside consultant from the deanery or diocese to advise in setting up the audit and discussing the results.

(b) It should involve the congregation and parish and be done as simply and imaginatively as possible.

(c) It should be completed within six months to a year.

The Audit

The audit has two parts, the analysis of the locality and the Church, and planning for action.

Part 1: The Analysis of the locality and the Church

(A) *The Locality*

The aim of this analysis is to build an accurate picture of the parish.

1 The Map

A large map of the parish should be made showing:

  (a) its boundary and neighbouring parishes; the church and other church buildings.

  (b) Major roads.

  (c) Bus routes.

  (d) Major meeting places — for example, sub-post offices. supermarkets, shops, schools, social and community centres, pubs, fish and chip shops, off-licences, newsagents (all with appropriate symbols using differently coloured, gummed stars).

  (e) Hospitals, old people's homes, etc

  (f) Housing — with blocks coloured differently for council, private rented, owner-occupied, high rise and demolition areas should also be marked.

  (g) Other churches

2 The People

A separate statistical profile should be prepared to accompany the map. This profile can be built up from census and other information. Local authorities can be of particular help here. it should include a population estimate and a breakdown of the parish by.

(a) Age
(b) Sex
(c) Employment
(d) Ethnic groups
(e) Mobility (how long on average do people live in the parish?)

3 What do people feel about the area?

(a) Ask people to write down the ten things they dislike about the area, and the ten things they enjoy or value about it ('ten for sorrow, ten for joy') in a brain-storming session. It is helpful to get the views of different groups - youth club, OAPs, young parents, etc. It is also important to get the views of people and groups outside the congregation. The results should be analysed.

(b) Are there conflicts in the area? (Young/old, newcomer/established residents, middle class/working class, etc).

(c) Who makes the decisions which affect the area? What changes are being made? (Roads, housing development, amenities, etc).

(B) *The Church*

The aim of this profile is to begin to build an accurate picture of the local Church. A simple questionnaire, completed by all members over a period of a month, is the quickest way to get information about the people. It should be brief enough to be completed after the service without difficulty; the results need careful analysis.

Suggested questions:

(i) Employment status (waged, unwaged, retired, part-time, full-time, etc).
(ii) Class. What is or has been your job (or your spouse's)?
(iii) Age (or age group)
(iv) Length of church membership
(v) Do you live in or out of the parish (if the latter, are you within one mile or further away?)
(vi) Which services do you come to, and how often?
(vii) What kind of housing do you live in? (Owner-occupied, council rented, private rented, etc.)
(viii) What are your skills or hobbies?

Those undertaking the Audit should also, as a group, seek answers to the following questions about the Church:

(a) Church membership; numbers, and distribution in relation to the map, types of housing, etc.
(b) Usual Sunday attendance, and trends in recent years.
(c) Who are the key people/leaders, and why?
(d) What proportion of the congregation is handicapped?
(e) What activities does the Church run, and why?
(f) What activities are the Church and its individual members involved in, in the community?
(g) Premises. What are they, in what condition are they, who uses them and when? Is the Church left open during the week?
(h) Financial trends (budget five years ago and last year, and the likely budget in the coming year).
(i) How much does the congregation give to the Church per head per week?

Part 2: Planning for action
The aim of planning for action is to help the congregation to come to conclusions about the nature of the parish and the congregation, and to see the need for the Church to make certain changes in its life and practice if it is to be properly local and outward-looking. This planning needs to be done carefully and over a period of time (certainly several months), maybe using particular groups, but always involving the whole congregation in the final decisions.

It may be helpful to use four stages in this planning:

1. The Audit group should put together, in a simple and imaginative way, all the evidence from the analysis of the locality and Church, and present it to the congregation. A visual display is particularly important. Discussion should only aim to clarify and agree the emerging picture of parish and Church.

2. Questions now need to be asked of the Church to discover how effective it is as a Church in the UPA. These questions could include:

   (a) Are local people and cultures, including members of minority ethnic groups, represented...
   (i) in the congregation?
   (ii) in the worship?
   (iii) in Church leadership?
   (iv) among churchwardens, sides-people, leaders of parish organisations?
   (v) on the PCC?
   (vi) on deanery synods?
   (vii) on diocesan boards, councils and committees, and Synods?

   (b) Is the Church seeking to be present in the various neighbourhoods, organisations and institutions in the parish:
   in the location of its worship centres?
   in social outreach projects — including caring schemes, youth work, unemployment projects, etc?
   in house groups?
   through chaplaincies?
   Are there parts of the parish unrepresented in the Church?

   (c) Do the church buildings (church, hail, centre, school, etc) and their use reflect a Church which is properly local and outward-looking? For example:
   are they used for and by local people and cultures, including other religions?
   are they used as drop-in centres for the unemployed, or as advice centres?
   are there obstacles to such aims, and if so how can they be removed?
   can church land be used for community purposes?

   (d) Is the Church served by a team of ministries including:
   clergy (stipendiary, NSM, LNSM, deaconesses, lay workers)? lay ministries?
   senior Church officers (wardens etc)
   and to what extent is ministry shared between clergy and laity?

(e) Is the Church collaborating fully with others?
with other denominations?
with other parishes?
with the deanery and diocesan boards and councils?
with other local organisations, local authorities etc?

(f) Is the Church actively involved in training its members for such ministries and mission? What kind of training would be most helpful?

(g) Are there any needs in the area (or of neighbouring parishes) which could be met in whole or part through the skills or hobbies of church members?

(h) Is there anything that can be done in collaboration with other faiths?

3. In answering these questions, particular objectives for a Church concerned to be more effective in the UPA will begin to emerge. These provisional objectives should be illuminated by a study of the Christian tradition, especially the bible. Questions to be asked could include: Have the people of God faced this or similar situations before, and what was their response? Are there contemporary examples of similar situations being faced by other congregations, and what solutions have they tried? Are there any diocesan specialists, or others, who can help us?

4. This should lead to a congregation deciding on its objectives, and selecting several priorities for the first year. These should include concrete projects. Projects and other objectives should not be attempted on every front in the first year. Changes should be accomplished gradually over a period of years with careful monitoring and discussion.

5. Inevitably deep questions will arise about the nature and purpose of the Church and the meaning of the Christian Gospel. People should be encouraged to face them, even if there is disagreement, as long as the discussion leads to action and is not an evasion of it. A sufficient common mind is needed simply for the next step. ‘I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me.’

Appendix 2 Caring for Volunteers

1. Selecting volunteers

Given the often desperate need for help, when a potential volunteer comes knocking at the door the temptation to hold on to them is very strong indeed. The consequences of not putting effective selection procedures into place can, however, be disastrous. If the volunteer is not suitable for the tasks they are being asked to perform, the service which the group or organisation is providing will suffer, and the provider will lose credibility; equally the client will not receive the service they need, or worse, could actually be harmed through contact with the volunteer. Moreover it is unfair to put a volunteer into a situation which is beyond them. A little time invested *before* the volunteer becomes involved will therefore reap dividends for all involved; the following three steps are advisable.

Getting started: what do you really need?
To make a decision about whom is required, it is necessary first of all to work out exactly what is required. A good starting point is to develop a 'Task Description' by answering the following questions:

- *What will the volunteer actually do?*
- *When and where is he or she required?*
- *With whom will the volunteer be working* (and this includes other volunteers, any staff, management committee members, and the relationship between them)?
- *What support is provided?* (including training, supervision, expenses)

From this, the minimum requirements of the volunteer can be worked out, forming the basis of the selection. Some organisations define this as the 'Volunteer Description'. Apart from the obvious requirements like availability, think also about the less obvious e.g. does the volunteer need any particular skills or attitudes before getting involved, or can this be addressed through training?

Telephone counselling, for example, is a highly skilled and challenging role, but *Childline* lists its requirements of volunteers in the initial stage as 'a positive attitude towards young people', and 'open to learning and self-awareness'. This is on the basis that volunteers will go through rigorous training and further well-defined selection procedures prior to contact with young people. In taking this approach, *Childline* ensures the full range of potential suitable volunteers can get involved.

Think of this in the context of your own group or organisation. You may have decided that you want volunteers who are 'mature'. Is age necessarily a prerequisite for maturity? There are lot of extremely mature 17 year olds, and by the same token, many people in their 30's are immature. So if you mean 'mature', and what you say is '25 plus', you are losing out on potential volunteers with the qualities you are looking for.

Methods for selecting volunteers
There are many ways of selecting volunteers, as 'one size does not fit all.' However using several methods can be time-consuming and creates a level of formality which can put people off getting involved. This needs to be balanced against the level of responsibility, support and supervision given to volunteers, and the potential risk to clients. Here are just a few of the main selection methods.

Self Selection: It is well worth bearing in mind that selection is a two-way process. If the volunteer-engager is crystal clear about what is required from the volunteer from the outset, then potential volunteers can make an informed choice about whether or not the group or organisation in question is suitable for them.

Application forms: It is important to think about what information is really needed and how application forms are used. For example, if literacy is not one of the requirements of volunteers, potential volunteers could be put off unnecessarily by the having to fill one out on their own. This can be easily overcome by the person in charge of volunteers doing the writing for the volunteer when meeting the volunteer. It is also easier for the potential volunteer to give the information you require e.g. regarding health, if he or she knows that the information is confidential.

References: Again the questions asked in references should relate directly to the tasks the volunteer will perform. If the volunteer will be digging up rhododendrons as part of a team of volunteers supervised at all times by Country Park Rangers, then the reference request should ask about physical fitness, reliability etc. If the volunteer is to teach ceramics to a youth group, then the reference request should ask about the volunteer's qualifications or experience in ceramics, and about appropriateness of the volunteer in working with vulnerable children.

Police checks: If a volunteer is to work directly with vulnerable people such as children, people with learning disabilities and the elderly, police checks should be considered. It is absolutely crucial, however, to remember that police checks are no guarantee of a potential volunteer's suitability, and that implementing good practices for the safety of clients is of the highest importance.

Interviews: Since most of us feel apprehensive at the thought of an interview, the Golden Rule for the majority of volunteer-engagers is not to call the interview 'an interview', but a 'chat.' The more relaxed someone is, the easier it is for them to offer information freely and give a true representation of themselves, thus making it easier for the person carrying out the interview to measure the volunteer against the Volunteer Description.

Trial period Trial periods give the volunteer-engager the opportunity to see the volunteer in action, with a specific point in time at which to make a decision on ongoing involvement. And vice-versa, given that selection is a two-way process.

Selection into practice
Firstly, be 100% clear about you are offering the volunteer, and ensure it is communicated effectively. In order to be fair, operate good Equal Opportunities practice and make sure that what you are asking for relates directly to what the volunteer will actually be doing. Designate a specific person or small group of people to be responsible for selecting volunteers. Have a clear means to reject volunteers when they are not suitable to carry out the tasks you wish them to perform.

So what does it mean for…
Volunteers Selection procedures are in place to protect you as well as the organisation and its clients, so try to be patient in what can sometimes seem like a very long process. Many organisations are looking for very specific attributes in their volunteers, and just because you are rejected by one organisation does not mean you are not suitable for volunteering with many others.
Volunteer-engagers Always bear in mind the responsibilities of the volunteer manager: not to place a volunteer in situations beyond his or her ability; not to damage the credibility of the agency, nor dilute the standards it seeks to set in delivering a service; and, if applicable, not to harm an already vulnerable member of the public with whom a volunteer may be working.
Management Committees Ensure the volunteers or staff within your organisation have the time, resources and skills to carry out effective selection of volunteers.

2. Supporting volunteers: induction

Many organisations recognise that retention of volunteers may be connected to the amount of support offered. A good induction can go a long way to ensure volunteers are informed and committed.

Why is induction important?
First impressions are important in all walks of life, and the volunteer should receive an induction which gives a positive impression of the organisation, its services, and the value it places on volunteers and volunteering. A good induction process identifies any particular support or training needs which the organisation has to address immediately or in the short-term.

What should be covered in an induction programme?
The content of an induction programme, and the level of formality, will depend very much on the size of the organisation and the kind of services it provides. See checklist below (page 20).

Should all organisations provide induction for volunteers?
Yes. All organisations should provide induction, but it could take place in a couple of hours, or could be spread over a number of weeks. Large organisations and organisations where volunteers work with vulnerable clients are likely to have lengthier induction processes

Doesn't induction involve lots of paperwork?
No, but some written information is required to get the best results from induction. As with many aspects of volunteer management, the more the organisation puts in, the more it gets back. At the very least, organisations should have an induction checklist to ensure that all volunteers receive a comprehensive basic introduction to the organisation. A number of organisations provide volunteers with a volunteer handbook which contains induction material, policies, procedures and volunteers' rights and responsibilities. A volunteer handbook is strongly recommended for organisations which involve substantial numbers of volunteers.

Sample induction checklist (overleaf)
The level, formality and rigour of the induction process will depend on the volunteering duties. Volunteers dealing with vulnerable clients, for example, will have a very formal, and relatively lengthy induction.

Induction issue	Induction to include
volunteer manager	• introduction to volunteer manager, contact point for all questions and problems
introduction to the organisation	• aims, values, services of the organisation • procedures – e.g. : health and safety, equal opportunities
who's who	• introduction to locally-based staff and volunteers
tour of building	• health and safety info, and location of toilets, kitchen etc
house rules and procedures	• use of telephones, photocopiers, computers
volunteering duties	• hours of volunteering, basic duties
regular meetings	• time, place and function of team meetings, volunteer meetings
expenses	• how and when to claim, what to claim
supervision	• introduction to the idea, frequency of supervision, date for first supervision session
training	• discussion of any initial training requirements

So what does it mean for…
Volunteers When you are choosing an organisation to volunteer with, ask about induction. Provision of formal induction for volunteers, even if it lasts just a couple of hours, is a good sign – it shows the organisation is well organised and has thought about its responsibilities to you.
People managing/ working directly with volunteers You will already provide some sort of induction, although it may only consist of welcoming the volunteer and showing the volunteer what you would like him or her to do. Make sure you use a basic checklist like the one above to ensure you fulfil your responsibilities as far as possible within the limits of the organisation.
Management committees and managers of staff Make sure whoever is responsible for volunteers within your organisation has a clear understanding of the induction process, and enough time to deliver it. Don't forget it will help you fulfil your legal obligations in terms of health and safety.

3. Volunteer needs

Volunteer needs	*Meeting needs*
Getting involved Information on: - the organisation - the role of volunteers - what does the organisation expect of volunteers e.g. commitment, standards	**information pack** containing clear and concise written information (without jargon) – at least 1 page – incorporating the key points
- support and training structure - payment of expenses - potential future development i.e. skills, training, responsibilities - extent to which the organisation can meet the needs of the volunteer	**one-to-one session** with member of staff or leading volunteer, using an information checklist
- need to feel welcome	**tour of premises**, a chance to meet other volunteers and staff and 'get a feel' for the place
Learning how to do it Show how to perform role Opportunity to discuss progress and any concerns, to identify further training needs Feedback so the volunteer knows whether he or she is 'getting it right' Sense of belonging & appreciation	**structured training** to perform the role, including shadowing an experienced volunteer or worker **specific time to review progress**, give feedback and say 'thank you'
Mature New challenges – opportunity to expand role and responsibility Not to be taken for granted Support to move on, not emotional blackmail to stay	**Regular support sessions** to review progress and discuss new challenges e.g. specialising in a certain area of the organisation's work; by training other volunteers
	Recognition of contribution to the organisation - article in local paper - add up number of hours volunteered - letter from the Chair - acknowledge at a regular support session

4. Reimbursing volunteer expenses

Many organisations seeking to increase the number of their volunteers recognise the value of reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses. It encourages volunteers from all sections of the community, enabling those on low incomes to participate. It can also help to increase the volunteer's sense of belonging and commitment, and make them feel a valued part of the organisation.

Many organisations are working with tiny budgets, and to start using that money to reimburse expenses suddenly would cause difficulties. But although starting to reimburse expenses can seem a daunting prospect, it's important to remember that getting a budget and simple systems in place to prevent people being out of pocket can be done *in stages.*

Stage 1: Work out approximately how much it will cost to introduce the reimbursement of expenses. In order to keep this manageable, most organisations set a limit per volunteer per 'session', for example the cost of a local bus journey to and from the project for each volunteering session.

Stage 2: Secondly, raise the issue with your management committee or steering group and aim to agree a date for introducing the scheme. This could even be a year or two down the line.

Stage 3: Thirdly, include discussion of the issue with any funders, highlighting its importance in connection with the Government's social inclusion policies and how volunteers can gain experience and develop skills in relation to employment or educational placements. Ensure the inclusion of a budget for volunteer expenses in any new funding applications. If on the other hand you do your own fundraising, include volunteer expenses as one of your aims.

Who should receive expenses? In order to prevent those who need or want to claim their expenses from feeling stigmatised, you should aim to offer expenses to all volunteers eventually. For those wishing to donate expenses back to the organisation, a discreet method for return can be set up.

Should we keep a record? Keeping records of volunteer expenses will provide evidence for your accounts, and convince funders that they are an integral part of your project's costs. It is also useful in the event of any enquiries from tax or benefit authorities.

What expenses should we pay? As a bare minimum, volunteers should be reimbursed for their travel to and from the volunteer activity and for any money spent while actually volunteering. e.g. phone calls, postage etc. Many organisations also cover the cost of refreshments and training - and some even cover costs for care of dependants. Remember, always reimburse the exact amount paid out by the volunteers; this avoids tax and benefits agency problems.

So what does it mean for….
Volunteers If it's not clear, ask about expenses. *People managing/ working directly with volunteers* If your group or organisation already reimburses expenses, make sure prospective and existing volunteers are aware that you do, and know how to go about claiming them back. It's amazing how many organisations have the means and intentions to reimburse expenses, but don't actually make it easy for their volunteers to get them. If your organisation doesn't reimburse expenses, bring it to the attention of your management committee, and explain why it is important. People being aware of the benefits of reimbursing expenses is at least a start, and you'll know you've done what you can. *Management committees and managers of staff* Ultimately, everyone can benefit from the payments of volunteer expenses, including volunteers on the management committee. A policy on the payment of volunteer expenses can be claimed on funding applications to promote the organisation's recognition of equal opportunities and government strategies such as "the active communities" strategy.

Appendix 3 Producing a questionnaire

Adapted from *Community Audit; listening to the needs of your community* Oasis Faithworks www.faithworks.info

Why use questionnaires?

Issuing a questionnaire is a good method of gaining information – and precise answers to defined questions at that - from a large number of people, thus enabling you to make comparisons between different groups of people within the area surveyed. Questionnaires are a quick way of gathering broad brush-stroke type information about your community. But do bear in mind the following caveats:

- Careful planning is needed to ensure that the information collected is clear, meaningful and suitable for analysis. Multiple-choice questions where interviewees answer by selecting A, B, C or D, for example, are by far the easiest to collate.
- Your questionnaire needs to be simple and short, to flow naturally and to include monitoring information (e.g. age, gender, etc.). Any controversial or difficult questions should be left until the end.
- It's essential to run a 'test' on a small but representative group of people first to ensure that your questions are clear and that the answers can be accurately analysed and provide useful feedback.
- Make sure that the people you survey know who you are, why you are asking them for information, what you will be doing with it, and how and when they can access the results.
- Hold a training session for all those who will use your questionnaire. Give them a chance to practice using it on one another and carefully explain how to deal with the different reactions they are likely to get to it, ranging from complete indifference to open hostility.
- Questionnaires are far more successful when someone proactively carries out the interviews rather than leaving forms and then expecting people to complete and return them.
- Think about places you might conduct interviews, e.g. door-to-door, the local shopping centre, train station, youth club, toddler group etc.
- If your questionnaire is designed for the whole community rather than a specific group, you should ensure that the sample size questioned is representative of the local population.

However, questionnaires do have their shortcomings and so should always be used in conjunction with other 'quality' tools to provide depth and accuracy. If used on their own they can even be quite misleading for the following reasons:

- Most people are naturally suspicious of strangers asking them questions, so the answers can be inspired by all sorts of motives, e.g. 'How do I get rid of this person as soon as possible?', 'I'm not telling him/her what I really think - it will be used against me', 'I don't like these people prying into my life', 'What is all this information going to be used for?'.
- People are often busy when you call on them or stop them in the street and preoccupied with other issues.

There are two types of questionnaire. The first (below) allows for ease of analysis but may make people feel boxed in if the selection of possible answers your questionnaire presents doesn't fully cater for their views. People's answers may be option 'E' when you've only offered them A, B, C or D

Buryborough Community Survey

1. How long have you lived in Buryborough?

□ Under 1 year
□ Under 5 years
□ Under l0years
□ Over 10 years

2. How would you rate Buryborough's youth facilities?

□ Excellent
□ Good
□ Adequate
□ Poor

3. Do you think the situation is:

□ Improving
□ Unchanging
□ Deteriorating

4. Which age group do you think is best catered for?

□ Under 10's
□ 10-14's
□ 15-17's
□ 18-23's

5. Which age group do you think has the worst provision?

□ Under 10's
□ 10-14's
□ 15-17's
□ 18-23's

6. What new facilities would you most like to see for young people in Buryborough?

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7. What is your age group?

□ Under 14
□ 15-17
□ 18-23
□ Over 23

8. Gender

□ Male
□ Female

If you use a questionnaire that doesn't have tick boxes (below), not only does this make it much harder to analyse but, because you can still only allow for one- or two-line answers, you still lack depth of feedback. If not designed with appropriate sensitivity, a questionnaire can be intrusive and therefore result in interviewees choosing to be evasive or dishonest.

Buryborough Community Questionnaire

1. What do you most enjoy about life in Buryborough?

2. What would you most like to change about life in Buryborough?

3. What is the biggest issue that Buryborough faces?

4. What is the biggest issue that you think the young people in the community face?

5. What is the biggest issue that you think faces the elderly in the community?

6. Name:

7. Address:

8. Age group:

   14-18

   19-25

   26-40

   41-65

   66+

9. Gender:

   Male □ Female □

Designing a questionnaire

- Make sure the instructions are clear and the language simple
- Keep the layout simple and short, ideally on one sheet of paper.
- Make the questions flow naturally.
- Put controversial/difficult questions at the end.
- Be consistent in the terms you use.
- Avoid ambiguous terms that may mean different things to different people.
- Don't ask leading questions, e.g. 'How has the one-way system complicated your life?' Instead ask, 'What impact has the introduction of the one-way system had?'
- Include monitoring information (ie age, gender etc.) at the end.