



Faith in Action in the Tavistock area



1. Preface



on behalf of those in need. This is reflected in the range and diversity of activities that are offered in the community. Most of these are run by volunteers who turn up regularly to offer their services, not for remuneration but driven by vision, passion and compassion – these are most powerful motivations.

The faith communities also have infrastructure across the area, with buildings that serve the whole community. Not only in Tavistock itself, but in the villages too churches play an important role in community activities including concerts and school meetings. Doors are also open to become mid-week venues for parents' & tots' groups, youth centres, keep fit activities, lunch clubs etc.

In the current economic climate where Devon County Council's aim is to help communities to help themselves, this Audit will play a key role in informing local authorities and public service providers as they seek to bridge the gap between the needs of the population and the provision that is available. Faith groups bring infrastructure and volunteers to help meet community needs. There are a wide range of community based activities.

Summary of Findings 2013

Faith is active and alive in the Tavistock Area. At the end of 2013 Tavistock Area Christians Together (TACT) commissioned and carried out an audit of faith in action among all the faith groups in the urban and rural communities which look to Tavistock as their focus.

Faith for the believer is an internal reality with an external expression. Most sacred texts have an equivalent of "Love God with all your heart, Love your neighbour as yourself". Worship goes up but compassion goes out and is expressed in action

2. Scope & Approach

In 2013 the faith groups of Tavistock and the surrounding villages were invited to take part in a “Faith Action Audit” of church led actions which led to community benefits. This included the listing of 7 joint projects, as well as single church audits from 25 churches in the Tavistock Area. The responses of the detailed survey were collated in January 2014 with over 85% returns from 9 churches in Tavistock and 16 in the villages around. All those invited except 5 village churches responded. No other faith groups in this area responded to an open invitation



to add information. Most local adherents of non-Christian faiths gather in either Plymouth or Exeter, except the Jehovah's Witnesses.

3. Faithful Providers

Where such Faith Audits have taken place, researchers have said *“We found little evidence to confirm critics’ fears about faith group service providers: that their main motivation is proselytising, they are exclusivist and they discriminate. Rather, faithful providers are highly motivated and effective, and often serve as the permanent and persistent pillars of community action within local*

communities.” (Demos 2013)

The faith groups contribute to local priorities by helping serve the community's needs including West Devon Borough Council's aim to:

“enable communities to shape and influence what happens in their area, lead healthy and active lifestyles and access local services.”

4. Research Findings

Volunteers

The following details are the “headlines” from the full report. Each section shows the number of voluntary hours dedicated to each area of activity and the corresponding monetary value calculated at a minimum wage of £6.50 per hour. The activities and hours shown are representative and not the full picture, which can be viewed in the complete Faith Action Audit.

• Single Church Community Activities

• *Parents & Pre-School Children:*
1,400 hours per annum: including Parents’ and toddlers’ groups and pre-school groups.
Monetary value: £9,100

• *Young People:* **2,831 hours per annum:** including youth bands, youth clubs, after-school and holiday clubs.
Monetary value: £18,401

• *Lunch or Coffee mornings:* **5,244 hours per annum:** including church based cafés, breakfasts for men, ladies’ lunches and lunches for older people, a Christmas Day lunch and party for those who are

on their own.

Monetary value: £34,086

• *The Elderly:* **6,288 hours per annum:** Including hospital visits, residential home visits, bereavement support, home visits for the sick.

Monetary value: £40,872

• *Social:* **3,491 hours per annum:** including table tops, quizzes, films, discussions, craft days, dog shows, Messy church, Bell ringers, singing groups, walks.

Monetary value: £22,691

Total Voluntary hours per annum from Single Church Activities = 19,254 hours

Total Monetary value: (Minimum Wage equivalent): £125,151 = 11 FTE (Full Time Employees)

• Joint projects

In addition to the above, TACT runs 7 joint projects, where the churches work together drawing on voluntary support from across local churches to provide specialist services to serve the Tavistock and village areas (a

population of 27,000). These projects come from sharing a joint vision yet each has its own governance, and all are linked to a national or regional network.

- **Catalyst** – support and mentoring in secondary schools
Hours per annum: 1428
Monetary value: £9,282

- **DATA (Debt Advice Tavistock Area)** - bringing help and support
Hours per annum: 708
Monetary value: £4,602

- **Foodbanks (Tavistock & Bere Peninsula)** - emergency food parcels
Hours per annum: 1,680
Monetary value: £10,920

- **Healing Rooms** – opportunity to receive prayer for healing
Hours per annum: 576
Monetary Value: £3,744

- **Open the Book** – Bible stories in primary schools
Hours per annum: 480
Monetary value: £3,120

- **School Pastors** – talking with students and staff at Tavistock College
Hours per annum: 552
Monetary Value: £3,588



- **Street Pastors** – bringing a calming presence to the night time economy
Hours per annum: 2856
Monetary value: 18,564

Total Voluntary hours per annum from Joint Projects = 8,280 hours

Total Monetary value: (Minimum Wage equivalent) = £53,820 = 5 FTE

(continues over)

4. Research Findings

Buildings



• Buildings

- Most churches use their own buildings for the benefit of the community: 6 in Tavistock, 1 in Princetown, 1 in Whitchurch, 6 in the West Dartmoor area.
- 13 churches have separate halls or meeting rooms: these include 5 in Tavistock, 1 in Bere Alston, 1 in Whitchurch, 1 in Princetown, 1 in Mary Tavy, 1 in Yelverton.
- 14 have kitchens: these include 6 in Tavistock, 1 in Bere Alston, 1 in Mary Tavy, 1 in Whitchurch, 1 in Yelverton, 1 in Princetown, 1 in West Dartmoor.
- 12 of the church buildings are listed and are of historical interest to tourists receiving over 10,000

visits per year.

Facilities in church buildings are used by a wide range of groups amounting to **5,900 hours per annum** of community based use for the benefit of the whole population.

- 52% of the community sessions are used by clubs: eg. running, dance, slimming, art, flowers, crafts, U3A, saxophone group, martial arts, bridge, camera club, Transition, Women's Institute, Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 35% by business (apart from the heritage role): eg. chiropodist clinic, Villages in Action, weightwatchers, dog training, zumba.
- 7% by occasional use: eg. music festivals, concerts, cinema, birthdays, Primary School events.
- 6% by public bodies: eg., Forum, Brownies, Guides, Bereavement support, Blood Donors.
- **Total volunteer hours per annum in providing buildings: 21,700 hours = 13 FTE**

Total monetary value = £141,050

5. Facts & Figures

Within the faith community there are around 15 ministers who are paid. Most ministers spend a significant time on pastoral work beyond their congregations, including weddings and funerals. Churches also employ 22 part time staff in youth work, administration and cleaning. Catalyst has one paid staff member, all of these contributing to the local economy.

The total number of hours per year given by unpaid faith volunteers in

the community total:

Single Church Community Activities
= 19,254 hours per annum =
£125,151

Joint Projects = 8,280 hours per
annum = £53,820

Providing Buildings = 21,700 hours
per annum = £141,050

TOTAL 49, 234 hours = £320, 021

6. Conclusion

The faith community is currently providing the equivalent of **30 FTE jobs or £320,021** in the Tavistock Area in providing community cohesive activities.

Not only are caring services provided, but faith groups also contribute a moral, social and spiritual compass for the Tavistock Area community itself. The work that is undertaken and the services provided have a

large impact on the lives of individuals and communities that receive them. In the present political climate this provision and impact looks set to increase.

7. Participating churches

• Tavistock:

St Eustachius; Our Lady of the Assumption;
Tavistock Methodist; Abbey Chapel; King's;
The Salvation Army; St Andrew's, Whitchurch;
United Reformed; Society of Friends (Quakers).

• Villages:

Brentor: St Michael de Rupe; Mary Tavy
Methodist; Peter Tavy: Methodist and St. Peter's;
Princetown Methodist;
Yelverton: Rock Methodist;
Bere Alston United;
Buckland Monachorum: St Andrew's;
Gulworthy: St. Paul's;
West Dartmoor Mission Community comprising
of: St Paul's Yelverton; St John's Horrabridge;
St Leonard's Sheepstor; St Peter's Meavy;
St Mary's Walkhampton;
St Mary's Sampford Spiney.

Faith Action Audit produced by:

TACT Tavistock Area
Christians Together
"Realising God's provision through working together"



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