



## **BREAKING NEWS**

**Original Tolpuddle Methodist Chapel –  
as used by the Martyrs – saved!**

**See final item.**

## **Success of Funding Training Day**

Our last Newsletter carried a notice about a funding training day. We were anticipating a small group with some very specialist stuff about funding. We ended up with a group much larger than we first thought (though still small) and a day fairly different to what we had anticipated.

**But it was good - very good - and a number of people at different stages and with different needs found it very useful and even inspirational.**

What did we do? We talked about the Church in the Community, which is my colleague Cliff's speciality, about being in touch with your community and thinking what would be useful for it and in it, about actually being in touch with the neighbourhood and about asking what local needs there are which could and should

be addressed.

The star of the show is the Church, Buckland URC, but more because of what it will be rather than what it is now. How it is hoped to change a "not fit for purpose Victorian Pile" into something which can both serve and attract the community. We talked about the plans, saw small things already achieved, heard how Buckland has become "the place to be" even though major work hasn't started. People who have nothing to do with this or any other Church are interested and supportive - very supportive.



We talked about change and how some people don't like it, the "I don't mind what you change as long as you do it after I've gone" syndrome. Things aren't always going to be easy, the need for leadership and vision. Don't be afraid to think big, if that is appropriate.

Bill Shankly, the legendary Liverpool football manager, once said "if you aim for the stars, you might reach the ceiling. If you aim for the ceiling, you're likely to stay on the floor."

## What do you need IBEX to do for You?



## **Future activities from IBEX...**

The Success of the Funding Training day set IBEX to thinking how it should go forward on similar events. We have a wealth of expertise to share across a wide range of areas, and are looking to extend that by getting in touch with others who are doing good things locally and are happy to share their expertise.

We want to do this in two ways:

Through our [website](#).

Through Training/Networking sessions.

And there are two broad areas we see a potential need to address, one being far more general than the other.

### The General

We are already in touch with a number of people who could not make that first training session, and want to support them in any way we can, whether it is through a further session, or through one-to-one support.

BUT it is clear that different people are at different places.

So we would be very [happy to hear from anyone](#) who:

- Has a specific building project in mind - plans perhaps in place, architects involved and the like, for which they need to get their fund-raising act together. OR
- Has other ideas about how to use adequate existing premises and want help with the next stages, i.e less about buildings, more about project development. OR Realises they need to do or want to do something, but hasn't a clue where to start ...

### The More Specific

We also plan to develop some “how to” pages for our website, which could also lead to Training/Information sessions, about specific areas of work. These would be more likely guidelines over what you need to think about rather than step-by step definitive guides on how to do it, because no two different situations are the same, and because different people might favour different approaches if there are, for example, two ways to go about setting up a food-bank.

### **So we would like to hear from you if there is either:**

- Any problem you would want to tackle which you might be struggling with.
- Something that you do well that others would find useful to hear about - And don't be modest. Some biblical quotation about hiding lights under bushels springs to mind. There are some great things going on in Churches locally which might inspire others if only they knew about it.

Some areas that spring to mind are:

- Setting up of - a Food Bank or a Soup Kitchen.
- Support for the homeless - Night Shelters, Rent Guarantee Schemes, Debt Counselling, Credit Unions,
- Thrift Shops or similar or Helping the unemployed.
- Supporting ex-offenders.
- After school/homework clubs.
- Support for older people/tackling loneliness.

So if you are doing any of these and would like to [share it](#), or have other areas you would like to tackle, please let us know. As some people don't like putting pen to

paper, or haven't the time, we would quite happily come to visit you so we can write your project up, if that helps.

## The Magna Carta



**Q. Where was the Magna Carta signed?**

**A. At the bottom!**

Or joking aside, at Runnymede, which is only a shortish drive up the road from where I live in Hampshire.

But it can hardly have escaped your notice that this year is the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. One of the most important documents in the history of democracy. One of the original 4 copies is normally kept just up the Road in the magnificent Chapter House at Salisbury. Given that this is an election year, it is an anniversary worth noting, if not celebrating.

**Quote of the day ...**



Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

"Anybody who says that the Church and Politics don't mix is reading a different bible to me!"

## Hustings

May 7th will be Election Day. It is the first time ever that we have known an election date for so long - 5 years.

One of the things Churches often do at election time is organise hustings. If you are already doing so, keep up the good work.

If you are not doing so, would like to, but don't know where to start, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) publish some excellent [guidelines](#) on how to do so.

It might seem a daunting prospect, but it is fairly straightforward and the CTBI guidelines provide a useful and easy to follow check-list of how to host a Hustings event.

Churches should be supporting the democratic process, and encouraging people to participate.



## The Bishops' Pastoral Letter

I've just written above "churches should be supporting the Democratic Process and encouraging people to participate." That was the main thrust of the recent [Bishops' letter](#) which attracted so much attention a few days ago.

Although it led to the expected defensive response from some political quarters, they seem to have missed the point that the Bishops were seeking to encourage people to

1. Participate in the democratic process.
2. Think about the issues in terms of their Christian faith.

So the letter highlights some of the issues the Bishops think might arise, but does not look at them from a party political point of view – an approach that we can only commend.

## The CTBI Project - A Good Society



CTBI is also doing some excellent work on the idea of a [Good Society](#), This is about

what a society would be like that was fashioned by people of faith in line with their faith, with plenty of information available on the link and a summary [video](#) to express the idea.

Many people consider that the expression “Good Society” was hijacked by politicians before the last election and that it has been subsequently been considerably devalued. This is a project, however, which reclaims the expression and is looking very much at what sort of Society people might want to see in the future.

We do, after all, pray regularly: “*Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*”. This in its purest state would actually be describing what that might look like.

## And Finally.....

Many of you will recognise the importance of Tolpuddle in the history of Trade Unionism, and in the history of just straightforward Social Justice. You will also be aware of the important part their Faith and their Methodist background played in inspiring their



quest for justice. You might realise the regular (small but significant) part that the Methodist Church and particularly recently IBEX has taken in the TUC Festival Weekend (third weekend in July).

The original chapel in the village, as used by them, has been privately owned for years and was falling in to disrepair. We have just received the following Press Release. Wonderful news.

## Tolpuddle's Historic Former Methodist Chapel Acquired

A Grade II\* listed former Methodist Chapel built in 1818 in Tolpuddle, Dorset has been purchased by a newly formed Building Preservation Trust helped by funds and expert advice from English Heritage.

Emergency repairs to stabilise the cob walls and to make the building wind and water tight started today (Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015), funded by a £9500 grant from English Heritage and managed by the Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust (TOCT). It is hoped that the major conservation works will be completed by 2018 to coincide with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the building.

Andrew McCarthy, Chairman of The Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust (TOCT), said: "We are committed to sympathetically restoring this historically important former chapel which was once used for worship by at least four of the six Tolpuddle Martyrs and three of them may well have preached from its pulpit"

Read the full story [here ...](#)

## Who is IBEX?

IBEX – the Church working in the Economy Central South Coast

IBEX is a Christian organisation relating faith to economic life, in Hampshire and Dorset, mainly Bournemouth and Poole.

We are funded by the URC Wessex Synod, Southampton Methodist District and Baptist Home Mission.

Our main areas of activity:

- Support for local churches serving their communities
- Work with Partner Organisations on Community Projects e.g. local authorities, statutory and voluntary organisations
- Support and development of Chaplaincy

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