

# Churches Together in South West Northampton

## Report & Draft Development Plan

2007



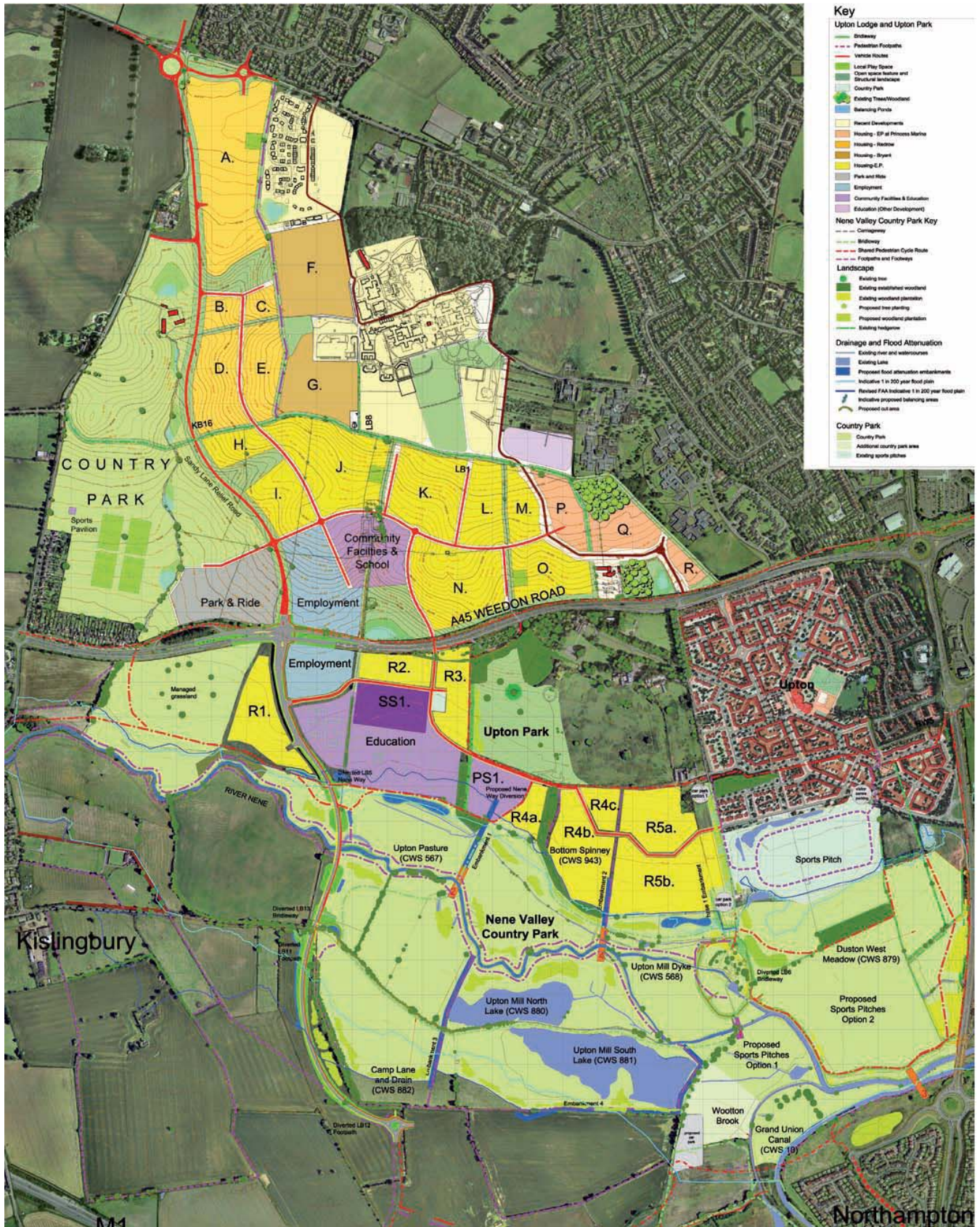
### Introduction

This year has seen a number of significant events for Churches Together in South West Northampton. What follows is a brief resume of how and where the local churches have been actively engaging with developments at Upton, Upton Lodge and St. Crispin's. An outline of a possible project is also included.

This report has been produced by the Revd. Neil Purvey-Tyrer and Deacon Maureen Spinks on behalf of the Ecumenical Ministry Team. It follows from meetings held at the new Rectory on 8 August and 18 September 2007 with English Partnerships, the Officer for Churches in New Communities Bob Purser and Rural Dean of Greater Northampton David Wiseman, and following the monthly Ministers Meeting in Duston on 17 October 2007.

Details of the churches involvement in earlier projects, such as the St. Crispin's Farm (1999) and Church School Project (2004), can be found elsewhere. Likewise information regarding the extent of the new communities planned here are available from English Partnerships and Northampton Borough Council.

The local Churches have a long history of involvement in the new build areas and where instrumental in establishing the St. Crispin's Community Association, an ecumenical Welcome Team to visit every new resident, and entered into a formal covenantal agreement in 2001. The Ministry Team remains totally committed to the ecumenical partnership and the aim of "enabling the development of inclusive, caring, attractive Christian Community". However, it has to be recognised that ministers have had to balance their commitment to the partnership working in the new areas with their commitment to the existing congregation(s) and to the wider church.



# Developing a Small Faith Group on St Crispin



## Background:

1. The current developments on the St. Crispin's site do not have a coherent community feel with a natural 'heart'. This has somewhat hampered our initial hopes.
2. Work on a community centre on the site of the old hospital farm, using Section 106 money, is still yet to happen. There is still some confusion when this might begin.

## Work to date:

1. Following the successes of two earlier Prayer Missions (2004 and 2005) Revd Neil has organised a number of prayer/study groups using the new Rectory (built in 2004) as a convenient base. These have met with a mixed response. The more established church members living in the nearby area have so-far out-numbered new residents.

## Future Plans:

1. A small group has been identified and is meeting to plan an Alpha Course in the New Year 2008. Maureen Spinks is leading on this and is still looking for a venue. Earlier in the 2007 Revd Neil and Diane Latchford (Church Administrator) were warmly welcomed by the General Manager of Northampton Town Football Club to use the Community Café at the stadium. The Ministry Team is keen to see enthusiasm and momentum maintained and hope that offering this programme may be an effective means of building relationships with those who are now living in the area, and may lead to a request for other courses.

# ExtraCare Village

## Background:

1. The minister with responsibility for outreach to this development is Revd Glayne Worgan. Good relationships with the management of the village and with people who have moved in have been fostered. In 2007 there have been changes in the ExtraCare's management team, and this has meant that Glayne has continued to work on building relationships.
2. Glayne has successfully organised a monthly Holy Communion Service (led by each minister on a rota basis) and twice monthly Pray and Share sessions. She is recognised as the de facto "chaplain".
3. As everyone is relatively new in the village the focus is on developing a sense of belonging to this new community

## Work to date:

1. Glayne has set up a regular pattern of Christian celebration in a quiet room set aside within the complex for that purpose. This takes the form of an ecumenical, non-eucharistic gathering for sharing reflections and prayer. This is being held fortnightly.
2. She is coordinating the celebration of Communion on a monthly basis, led by different members of the ecumenical clergy team.
3. Glayne also has close links with the Roman Catholic Eucharistic Team who ensure that those unable to attend Mass at St Patrick's receive the Eucharist weekly.

## Future Plans:

1. There have been requests for further involvement from the local ministers particularly at

significant times in the year. Glayne continues to monitor and respond to such opportunities.

2. Discussion has recently taken place about the licensing Eucharistic Ministers to work solely in the ExtraCare Village.

## **St.Luke's CEVA School**

### **Background:**

1. Work on the new Church School building (opposite the ExtraCare Village) is almost complete. Staff and children will be moving onto the new site in January 2008.
2. The Governing Body of the School currently has ten foundation governors. The Partnership and the Church of England's Board of Education (Peterborough Diocese) has ensured that suitable ecumenical candidates are appointed.
3. Ms Lara Hosier (a foundation governor) is currently in training as a Parish Evangelist. It is hoped that she will work out of the school as a Christian witness to staff, parents and pupils.
4. Revd. Alan Baines also leads worship in the school and will continue to provide pastoral support during this transitional period.

### **Future Plans:**

1. This will provide us with many opportunities for involvement with children, staff and parents.
2. It will also provide us with a much needed base for social activity

## **Worship at St Michael's Upton**

### **Background:**

1. St Michael's is the parish church for Upton and is presently in the hands of the Churches Conservation Trust.
2. It is used during the week by Quinton House School for worship and for quiet space for the pupils.
3. The Ministry Team do not envisage a change in the ownership of the church, but they recognise that in the short term it could provide a useful focus as public space, in the absence of any other facility.
4. There is a good deal of support for us to provide more modern, regular worship, probably helped by the beauty and history of the church building.

### **Work to date:**

1. In June 2006 the Ministry Team were overwhelmed by the response to an invitation to come to St Michael's to talk about setting up some sort of regular worship at the church.
2. In October 2006 a session was held to identify people who might potentially form a group to help plan a Christingle Service and perhaps more regular worship in the New Year 2007.

### **Future Plans:**

1. We will continue to hold six Services in the year at St. Michael's including a participative and family oriented Christingle service on Christmas Eve.
2. We express our hope that monthly services could start here once a worshipping congregation can be identified.
3. The traditional services (carol concert, Easter, rogation and harvest) that are presently conducted will continue to be held. The Friends of St. Michael's continue to meet and plan these more traditional events and are working hard with the Parish Council, WNDC and English Partnerships to ensure sensitive development around the church.



## The Welcome Team

### **Background:**

1. The Welcome Team was established in 2002 and started visiting people as the first homes were completed at St. Crispin's in early 2003.
2. They provided the core group for planning and running the Prayer Missions in 2004 and 2005 and they continue to visit homes in the areas where completions occur.
3. To date their activities have been confined to the St Crispin development rather than Upton due to the proximity of the site and the number of team members.
4. Membership of the team is drawn from the participating members of the LEP.

### **Work to date:**

1. The team continue to offer a Christian welcome to those moving to the new homes being completed in the areas of St. Crispin, Upton and Upton Lodge. The slow pace of completion has created difficulties
2. The group will continue to meet in 2007 and 2008 with Revd Alan for mutual support and encouragement. Through the Partnership Enabling Group he will seek to strengthen and develop the work of the Welcome Team both at St. Crispin's and on the former Timken site.

### **Future Plans:**

1. It is hoped that the Team will be able to undertake a community survey in late 2007, with the support of Deacon Maureen Spinks, who is assisting with questionnaire design. We hope that this will give the ministry team further information in order to be able to focus the work that we are undertaking.
2. Together with Revd Neil, the Welcome Team has distributed the Duston Directory to the homes that are presently occupied on the site. Some 15,000 copies of the Directory have been delivered to homes across the whole area by all the churches in our Partnership. This has generated much interest in a more regular community bulletin.
3. Alongside the Duston Directory Churches Together is also responsible for the [duston.org.uk](http://duston.org.uk) website. Paul Hayward (webmaster) worked hard in 2006 on updating and completely redesigning the website which includes numerous links to local businesses, community groups and, of course, our churches. This work is to be continued by Diane Latchford.

## The Former Timken Site

### **Background:**

1. We continue to watch the preparatory work on this site, and are aware that for St Luke's, St Francis, URC and St Patrick's churches this will be very much on their doorsteps. It is hoped that this will encourage members of their congregations to consider sharing in outreach to the newcomers.
2. Revd. Alan has the 'watching' brief on this development and continues to keep the partnership informed.

## **Elderly Care Team**

### **Background:**

1. In 2005 the ecumenical team that had been providing monthly "songs and stories" services in the local residential nursing homes came under the umbrella of the Local Ecumenical Partnership.
2. The team is lead and supported by Revd Yvonne Chapman (previous Church of England priest in Duston) who uses The Christian Council on Aging to provide material and training support to team members.

## **Upton, Upton Lodge & Upton Park**

Throughout 2007 this part of the new developments has occupied most of our time and prayers. Revd Neil and Maureen have spent time listening and talking with local residents and community groups including the new Upton Meadows School, the Parish Council, English Partnerships, West Northants Development Corporation, County and Borough Councillors. It has been particularly hard going and at times frustrating.

### **Background:**

1. Here there is currently no community centre (an Interpretation Centre is planned adjacent to the Sports Pitch at Upton One but like with St. Crispin's there is as yet no community focus/heart). The nature of the developments throughout the whole of this area, work against a sense of togetherness or belonging.
2. At a recent consultation meeting for Upton Lodge in the Summer of 2006 Neil asked whether Section 106 money or a building could be given to the local churches in the new community areas planned for Upton Lodge. A letter following publication of the planning details was then sent to English Partnership in the Spring of 2007.
3. In the meantime a letter was sent to the Chairman of the Quiet Space Project at a similar residential development at Poundbury, Dorchester. Local Christians there were experiencing similar difficulties which had inspired them to proposed a "peace garden" and development of a small community hall administered by local churches.

### **Work to date:**

1. Fostering relationships and identifying principle partners has been a primary aim for us over the past twelve months. Revd. Neil earlier this year became a Parish Councillor at Upton and has more recently been invited to join the Upton Grange Residents Association.
2. He has Neil organised harvest festivals in the schools in Upton and planned further assembly work to deepen this relationship.
3. The Christian Meditation Group, previously meeting at St Francis Church, New Duston, started to meet in the new primary School at Upton (Upton Meadows) from the Spring of 2007. This was warmly received by the Head Teacher and Governors. However, due to costs the Group has returned to St. Francis.

### **Future Plans:**

1. The Minister Team believes that temporary facilities should be provided at Upton Lodge to cater for the growing new community. Such facilities would:
  - a) Provide a focal point from the beginning for community involvement - people moving inevitably seek a connection in and to the local community.
  - b) Provide a neutral, visible and accessible place for people to meet their neighbours, to discover interests they have in common, to make friendships, share experience of discovering a new area, create links and networks.
  - c) The community facility would need to be cheap to hire or use so experimental groups

- and events are not put off by issues of finance
- d) Temporary facilities would need to include: large room or small hall and small room, equipped kitchen, storage space with tables and chairs, toilets, heating and lighting and parking space
  - e) As these links and networks form and strengthen the needs of the new community begin to emerge and grow, the temporary facility would enable and facilitate this to happen (probably including a worshipping Christian congregation)
  - f) The discovered needs of the new emerging community begin to shape the kind of permanent facilities that will be needed, this in turn raises the potential revenue streams and fund-raising and grant applications which could help overall finance
  - g) The new community is involved from the beginning and potentiality both "owns" and supports whatever community facilities are eventually developed.

## **The Future – Examples of Best Practice (Abbey Meads)**

### **Background:**

1. The Ministry Team believe that temporary community facilities will not be enough on their own. Maureen has particular experience in this area and has recently suggested that ideally what is needed here is:
  - a) Catalytic people to enable and facilitate "meeting and connecting" (community development workers for example)
  - b) The churches have both paid and volunteer people and experience in both managing, facilitating and utilizing public spaces for the benefit of local communities. A clear steer by our respective Church Leaders would be helpful/essential.
  - c) The 'Church' has already been active in working towards community development but is now hampered in its effort by lack of appropriate community facilities and/or funds. Those facilities currently available are expensive to hire (PFI schemes) and are not in suitable locations for access and visibility (St. Michael's Church cannot provide these.)

### **Work to date:**

1. Permanent facilities will be needed. The local churches are willing to enter into partnerships with whatever community groups emerge. The Minister Team is anxious to start the process to bring the community together in order for appropriate facilities to be identified. We are not able to finance it all.

### **Best Practice:**

In 1996 the Swindon Northern Development (Abbey Meads) was provided with a full-time (paid) minister and a house after the 350<sup>th</sup> completion. Within six months a port-a-cabin was delivered and sited by the developers (managed by the local authority) in a central location to the new build. This formed the focus for ('sustainable') community development.

The 'catalytic people' were the local Church Deacon (paid for by several Christian denominations), the Local Authority appointed Community Development Worker (part-time/2 day-a-week), a Police Officer (funded by a research project evaluating the effective presence of the Police in developing communities).

Door to door welcome visiting, clinic and support group for new parents, parent & toddlers groups, community drop-in, special events (Christmas, Easter), worship services, social events,

holiday clubs, work with schools, children's evening activities, base for community association, community monthly newsletter, information evenings by developers, consultations by local Authority and developers, fund raising for emerging groups, were all organised.

By 2001 permanent community facilities were ready. After 5 years over 3,500 people were in residence. The Local Authority had provided community rooms within the school (which subsequently proved to be inadequate) The churches had provided separate church building, with a multi purpose worship area and some community rooms. (The churches had engaged and attempted to engage with health/education and other groups about joint facilities but initially was met with reluctance) By this time community groups were well established and buildings were extremely well used.

## **Our Hope for the Future**

At a meeting of the local Ministry Team on 19 November 2003 we hoped that facilities in the new Church School building at St. Crispin's might be provided for worship, outreach and youth work, and church administration. It was anticipated that the so called Church School Project might provide for the local community in three ways:

### **Worship**

- small group worship which represents our various traditions
- daily weekday services using the established Christian Meditation Group under the care of The World Community for Christian Meditation
- quiet space for reflection and at times of national crisis/significance
- occasional Sunday use

### **Outreach and Youth Work**

- centre for the Welcome Team
- Alpha/Emmaus Groups
- confirmation/post-confirmation groups
- book/coffee/support group
- after school/summer clubs
- youth (teens) club/youth evangelism
- toddler schemes – toy library
- link with ExtraCare Village – older peoples work

### **Church Administration**

- centre for information about local churches and Christian networks
- shared administration
- availability of local services
- Parish Council
- local Police drop-in
- parish nursing

Since 2003 our ideas have crystallised and it is now our hope that the local churches could act as a catalyst and symbol of local community action. English Partnerships and the Associate Master Planner for the Halcrow Group have invited our participation and provided an opportunity for (some of) our ideas to be realised.