



When, in our last Newsletter, we called for Churches to tell their stories of how they relate to their community, the first and immediate response we received was from David Masters, the Pastor at the Central Baptist Church in Southampton.

It is a suite of buildings which is by no means the “finished product” in terms of having something really “pretty”, but the attitude and the atmosphere of the place tells a different story – during our interview, David said “If someone knocks on the door, I will try to help”.

In terms of the old adage that it is not the buildings that matter, but the people, this is a place where there is no doubt that it is the people (and the community) who matter, and the buildings follow on behind as circumstances dictate or permit.



“If the physical community is not different because we are here, we are doing something wrong.”

In about 10 years at the [Central Baptist Church in Southampton](#) David Masters has achieved a great deal with something which had a doubtful future when he arrived to his first post. The building was chronically underused, but David believes that this Grade Two listed building has to be used as a Community resource to justify the expense of keeping it open and the added pressures of developing it.

Although previously many people wanted the church as a Sunday by Sunday “Sacred Space”, and that’s not just the sanctuary, but the whole premises, now even the Sanctuary has been used for band rehearsals and fashion shows. It’s also being carpeted because Southampton Solent University want it to be.

And that is about partnership. David stressed that “we try to work very

hard on partnership as we are a small, city centre church, where most of the congregation live out of the area". Churches simply aren't able to do all the hard work themselves.

You need decent partners who contribute to either the finance or the mission of the Church, or both. And good partners don't come easy. Most have been sought out and relationships cultivated. But anybody who uses the building (even when not paying) is a partner because they make sure the building is "used" and isn't a museum. David detailed some of that use:

- Two other churches on a Sunday
- At least 4 Mental health projects, none of which pay full price, but contribute as they can.
- Encouraging donations for the local food bank, who are always amazed how much there is to collect.
- A Coffee shop on Thursday mornings "to engage with our community", which is 95% students. But this attracts people from the local retirement home, carers with their clients and those with physical disability needs from a project around the corner that had to close its doors.
- a free cooked breakfast for the homeless once a month, which by working with three other churches covers almost 50 weeks of the year.

One partner is Southampton Solent University. David speaks at the CU (Christian Union) and works with the Chaplaincy department. They also work with the Student Union & Southampton City Council in the Eco Ernie project - a major clean up/recycle project at student moving time (end July) where all salvageable materials go to charities – local and national. A real case of 'everybody wins'.

Through all this, the building has changed through sensible steps. Redecorating, tidying up, sensible purchases of new furniture. In response to a crisis of defective electrics came a new kitchen – on a tight budget but

future-proofed, built to cater for any potential future use that can be thought of. It has, for example, been used for cookery projects by some of the Mental Health “Partner Organisations”.

The last word - a highlight for David was when early on one elderly neighbour of the Church commented that “It’s good to see the Church so busy“. That says it all, really.

OCTOBER TRAINING DAY is now FULL!
With considerable interest in the Training Day
'What Should We Do With Our Church?'
we are pleased to note that a

second Training Day has been booked.

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, 30 January 2016

Parkstone United Reformed Church, Bournemouth

Email newsletter@ibexsouthcoast.org.uk to reserve your seat.

This is for people or Churches who are at a different stage on their journey - **Those who want to do something but don't really know where to start.** We think there are three main possible stages to any Church development process:

Stage 1 - Think about your wider community, talk to your wider community and work out what you might be able to do to be useful.

Stage 2 - When things begin to happen - as they will - identify how your premises are inadequate, and what you need to do to "do it better".

Stage 3 - Raise the Money!

This will be for people somewhere in the first two stages - the final programme will only be developed after talking to people who will be there, to identify what would be useful...



SAVE THE DATE! If you have any interest at all in the challenges that the Churches have faced over the last few years, and will continue to face, then you really ought to come along to hear

Paul Morrison

7.30pm, Thursday, 5th November

@ Fareham United Reformed Church

**Title: New Government - New Challenges
For Churches Committed To Social Justice**

The first majority Conservative government in 18 years changes the political landscape - what does that mean for Churches?

Paul is the JPIT ([Joint Public Issues Team](#)) policy advisor on issues around the economy including poverty and inequality, and author of the “The Lies We Tell Ourselves” Report.

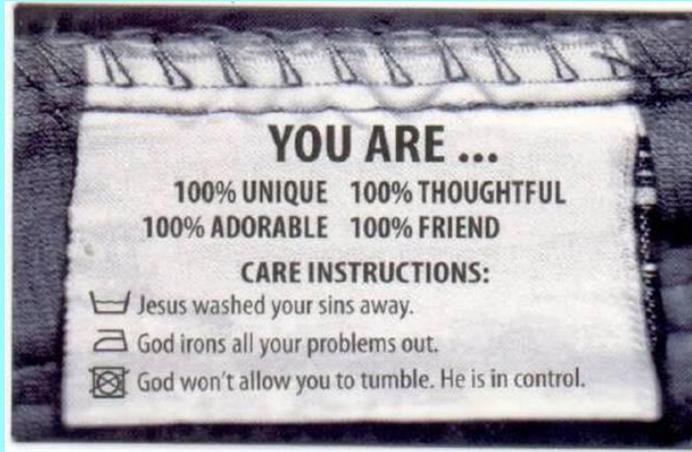
So if you are interested in Foodbanks and why they are needed and how some people dismiss them, concerned about Benefits Sanctions and the Benefit Cap, and wonder what else the Churches will be given to think about over the next five years, do come along.

For more information contact David Wrighton on Email tl@ibexsouthcoast.org

Quote of the day ...

“God never made a promise that was too good to be true.”

— D.L. Moody



An Update on the Buckland URC Project ...



Cliff Bembridge on the (remarkable) progress on the Buckland URC project. It has been something of an inspiration as to what IBEX can offer to others ...

I couldn't hammer a nail in straight if I tried but I love watching others create. I am certainly having a field day at the moment. Eight new houses are being built opposite our home in Cosham and at Buckland United Reformed Church in Portsmouth, where I am part time minister, we are half way through an exciting re-ordering of the church. So from 7:30am to 4:00pm daily whether I am at home or church I can watch others create in a way that I never could.

My particular passion is transforming church buildings for service. As the project at Buckland nears completion I am excited and a little terrified that when our builders finish their work, our work begins as we take up the challenge to more faithfully serve our local community.

In a very real sense Buckland is IBEX's test bed. It is here we turn theory into reality, a place where people can visit and experience first-hand a soup kitchen, a debt counselling service and a business centre. And soon there will be an exciting new space for worship to see, along with a heritage community café and of course space for more 'experiments'; a place too to come and seek help with how to plan and fund a building scheme that is right for your situation.

We don't pretend Buckland has all the answers – we have made plenty of mistakes. It is simply somewhere you are welcome to come and learn from both the things we got right and the things that didn't quite come off as planned. So whether you are looking for ideas as to how your church can serve your community or you want help

with an idea you already have, a visit to Buckland may be valuable.

If Portsmouth seems too far away for you then we are happy to come and meet with you on your home ground. In addition we run courses where you can share with others. Our first on funding projects was well received and our second next month on looking at what we can do with challenging buildings is attracting a lot of interest. We are planning a third but as yet the agenda is not set – why don't you tell us what would be helpful to you.

IBEX won't be able to help you hammer nails in straight, but maybe we can help you hit the nail on the head in supporting you in finding ways to more faithfully serve your local community through your buildings.

Cliff Bembridge

IBEX Church and Community Officer

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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