



A REVIEW

OF

INTERMEDIATE ECUMENICAL LIFE

IN ENGLAND

AUGUST 2011

Churches Together in England

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ABBREVIATIONS AND USAGE

CEO	County Ecumenical Officer
church	with lower case “c” is used when reference is made to a local building or congregation, and adjectively. This usage may not be consistent with usage within quoted text.
church leader	with lower case “c” and “l” is used for leaders in a local church or fellowship.
Church Leaders	with capital “C” and “L” is used to indicate those who have wider oversight and responsibility within a Church or denomination.
Church	with a capital “C” is used when reference is name in the body of the text to the Church as the Body of Christ, or as a denomination. This usage may not be consistent with usage within quoted text.
CTBI	Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
CTE	Churches Together in England
CTinX	Churches Together in X (i.e. a specific county/area or town)
DEO	Denominational Ecumenical Officer
LEP	Local Ecumenical Partnership
IB	Intermediate Body
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
SB	Sponsoring Body
SRO	Social Responsibility Officer
XCT	Churches Together in X (i.e. a specific county/area or town)

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for this Review was identified as a high priority for Churches Together in England (CTE). The Terms of Reference of the Review Group, its personnel and methods were established in time for the launch of the Review with a letter from the CTE Presidents to Church Leaders in January 2011 (Chapters 2 and 3). We, the Review Group, have surveyed literature, initiated discussions at meetings, interviewed County Ecumenical Officers (CEOs) and others, and made extensive use of two purpose-designed on-line surveys.

Intermediate Bodies (IBs) have a variety of origins and we note that their present state is the result of a changing scene – the desire for lighter structures, reduced human and personal resources, the tension between mission and unity, the increased profile of other faith communities, the more varied and diverse nature of Christian communities, and an accountability culture (Chapter 4). We recommend specific attention to the London situation, which is outside our remit.

The variety of origins of IBs means that there is no defined common purpose. We affirm the IBs' value and significance in the journey towards the unity of the Church. We suggest that the articulation of purpose and the discussion of priorities would benefit IBs, and might lead to Church Leaders identifying with them more closely and enthusiastically (Chapter 5).

Changes are evident in the structure and work of IBs (Chapter 6). We suggest that the need for robust governance structures may actually present the opportunity for forms of meeting which are more relational and missional. Members of IBs have expressed their wish to concentrate less on the Sponsoring Body role, and to give more attention to other forms of local ecumenical life, to secular/social issues, mission planning and theological discussion.

In the second part of the Review we look in more detail at each of the purposes of IBs that we have identified in the first part.

We stress the importance of the networking role of the IB and the value of County Ecumenical Officers who have networking and inter-personal skills. Full use of information technology is encouraged, with proper provision for it in IBs' budgets (Chapter 7).

In considering the support of local ecumenical life in its varied forms (Chapter 8) we note that the transition from Council of Churches to a Churches Together model has not happened in many instances. IBs are recommended to assist the process of broadening the range of activity of such groups and thus involving key decision-makers and leaders. We also recommend that the Churches Group for Local Unity (CGLU) gives more attention to the breadth of local ecumenical life.

The Sponsoring Body function has tended to absorb the attention of IBs (Chapter 9). Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) though beacons of ecumenical life in some places, have not been the expected harbingers of a united Church. They have taken up a great deal of time and energy of IBs and CEOs; we suggest here that the Sponsoring functions be reassessed and we call for clarity about which responsibilities rightly and essentially belong to the participating denominations and which to the Sponsoring Body. It is evident that the review of LEPs has been a particular burden, and alternative models are offered in Appendix C1. It is also recommended that CGLU reviews its advice.

We note (Chapter 10) the emphasis in the Review Group's findings on the IB as an opportunity for meeting and for building and maintaining relationships among church representatives and Leaders, though not

without difficulty because of the range of understandings of leadership, different boundaries and the asymmetry of denominational structures. IBs are encouraged to ensure that their agenda reflect the needs and wishes of Church Leaders, so that their involvement is more than solely duty.

We address the apparent disconnection between unity and mission, remarking that whilst IBs have been effective in building relationships between mainstream churches and their Leaders, they have not been as good at responding to calls for a “mission agenda”, which has been taken forward in some places by separate, independent “parallel ecumenical movements” (Chapter 11). We urge IBs to continue their attempts to develop their networks and broaden relationships, and to encourage local groups to explore new ways of sharing in mission.

Social / secular issues had been identified in the Survey as an area which members of IBs would like to receive greater attention, and in the light of this we look at how IBs can relate to “stake-holders”, public bodies, charities etc (Chapter 12). We encourage IBs to take the opportunities presented by the governmental and secular bodies’ current need to consult and to court the “third sector”, even when the IBs may be more resilient than the stakeholders with whom they are involved.

We argue that relating to other faith communities is more often concerned with “inter-communal” matters (that is, relations between communities often with distinctive origins and ethnicities) rather than “inter-faith” in the sense of inter-religious dialogue (Chapter 13). Thus, the need and opportunity to relate to other faith communities is much greater in some areas and some IBs than others; but there is no evidence, and no enthusiasm, for the idea that “inter-faith is the new ecumenism”.

We address the increasing diversity of English Christianity (Chapter 14); and observe and commend IBs’ desire to broaden their membership, noting that some Churches do not want to join IBs which they have regarded as dysfunctional. We ask IBs to consider the effect that accepting a group into membership may have on other ecumenical bodies, especially CTE and CTBI. Model criteria and procedures are provided in Appendix C2.

We encourage IBs to develop as places of encounter, mutual enrichment and dialogue (Chapter 15), and we affirm the CEO’s role as educator and interpreter. CTE is recommended to consider how the Churches Theology and Unity Group can be helpful to IBs, and how CEOs’ continuing theological development can be resourced.

We also ask IBs to maintain the “ecumenical vision”, the wider *oikoumene* – in the sense of both “world-wide Church” and “whole world” (Chapter 16).

We look at the support that IBs receive. We consider the key role of the County Ecumenical Officer (Chapter 17), often working with a team of Denominational Ecumenical Officers. We make a plea for the just and proper treatment of CEOs, with additional material about their employment provided in Appendix C3. Given Survey findings that are very positive about CTE’s work, we consider the support that both it and the Member Churches can provide (Chapter 18).

Finally, we bring together the recommendations from the preceding chapters, addressed to Churches Together in England, to Member Churches, and to Intermediate Bodies (Chapter 19).

2 HOW THE REQUEST COME ABOUT

Priority 1

A discussion paper presented to Member Churches of Churches Together in England by the Trustee Board of CTE in December 2009, *A strategy for Churches Together in England*, identified as CTE's first priority the support of local and intermediate structures. "We believe that the local remains the ecumenical 'frontier' for most people, and that the joys and difficulties experienced there provide the raw material for ecclesiological and missiological reflection and the wider ecumenical work of the Churches, both bi-laterally and multi-laterally."

The paper proposed:

"We will continue to nurture the local and intermediate networks through the support of personnel, training opportunities, networking and the development of resources. Ecumenical structures in England have not changed since 1990. In particular there has been no national opportunity to reflect on the nature and experience of Intermediate Bodies, their relation to each other and to the National Instrument since Forum 2001. We recommend to the Churches that the time has come to review the situation."

The outcome of the discussion came to the CTE Enabling Group in March 2010, which endorsed the proposal for a Review. The General Secretary reported:

"There is a need to 'review' intermediate ecumenism to establish patterns of best practice. We need to know where it works well and why and encourage the spread of good practice. A good deal of practical information has already been collated, and the report of the intermediate bodies to the 2001 Forum will provide useful background material. Each 'level' of ecumenism is autonomous. However, it is in the interests of all the churches to ensure that intermediate level ecumenism is useful and productive and not a burden, and the December consultation was also clear that need should precede structure. It is therefore important that we identify the needs that exist at an intermediate level, and then ask what structures best meet those needs."¹

Implementation

Arrangements were made for the Review during the summer and autumn of 2010, with the identification of a lead reviewer and review group. The launch came when in January 2011 the Churches Together in England Presidents wrote to Church Leaders through denominational channels, encouraging their participation in the survey which was to form part of the Review:

"We remain deeply committed to the unity to which Christ calls us, and to the pilgrimage towards unity which received such an impetus from the Swanwick Declaration of 1987. We are also conscious that much has happened since then. If we are all to move into the next stage of our joint pilgrimage with a spring in our step, we need to be clear what we require of CTE which was set up to help us make that journey together. "This survey will provide CTE with some of the information it needs to evaluate the journey so far, and to put in place guidelines for the future.

"We realise that each Intermediate Body has its own history and ethos, and indeed its autonomy. But we also know that the lifeblood of English ecumenism is nourished by the dedicated work you do through these bodies."

¹ Where to from here? Reviewing CTE, A paper for the Enabling Group, March 2010 CTE London

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE and REVIEW GROUP

Terms of reference

- Provide an accurate survey of the state of intermediate ecumenism in England, including in its research the various reviews Intermediate Bodies have made of themselves.
- Be aware of the distinctive histories of the various IBs, and the ways in which they relate to government structures.
- Survey the ecumenical needs of intermediate level Church Leaders, examine the ways in which IBs relate to LEPs and other forms of ecumenical mission, paying particular attention to the move from 'structure' to 'mission (e.g. in terms and conditions of new appointments).
- Explore the ways in which IBs relate to local Churches Together groups and other ecumenical groupings.
- Consider the ways IBs relate to CTE and establish what structures and patterns of support would be most helpful.
- Make recommendations to Member Churches and IBs about patterns of good practice.
- Make recommendations to CTE about appropriate structures and processes for supporting the work of IBs.

Review Group Members

Andrea Murray, Diocesan Ecumenical Officer, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
The Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary, Churches Together in England
The Revd Dr Colin Marsh, Ecumenical Development Officer, Birmingham Churches Together
The Revd Dr Roger Paul, National Adviser (Unity in Mission) at the Church of England, and a Director of Churches Together in England
The Revd Bill Snelson, former General Secretary, Churches Together in England

Methods, sources and papers

In addition to interviews, attendance at meetings and consulting papers, the Review Group made extensive use of on-line Surveys, to which reference is made through this document and many findings of which are shown in the Appendices. Appendix D1 provides further details.

4 INTERMEDIATE BODIES: PAST AND PRESENT

Origins

What are now called “Intermediate Bodies” have various origins:²

- City and County Councils of Churches
 - Manchester Council of Churches 1917
 - Bristol Council of Churches 1924
 - Sussex Council of Churches 1955
 - By the 1960s Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Coventry had appointed full- or part-time officers
- Church Leaders’ Meetings
 - As the ecumenical movement in England gained momentum, and secular organisations became less and less willing to deal with the established Church on its own, so Church Leaders at diocesan/district level began to meet with their colleagues who exercised similar responsibilities in other Churches. Usually these meetings began in an informal manner for mutual support, information and consultation on matters of common concern.
- County/Diocesan Sponsoring Bodies
 - The concept of a sponsoring body was outlined in the report *Planning the Ecumenical Parish* produced in Corby in 1967, following the establishment of the first Area of Ecumenical Experiment. As such Areas (later to be known as Local Ecumenical Projects) increased, and in the wake of the Sharing of Church Buildings Act in 1969, it became convenient to have a single sponsoring body overseeing a number of such projects, rather than separate bodies for each. The Bristol Sponsoring Body was the first, in the 1970s.
- New Town Developments
 - Telford appointed an Ecumenical Development Officer whose task was to relate to the development corporation and to enable the various Churches to work together in establishing joint neighbourhood churches and also joint specialist ministries
 - Swindon churches at the end of the 1970s looked at the idea of an ecumenical bishop to exercise pastoral oversight over all the ecumenical work in the area.
 - Milton Keynes appointed an ecumenical secretary and formed the leaders of each of the sponsoring churches into a joint presidency.
- Realignments of previous bodies
 - Most recently, two Intermediate Bodies have merged; and another has divided.

Development

The Swanwick Conference in 1987 paved the way for the establishment of the National Ecumenical Instruments which had as full members both the Roman Catholic Church and an emerging number of Black Majority Churches. In the transition from the British Council of Churches and the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects (CCLEPE), the autonomous IBs were to act as the connecting link between local ecumenism and the national instruments. In some, the Roman Catholic Church had been engaged for years; for others, this was the time that the Roman Catholic Church began to engage as a member of IBs.

² Nunn, R. *This Growing Unity*, CTE London (1995) pages 1ff

Prior to 1990 the care and oversight of local Councils of Churches in England was mainly the responsibility of an “Ecumenical Officer for England”, a post created by the British Council of Churches in the 1970s out of the recognition of the need for the BCC to give more encouragement and support to the several hundred Councils of Churches which by then existed. On its formation in 1990 Churches Together in England assumed responsibility to encourage and service the IBs, which in turn, it was planned, would relate to local Councils of Churches in their area.

The present

There are 55 Intermediate Bodies in England. In the recent Survey, respondents described the origins of the IBs as³

- 16 Councils of Churches
- 2 Church leaders Meetings
- 10 Sponsoring Bodies
- 3 New towns
- 10 Mixed origins

In the past five years one IB has disbanded, leaving a void; two are reviewing their existence; and several are examining better ways of operating.

Virtually all the IBs have a designated officer, most commonly called the “County Ecumenical Officer”,⁴ ranging from full-time remunerated posts to volunteers. Aggregated, the CEOs are paid to work over 110 days per week, though – in the nature of part-time employment – they perceive themselves as working much more.⁵

One IB has a Social Responsibility Officer (SRO) rather than a CEO; another has a single full-time post shared between a CEO and an SRO.

The financial investment into IBs varies tremendously, £50,000 being not untypical for the largest, down to a few hundred pounds for the smallest.

38 IBs have their own websites.⁶

Geography

In the recent Survey, respondents described the geography of the IB as

- 13 Rural/ county
- 3 Entirely urban/city
- 16 Mixed
- 3 New towns
- 3 Within M25

Some IBs, focussed on the large conurbations, have Church Leaders living close to each other, which may help to strengthen relationships; in at least one instance, a rural IB has no Church Leader living within its boundaries.

³ Appendix B1 About Intermediate Bodies

⁴ “County Ecumenical Officer”, being the most frequent, is used generically in this Report for the range of titles recounted in Chapter 17 “The County Ecumenical Officer”.

⁵ See Appendix A1 Intermediate Bodies and County Ecumenical Officers

⁶ See Appendix A2 Intermediate Bodies Websites

Little appetite has been shown for the realignment of the boundaries of IBs, which often conform roughly to county boundaries, which themselves conform to Church of England diocesan boundaries. Some concern about boundaries was registered in the north-west. Greater London has three IBs (one of which relates also to Essex) and there is no IB in West London.

The Changing Scene

These recurring themes emerge in some recent reviews of the Intermediate Bodies in Surrey, Milton Keynes and Lancashire.⁷ They will be addressed in the coming Chapters.

- Lighter structures
 - The desire for structures which enable relationships and reduce the business agenda.
 - Addressed in Chapter 6 A Changing Structure and Agenda
- Reduced resources – ministerial , financial, volunteering, ageing
 - Continued pressures on the resources of membership, ministry and finance in the traditional ecumenical partners, and the effect both on IBs and on local ecumenical life.
 - Addressed in Chapters 8 and 9 Supporting Local Ecumenical Life, and The Sponsoring Body
- Mission and Unity
 - A decline in both church attendance and denominationalism.
 - Investigation of new ways of being Church and the perceived tension between mission and unity.
 - Addressed in Chapter 11 Strategic Planning :Mission Together
- Statutory agencies and partnerships
 - The evolving relationships between faith organisations and statutory agencies particularly through consultations and partnership working.
 - Addressed in Chapter 12 Relating to society and stakeholders
- Other faith communities
 - The greatly increased profile of inter-faith relationships post 9/11 and 7/7, the role played by the Regional Faiths Forums, and the place of inter-faith on the IBs' agenda.
 - Addressed in Chapter 13 Relating to other faith communities
- Broader church involvement – Black and Minority Ethnic, evangelical, Pentecostal
 - The arrival of an increasing number of congregations from other world church traditions and of congregations who may be part of a denomination but worship in their own language.
 - The continuing growth of independent churches and congregations.
 - The willingness of some Churches and groups previously outside mainstream ecumenical structures to be more involved.
 - Addressed in Chapter 14 Inclusion and Membership
- Legislation and regulation – an accountability culture
 - The need for charity registration and robust structures, particularly in the role of employer.
 - Addressed in Chapter 17 The County Ecumenical Officer

RECOMMENDATION

Churches Together in England

#1 In the light of the complexity of the London situation, not addressed in this Review, it is recommended that CTE discusses with the IBs for London and the London Churches Group for Social Action, and their member Churches, how their current work may be further enhanced and how the needs of West London may be addressed ecumenically.

⁷ See Appendix A3 The Changing Scene

5 THE PURPOSES OF INTERMEDIATE BODIES

Between the national and the local

“Intermediate Bodies” have in common that they are located between the national and the local working-out of relationships between the Churches. However, they do not have common origins, and their geographic and demographic contexts vary widely. So it may not be expected that they have common purposes.

In the broadest terms, the IB may be defined as a means through which the leadership and authorised representatives of the Churches and denominations in a county or city come together on a regular basis. Yet the purpose and rationale of such coming together need to be better articulated, in order to address some of the frustrations expressed in responses in the Survey.⁸

One Church Leader wrote as part of a review of his particular IB:

There is a paradox.

On the one hand, arguably ecumenical relationships are as good as or better than they have ever been.

- There is a high level of trust amongst church leaders. Many of them meet together at least every other month...,
- There is increasing cooperation and fellowship involving both the historic and the newer denominations.
- Some (admittedly not all) local Churches Together groups flourish.
- In particular locations, cooperation between different local churches happens, without any direct input from the Intermediate Body. The same is true of ecumenical chaplaincy in prisons and hospitals.

On the other hand, the Intermediate Body itself is struggling. “We seem to be meeting for meetings’ sake,” “I’m not sure what we’re doing there,” and “The structure we’ve got at the moment isn’t working,” are just some verbatim comments from members.

Identifying purposes

Through examining some recent IB Constitutions¹⁰ and IB review documents, the Review Group identified headings covering the various purposes of Intermediate Bodies, and attempted to emphasise the practical functions rather than the aspirational. The recent Survey¹¹ confirmed that the functions identified featured large on the agenda of the IBs. The purposes identified were:

- Sign and symbol of unity
- A forum for strategic planning
- Communications /network
- Local endeavour and CT groups
- Church leaders relationships and meetings
- Agency of relating to government and statutory bodies
- Accountability to one another
- Sponsoring Body
- Broadening membership and accepting ecumenical partners

⁸ Quoted in Appendix B2 Your personal involvement in IBs

⁹ Rt Revd Richard Frith, Bishop of Hull, writing of Key Churches Together

¹⁰ See Appendix A4 Constitutions of IBs

¹¹ Appendix B3 The Work of the IB, Appendix B7 Changes in the Scope of IBs

At their Annual Consultation in May 2011 County Ecumenical Officers were asked to consider these purposes of an Intermediate Body, first thinking not of their own situation but of the general principles of intermediate ecumenism, and then reflecting on the actual priorities of their own Intermediate Bodies.¹² It was apparent that the actual prioritisation of work was significantly different from the principles on which intermediate ecumenism is based.¹³

One IB, it was noted, had articulated its priorities differently; otherwise the CEOs largely accepted the headings offered, suggesting also the theme of “Encounter, enrichment and understanding” and, a couple of times, “Connecting with the wider Oikoumene”. In terms of “Strategic planning” the Review Group discovered a range of understandings within its own membership – from the avoidance of denominational events clashing with one another to the planned presence of Christian worshipping communities in new housing areas: what the different interpretations had in common was the need for ecumenical discussion of denominational plans.

Some observations may be made at this stage:

- The sign and symbol purpose is of a different order from the rest. It will be examined below and is now suggested as the over-arching theme.
- Strategic planning does not receive the priority that CEOs would want.
- The Sponsoring Body function receives a higher priority than CEOs consider ideal.
- The support of local endeavour / Churches Together groupings is regarded as important and is given a high priority.

The identified purposes are examined in the coming chapters.

The Basis and Commitment: An over-arching theme

These purposes are within an over-arching theme, which appears on the websites or in the documentation of a considerable number of IBs: that the IB is a sign and symbol of the unity of the Body of Christ. Often phrasing analogous to the “Basis and Commitment” of Churches Together in England¹⁴ has been used. Since the late 1980s there has been an increased emphasis on mission. There is a greater awareness of the inter-relatedness of unity and mission, as a response to the dominical injunction “that they may be one that the world may believe”. But there is also sometimes a sense of a tension between unity and mission in practice. The Review Group therefore suggests that the instrumentality of the IB is stated within an over-arching theme, thus:

An Intermediate Body is

- a visible sign of the Churches' commitment to deepen their communion with Christ and with one another, and
- an instrument to proclaim the Gospel together by common mission, witness, and service in their county/region.

¹² Appendix A 5 The Purposes of IBs: CEOs' views is a detailed account.

¹³ An example, perhaps, of “strategic drift”, defined as “a gradual change that occurs so subtly that it is not noticed until it is too late”.

¹⁴ CTE Basis and Commitment: “Churches Together in England is a visible sign of the Churches' commitment as they seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another, and proclaim the Gospel together by common witness and service.”

REFLECTION ON THE QUEST FOR VISIBLE UNITY

The search for the unity of the Body of Christ, and the growth – both painful and joyful – of the partial communion that exists between Christians, is to be realised in all dimensions of the Churches' life, from the world-wide to the congregational. There are global conversations (such as the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) and national agreements (such as the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, or the agreement between the New Testament Church of God and the Church of God of Prophecy); there are local, inter-congregational covenants and other forms of Local Ecumenical Partnership; there are Personal Covenants between Church Leaders at the intermediate level, as well as a Covenant between the Presidents of Churches Together in England. These in their different contexts are visible signs of commitment; they should be mutually enriching and encouraging, all part of the trajectory towards unity.

It may be noted that the overwhelming view expressed in the recent Survey¹⁵ was that bi-lateral dialogues and relations have enriched the multi-lateral IB, rather than detracting from it.

The members of the IBs are (almost without exception) members of Churches which are either world-wide *per se* or part of world-wide communions or alliances. Though each IB is itself autonomous, each of its members has lines of accountability, connection and communication, and so the IB is a context for reconciling and reconciled relationships.

There are different ways that unity may be expressed in relationships between churches:

Viewing through the lens of *Missio Dei* (Mission as an activity of God, rather than of the Church) and against the backdrop of a multi-cultural city, Dr Colin Marsh, Ecumenical Development Officer for Birmingham, writes,

“Christian unity ... will be realised through fellowship that supports mission partnerships. To this end, ecumenical space will be a place of fellowship that enables one church's participation in God's mission to be connected relationally with another. The space will increase Churches' mutual understanding of the separate ways they are being led in mission by God and inspire participants to embark on a spiritual journey of discernment aimed at increasing shared participation in mission.”¹⁶

Others may use the language of “Receptive Ecumenism”¹⁷ or of the “exchange of gifts” advocated by *Ut Unum Sint*,¹⁸ since within the IB is the opportunity for real interaction, not least between those whose traditions regard them as a “focus of unity”.

REFLECTIONS ON ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

Developing as they did from several roots now intertwined, IBs have little common rationale apart from being “between the local and the national”. Yet internationally they are regarded as the jewel in the crown of English ecumenical life. Evidence suggests that some Church Leaders are finding them burdensome, and a clearer understanding of their role, and then adherence to that agreed role, may help to foster greater commitment. Yet pure functionality under-sells the importance of the Intermediate Body, which may have

¹⁵ See Appendix B3 Your Personal Involvement in Intermediate Bodies

¹⁶ Marsh, C. “Mission-shaped ecumenism” (2011)

¹⁷, That is, asking “What do we need to learn and what can we learn – or receive – with integrity from our others?” See Chapter 15 “Increasing Understanding”

¹⁸ Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995)

sufficient elements of being sign, symbol of foretaste of the Kingdom to make participation in it both significant and enriching.

Different IBs will have different priorities. However, the identification of priorities and their periodic review may encourage a greater sense of ownership by the members of the IB, greater “buy-in” to the work, and may help to address the comment referred to above, “I’m not sure what we’re doing there”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#2 It is recommended that IBs develop their work in a cycle of reflecting on vision and purpose, identifying priorities, planning and acting on reasonable and achievable objectives, agreed with the County Ecumenical Officer, in order to meet more effectively the needs of their member Churches.

6 A CHANGING STRUCTURE AND AGENDA

Becoming Churches Together

Many Intermediate Bodies have struggled in the transition from the Council of Churches model to the Churches Together model. There are at least three significant shifts that the Churches Together model entails:

- From constitutional, ecumenical structures to more flexible relationships which enable ecumenical partnerships and networks.
- From working towards organic, institutional unity to engaging with (increasing) diversity.
- From mission on behalf of the churches to partnership in mission.

Structures and Oversight

One of the trends emerging in IBs is the move towards lighter, more flexible structures. The key feature of the Churches Together model is

“a move from ecumenism as an optional and occasional extra for local churches, often supported by a limited number of enthusiasts, to a more committed coming together of churches to share concern and action about their central purposes; thus the key decision-makers and leaders, ordained and lay, need to be involved as much as possible with a willingness to act together on a far wider and more demanding scale.”¹⁹

This model is aimed at enabling Churches to work directly together, rather than through a separate decision-making body. In general, the trend for IB structures is towards a smaller executive group, alongside a larger body, which meets less frequently but with wider representation, with the key oversight and strategic role held by a Church Leaders' group.

In the Council of Churches model, the IB is clearly an organisation, operating separately from, but financed by, the member Churches, carrying forward work on behalf of the Churches. In the Churches Together model the IB is a partnership of Churches, committed to working together. The main contrast with the Council of Churches model is that the Churches themselves carry forward the work together in partnership. Some IBs are moving even further away from formalised structures, towards a more flexible network model, which is a more inclusive ecumenical space.

Yet the desire to have lighter structures and to be more inclusive has to be reconciled with issues of charity registration, trusteeship, employers' responsibilities, funding etc.

Levels of satisfaction

The evidence²⁰ is that IBs are regarded by their membership as worthwhile, fulfilling, helpful in building and maintaining relationships, and a useful forum for consultation and decision-making. Very few members felt the IB was a “no-longer needed luxury”.²¹ However, there are expressions of frustration and dissatisfaction with IBs –and a number of respondents to the Survey had the perception that some Church Leaders do not

¹⁹ Nunn, R. *This Growing Unity*, CTE, London, (1995) p 24.

²⁰ See Appendix B3 Your personal involvement in Intermediate Bodies

²¹ See Appendix B4 Members' Views – A no-longer needed luxury

engage with IBs or give priority to ecumenical relating. (This frustration may be attached to the role of the IB as a Sponsoring Body for Local Ecumenical Partnerships, rather than the IB itself – dealt with in Chapter 9.) Those who felt the IB was essential if Churches were to work together outnumbered by 3:1 those who felt it was not essential.

A simplified structure

Most IBs work with this structure or some elements of it:²²

- A subject focussed Open Meeting or Forum >>> Annually, less frequently, or not at all
- A Church Leaders meeting - informal, formal, over a meal >>> Half yearly or annually
- A Full IB Council meeting – Church Leaders, DEOs and maybe others >>> Quarterly or half-yearly
- A Denominational Ecumenical Officers’ Meeting >>> Quarterly or more frequently
- An Executive, maybe the DEOs and a Church Leader >>> Quarterly or more frequently

The Sponsoring Body function is often, but not invariably, carried out by or delegated to the Executive or DEOs’ meeting. Annual Forums have become less popular. When they remain as part of the governance structure, their business element is reduced to a minimum. More popular are subject-focused meetings.

“We have seen the business style meetings with agendas and speakers replaced by more stimulating occasions where people are keen to come to be refreshed for their own local ecumenical journeys, and we cannot put it all down to the lunch and cake we now always offer!”²³

“The Assembly, or whatever [the IB] chooses to call it, and other occasional but regular gatherings are a key part of the new structure. They should be inspirational or useful meetings, gathering people together according to theme or need.”²⁴

What decisions are made where, varies from one IB to another.

Appraising current effectiveness²⁵

Those responding to the recent Survey thought that IBs were good at supporting Local Ecumenical Partnerships and supporting local ecumenical endeavour. They did not feel that IBs were good at strategic planning for the Churches or at taking mission opportunities.

Asked how the Agenda of their IBs had changed over the past three years, and how they would like it to change, some responses were:²⁶

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| ○ Theological Discussion | More than previously | Would like more |
| ○ As Sponsoring Body | Slightly less than previously | Would like less |
| ○ Local Churches Together groups | More than previously | Would like more |
| ○ “Secular” issues | More than previously | Would like more |
| ○ Mission planning | More than previously | Would like more |
| ○ Promoting prayer/ spirituality | About the same | Would like more |

The strongest hopes were for more theological discussion, more attention to local/regional secular issues, and more work on mission planning and Fresh Expressions.

²² Appendix B5 The Structure of the Intermediate Body

²³ *Churches Together in Dorset – How we meet* Paper to Churches Group for Local Unity (2010)

²⁴ Churches Together in Lancashire Review (2008)

²⁵ Appendix B6 Members views of the Intermediate Bodies

²⁶ Appendix B7 Changes in the Scope of IBs

The Agenda in Context²⁷

What is clear, and right, is that the Agenda of the IB is highly influenced by the type of area it serves. Inter-faith, Minority Ethnic or New Housing issues are hardly ever mentioned in some IBs.

On the other hand, Local Ecumenical Partnerships and local Churches Together groupings feature large local/regional secular issues quite often, but public statements infrequently. Theology seems to be seldom mentioned.

Different IBs also have a range of events and joint projects they promote or support, e.g., church tents at County Shows, or work with the disadvantaged or dispossessed. Again, they are responding to their context.

In terms of their response to national initiatives,²⁸ the greatest engagement has been with the Millennium and setallfree. HOPE08 had less involvement, though the new HOPE is receiving more interest. IBs have been a little involved with Bible Fresh. Eight are now greatly involved with More Than Gold, in preparation for the 2012 Olympics, and this may be expected to expand.

REFLECTIONS

It is important that IBs clarify their charitable status, and identify the actual Trustee body which is legally responsible for the good governance of the organisation (clarity about this is important as confusions of role have arisen). Proper governance structures may be less burdensome and may free up valuable meeting time, enabling a move towards subject-focussed and relational forms of meeting. Members of IBs look for opportunities of addressing local/regional secular issues, for planning for mission and church presence, and for theological dialogue, areas where IBs need to be stronger in future. More attention to them may, or should, see a greater commitment from Church Leaders to engage in the IBs' agenda because it is addressing their needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#3 It is recommended that IBs adopt clear governance structures which affirm and facilitate the centrality of relationship and encourage a mission focus.

Churches Together in England

#4 It is recommended that CTE offers support and resources for IBs in seeking appropriate governance structures.

The following Chapters follow through the functions of IBs in the order of actual priority given to them, as identified by CEOs.

²⁷ Appendix B3 The Work of the Intermediate Body

²⁸ Appendix B8 Activities of Intermediate Bodies

7 NETWORKING

Making connections

“Making connections for Christ” is the strap-line of Churches Together in South London, and accurately describes one of the main *raison d’être* of Intermediate Bodies, which offer a unique service. County Ecumenical Officers identify it as their IBs’ main priority.²⁹

The network of communications is built and maintained with and between:

- Denominations and local churches within the mainstream ecumenical movement
- Churches currently outside the mainstream ecumenical movement
- Local Churches Together groupings
- Local Ecumenical Partnerships
- Christian agencies and movements
- Chaplaincies and sector ministries
- “Stakeholders” in public authorities
- The media
- Churches Together in England and CTBI

Opportunities

Advances in information technology have opened up opportunities. They have also made communications easier and cheaper; and they may have raised expectations. CEOs need to be at ease using IT, to know how to access specialist help when they need it, and for this to be part of their budgets.

Since 1990 IBs have been seen as the communication conduit between the national ecumenical instruments and local groupings of Churches Together, though with the websites of the national instruments, and the email newsletter *CTe-news* the delineation is less defined than previously.

34 Intermediate Bodies have websites, some of high quality and others providing limited basic information, some clearly professionally produced. About half of these, when viewed in early July, had material which was long out-of-date. At least one (Cumbria) publishes an occasional newspaper, and West Yorkshire combines with the Roman Catholic Diocese in an annual ecumenical edition in January.

Meetings

In the early days following the restructuring of 1990, IBs held major “Forums” or “Assemblies” as a major element of networking. These have become less popular, and in some instances have been replaced by subject-focused and targeted ad hoc meetings. Some IBs hold get-togethers for representatives of local Churches Together groups and/or Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

The personal touch

CEOs are themselves crucial in maintaining networks, through their interest, affirmation and personal visits. Electronic and paper communications are no substitute for the “personal touch” which can be very time-consuming and may not be obviously rewarding in the short-term.

²⁹ Appendix A3 The Purposes of Intermediate Bodies

REFLECTIONS

The IB, and more precisely its CEO, is at the centre of a network of relationships which is second-to-none; a CEO with the right skills has enormous opportunities for introducing people to people. Personal contact and the use of paper and electronic media are both important, and nowadays neither on its own is sufficient. Pressures on time, a reduced base of interest (through age and decline in membership), even the cost of travel, make the mounting of large networking meetings less attractive; and full use needs to be made of new media, remembering always that not everyone has access to them or is comfortable with them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#5 It is recommended that IBs ensure full use is made of IT through email, newsletters and websites which are kept up-to-date, and are prepared to include IT development within their budgets.

Churches Together in England

#6 It is recommended that CTE in association with CTBI continues to encourage and resource the use of IT by IBs.

8 SUPPORTING LOCAL ECUMENICAL LIFE

The extent of the Intermediate Body's responsibility

The support of local groupings of Churches Together and local ecumenical life has been seen since 1990 as the role of the Intermediate Body. Ecumenical life - relations between churches locally - may not be limited to Churches Together groups, and some groups have more life than others.³⁰

- 6 IBs have 1 - 10 CT groups
- 8 IBs have 11 - 20 CT groups
- 6 IBs have 21 - 30 CT groups
- 5 IBs have 31 - 40 CT groups
- 4 IBs have 41 - 60 CT groups
- 1 IB has over 100 CT groups

CEOs report that the support of local ecumenism is regarded as a high priority by IBs,³¹ and the members of IBs report that this is assuming a higher priority which they would wish to encourage.³²

The needs and opportunities

There is a range of models for churches working together locally: for example informal networks of churches, local churches together groups, project based initiatives, fresh expression initiatives, the six categories of Local Ecumenical Partnerships, and ecumenical schools.

The common thread running through all these models is that they all rely on the quality of relationship, not only between key individuals, but also between the churches. However, there are also some significant differences between the models, which depend chiefly on the extent to which the churches involved consciously and visibly express, through covenanting together, their commitment to and agreement with each other. There is a spectrum of the visibility of commitment and agreement between local church communities, which is related to the intensity of covenanting.

Churches Together groups are the model most often with a relationship with the Intermediate Body. One CEO wrote this about the state of local Churches Together groups:

“The secretaries and links for local groups of Churches Together are the unsung heroes of the ecumenical movement and it is important to acknowledge and support them, send cards when they stand down and welcome new ones. There is a looming crisis as some very long-standing ones retire and are not being replaced - informal relational meetings may work well at one level but mean that communication and co-ordination of local activity are less effective.”³³

Some groups are vibrant, others are struggling; recurring themes are dependence on local ministers' enthusiasm, “a faithful few”, “an ageing nucleus”, weariness and tiredness.

Against this backdrop, the IB has the opportunity for re-envisioning, resources and raising expectations. The key issue may be how to encourage ecumenical living and churches being and working together, and moving away from a Churches Together which is little more than a re-named Council of Churches. Yet “Churches Together” was envisaged as a major shift in the way Churches and their leadership were to work together and what was expected or required throughout the ecumenical movement:

³⁰ Appendix B1 About Intermediate Bodies

³¹ Appendix A3 The Purposes of Intermediate Bodies

³² Appendix B7 Changes in the Scope of Intermediate Bodies

³³ *Churches Together in Dorset – How we meet* Paper to Churches Group for Local Unity (2010)

“This shift needs to be effective at all levels and in all places in order to establish a radically new style of working which builds on the creative ecumenical relationships of the many rather than the ecumenical activities of the few.”³⁴

The change from Council of Churches to Churches Together was subsequently summarised as:

“a move from ecumenism as an optional and occasional extra for local churches, often supported by a limited number of enthusiasts, to a more committed coming together of churches to share concern and action about their central purposes; thus the key decision-makers and leaders, ordained and lay, need to be involved as much as possible with a willingness to act together on a far wider and more demanding scale.”³⁵

It is not clear that IBs have been a catalyst in this transition. Where churches have come together – and where their relations have been revitalised – is in the support of projects, and there are positive experiences around, for example, street pastors, work with migrants and asylum seekers, and night-shelters.

HOPE08 has helped to revitalise relationships and to bring into the local inter-church fellowship churches which hitherto had not related, although this did not apply in all areas or with all churches; and HOPE08’s impact was much greater in urban than in rural areas.³⁶

In the recent Survey³⁷ respondents indicated that they valued communication from the IB and examples of good local practice. Some were negative about the relationship with the IB which could seem remote and disconnected. Respondents particularly looked for support in planning for the future of church life in their area and in relating to Black and Minority Ethnic Christians.

REFLECTIONS

Local Councils of Churches and those who devoted their time and energy to their development laid the foundations for the ecumenical life of England today, and helped to create the relationships – and the possibility of such relationships, which are now regarded so highly. The transition to a Churches Together model, more rooted in the structures of each denomination, though perhaps less visionary, has been hard to achieve. IBs recognise the importance of local ecumenical life, expressed usually though not exclusively through Churches Together, and IBs want and need to invest more developmental time in the local.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#7 It is recommended that IBs support and resource a variety of models of churches working together locally, and encourage the transition from Councils of Churches to “Churches Together” as local churches collaborate in the whole range of their activity rather than on a solely “ecumenical” agenda.

Churches Together in England

#8 It is recommended that the Churches Group for Local Unity provides resources for new models of churches working together locally, and addresses the challenge for local churches of moving from a “Council of Churches” to “Churches Together” way of working.

³⁴ The next steps for Churches Together in Pilgrimage, BCC, London, (1989) introduction

³⁵ Nunn, R. This Growing Unity, CTE, London (2006) page 24

³⁶ The whole Church, for the whole Nation, for the whole Year: An Evaluation of HOPE08, Theos (2009) pp 40- 42

³⁷ Appendix B9 Local Churches Together grouping feed-back

9 THE SPONSORING BODY

The origins of the Sponsoring Body role

Among the ways that churches work and grow together locally are Local Ecumenical Partnerships. At least 10 IBs originated as Sponsoring Bodies for “Areas of Ecumenical Experiment”, which from 1969 were called “Local Ecumenical Projects”, and from 1994 “Local Ecumenical Partnerships”. The change in terminology indicates a move from the provisional to the permanent. 1969 also saw the enactment of the Sharing of Church Buildings Act. The Churches Group for Local Unity (CGLU) under CTE’s auspices uses the following definition of Local Ecumenical Partnership:

“A Local Ecumenical Partnership is defined as existing ‘where there is a formal written agreement affecting the ministry, congregational life, buildings and/or mission projects of more than one denomination: and a recognition of that agreement by the Sponsoring Body, and authorisation by the appropriate denominational authorities.’”³⁸

CGLU has six “categories” of LEP: Single Congregation LEP, Congregations in Covenanted Partnership, Shared Building Partnerships, Chaplaincy Partnerships, Education Partnerships and Mission Partnerships. In the Church of England LEPs are regulated by the Ecumenical Relations Measure 1988 and by Canon B44.

LEPs were seen as harbingers of united church life and laboratories for ecumenical discovery, and the Sponsoring Body’s role was not only of supervision but also of learning.

The current situation

The recent Survey shows the number of LEPs in an Intermediate Body’s area:³⁹

- 7 IBs have 1- 10 LEPs
- 20 IBs have 11- 20 LEPs
- 7 IBs have 21- 30 LEPs
- 3 IBs have 31- 40 LEPs
- 1 IB has more than 40 LEPs

The Sponsoring Body function may be carried out by the full IB, or by an Executive Group, or by a Denominational Ecumenical Officers Group. The evidence is that the Sponsoring Body role consumes a lot of the Agenda, and that members would like it to consume less.

Because LEPs were seen as learning opportunities, they were discussed in the wide ecumenical forum of the Sponsoring Body rather than solely between the denominations participant in the LEP; and so levels of interest have been hard to maintain.

LEPs have been perceived in recent years as costly in human and financial resourcing, requiring a degree of support that is greater than that of other local churches. The truth of this perception is outside the remit of this Review; however it is worth noting this comment from a meeting arranged by CTE in 2010 between missionaries and ecumenists:

“Ecumenism has a weighty PR problem. It carries a stigma. It is understood as part of a Christendom model of being church, institutional, centralised, heavily bureaucratic. The

³⁸ Ecumenical Notes: 01.02 Concept and definition of a local ecumenical partnership CTE London

³⁹ Appendix B1 About Intermediate Bodies

consultation acknowledged that in this sense ecumenism was simply the scape-goat for *all* inherited structures. Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are no more stuck in 'maintenance mode' than many parish churches or one denomination churches."⁴⁰

It is important to clarify what the tasks of the Sponsoring Body are. The functions of IBs as mentioned in the Model Governing Documents (Constitution and Schedule) for a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership⁴¹ indicates these roles:

- Approval of Amendments to the Constitution and Dissolution of Charity
- Support, encouragement and advice
- The approval of rites, practices and procedures for Baptism and Membership.
- The approval of specific rites of worship
- Consultation about ministry
- Developments of the LEP
- Review

All these tasks are carried out in conjunction with the denominations participating in the LEP; the denominations cannot abrogate their responsibilities to the Sponsoring Body which is not a new and separate denomination. As Sponsoring Body the IB has a continuing role of supporting and guiding LEPs in their ecumenical journey. Sponsoring Bodies do not, and should not, replace the oversight which the participating churches should provide for LEPs. The key responsibility remains with them. However, the Sponsoring Body has the crucial role of encouraging the co-ordination of oversight and an interest in the ongoing life of the LEP as a visible expression of growing ecumenical collaboration and Christian unity.

The IB is tasked with ensuring that an LEP is reviewed regularly, and reviews may be combined with denominational reviews as required by the denomination. The purpose of reviews includes supporting and encouraging the LEP, but also assisting those who have responsibility for oversight, and offering examples of good practice to the wider Church.

However, reviews are widely regarded as a problem. For the IB, they are seen as distracting from other business. For the CEO they can be a burden - to arrange and negotiate, to find suitable reviewers, and to see through their implementation.⁴²

Here are some comments from CEOs:

- This is a very difficult area as no-one seems to understand the process or why we, as an intermediate body, are involved. It seems to work best if the respective DEOs liaise with the church and simply keep me advised.
- They are necessary but are rarely welcomed! Finding reviewers is never easy, and the new URC 4-year system may yet confuse things. One may wonder whether Church Leaders or others actually take much notice of the reviews when done.
- I am not sure how seriously the reports are always taken - certain issues which are often caused by factors outside of the LEP can be flagged up review after review.
- Almost impossible to find people willing to undertake. Little interest at any level. Usual suspects exhausted.

By the LEP they are often regarded as "OFSTED", inspection, imposition, and a waste of time.⁴³ Not all comments from LEPs have been negative, but some give grounds for concern:

⁴⁰ Mission Shaped and Ecumenical – Missioners and Ecumenists in Conversation CTE note of meeting 2010

⁴¹ Ecumenical Notes 01.05 CTE London 2010

⁴² Appendix B10 Local Ecumenical Partnership Reviews – CEOs Comments

Here are some comments from LEPs:

- Don't really feel a need. We just consider ourselves one church with good links and involvement in both denominations.
- Only stated the obvious.
- Be carried out by someone with leading experience in the particular setting and mission of our church - that way they might have constructive comments, criticism and advice for us. The present system feels like a box-ticking exercise with little value other than waving an ecumenical flag.
- A simple response to our concerns would have been nice. Once the initial report was delivered we heard nothing, and got no answers to questions raised or corrections offered. The report is therefore practically irrelevant and will not be informing our planning and decision-making.
- We are always reviewing our life and witness. A formal review is an unnecessary distraction; doesn't help us move forward.

Future development

A key practical question is whether the sponsoring body function of IBs is any longer realistic or even necessary. "Ecumenical oversight" of LEPs may be an illusion. It may be time to focus and reduce the IB's activity in this area.

Some IBs are well along the way to finding new and lighter-weight systems of reviewing LEPs. These include accompanied self-appraisal, peer accompaniment, or by annual reporting. [Appendix C1 sets out options in more detail.] How reasonable it is to ask of LEPs questions which either are not asked of other local churches, or which rightly belong to the participating denominations to ask?

In short, the responsibilities of the IB as a sponsoring body may be distilled as:

- To co-ordinate and act as a reference point for participating denominations.
- To ask how the participating denominations are keeping to their mutual accountability to the covenant which established (and sustains) the LEP.
- To coordinate support for and interchange of experience of people in LEPs.
- To coordinate reviews.

REFLECTIONS

Though in some instances lights set on a hill, LEPs have not been the beacons for a united Church in this generation. Single Congregation LEPs (the most complex) number some 600 in England, out of a rough estimated total of 40,000 congregations. Their significance within a denomination is marked: they represent a much higher proportion of United Reformed Church congregations than they do of Church of England congregations; and Single Congregation LEPs have not included the Orthodox Churches or the Roman Catholic Church, or BME Churches.

Without detracting from their positive contribution to the life of the Church in England, the attention they receive from CTE and from IBs is disproportionate, especially against the backdrop of emerging forms of ecumenical life. The time consumed by LEPs could be spent more creatively, and IBs might be more enthusiastically embraced by Church Leaders if this were so. However, LEPs are not the only form of local church life that has difficulties, and they should not be criticised unduly.

⁴³ Appendix B11 Local Ecumenical Partnership Feed-back

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#9 It is recommended that IBs reassess their role and function as Sponsoring Bodies by differentiating clearly between the responsibilities of the Sponsoring Body and those of the Churches participating in an LEP.

Churches Together in England

#10 It is recommended that the Churches Group for Local Unity, in conjunction with the Enabling Group, reconsiders how best to resource and support LEPs, while developing an agenda which reflects and resources the breadth and structures of local ecumenical life and mission.

#11 It is recommended that CGLU revises its advice on the function, extent and methodology of reviews of LEPs, with a view to limiting the reviews to what are the essential roles of the Sponsoring Body, what rightly belongs to the participating churches, and what it is reasonable to expect of the LEPs.

10 CHURCH LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

“Leaders” of the Churches

The opportunity for meeting, for building and maintaining relationships, is regarded as a high priority. In the recent Survey this function received by far the greatest emphasis,⁴⁴ and it is the third priority identified by CEOs.⁴⁵ The evidence is that some Leaders attend IBs more out of duty than enthusiasm; one CEO describes them as being “just in turn-up mode”.

Churches vary in their self-understanding and therefore their understanding of what is local, which affects the way that Churches are represented in IBs. There is potential for tensions to emerge in a Church Leaders’ group including leaders with authority at intermediate or regional level, and leaders with a congregationally derived authority.

There are issues about how independent Churches can find their place in IBs, how smaller Churches without stipendiary ministers can attend meetings during the day, and how some groups such as the Quakers have personal leadership.

The different size of Churches, different areas covered, different status, mean that establishing peer groups of those with comparable responsibilities is difficult; relating in rural areas may be harder to achieve than in the concentrated urban areas. This may go some way to explaining why IBs are not seen as successful in exercising a strategic and oversight role. The concept of equal partnership in the *Missio Dei*, and indeed mutual generosity, may help; but the possibility is that Leaders will find other ways of establishing relationships and peer groups, irrespective of the IB. Occasional regular review of the priorities of the IB with the Leaders could mean a greater “buy in” to the work and a greater solidarity with the CEO.

Covenants and accountability

The fact that Churches and Leaders are willing to meet suggests a degree of mutual recognition of their faithfulness to Jesus Christ (language of “common baptism” is difficult for some traditions). In many instances Leaders have entered into personal covenants with one another, committing themselves to prayer, study, consultation, and shared witness to the world. This suggests a degree of mutual accountability which does not deny denominational accountabilities.⁴⁶

Leaders’ Covenants vary tremendously in importance. In some places they have fallen out of use; in others they are renewed publically whenever a new Church leader comes into office. Of Leaders responding to the recent Survey, three said the Covenant was very significant to them personally, nine “quite a lot” and six “not much”.⁴⁷

Appropriate representation

If the Churches are to benefit from the IB in terms of their planning and strategy, it is essential that they are represented appropriately. It is essential to maintain an agenda which is relevant to those attending. Colin

⁴⁴ Appendix B2 Your personal involvement in Intermediate Bodies

⁴⁵ Appendix A3 The Purposes of Intermediate Bodies

⁴⁶ Appendix A3 - The Purposes of Intermediate Bodies - shows that CEOs thought their IBs saw this as a very low priority.

⁴⁷ Appendix B6 Members views of the Intermediate Body

Marsh writes about the importance of good representation in a comment focussing on local Churches Together groups but applicable to IBs also:⁴⁸

“... the purpose of the Churches Together’ central meeting spaces is to enable Churches to share decisions between themselves as an instrument for unity. Thus, for Churches Together to be effective, participating representatives need connection and influence within the decision making processes of the Churches they represent. Unconnected to decision-makers and leaders of the member churches, decisions taken in the ecumenical meeting are liable to suffer a similar fate to that of the Council model, whereby the ecumenical agenda becomes peripheral to a group’s life...”

Denominational Ecumenical Officers play a large part in the work of IBs (indeed, in one IB a team of DEOs acts in place of a CEO). Good relations and good communication between the Church Leaders and their DEOs are essential, as is the DEOs’ access to denominational policy- and decision-making.

Changes in Leadership

Whilst some Churches work on the principle of planned hand-over and succession of leadership and oversight, in the Church of England at least vacancies in see are the norm. This can mean that decisions affecting the IB are taken by people unfamiliar with the IB and not so involved in the network of relationships it represents.

In-coming Church Leaders may not be familiar with IBs, with the expectations upon them or the opportunities and support available to them; their ecumenical experience may be quite limited. So care needs to be taken both by the national denominational ecumenical officers and by the IB to ensure that new Leaders are informed and encouraged.

REFLECTIONS

The involvement of Church Leaders and those with real decision-making “clout” is essential if IBs are to flourish, and the Church Leaders need to be able to identify with the agenda of the IB and the work of the CEO. Covenants between Church Leaders have a really important and encouraging significance. Yet the stress upon Church Leaders and their relationships can lead to discontinuities when they move on.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Member Churches

#12 It is recommended that member Churches of IBs encourage their leaders to participate in the appropriate meetings and structures of the IB, and that denominations nationally make the IBs’ significance and role in the Church’s mission part of the formation and induction of potential and new Leaders.

Intermediate Bodies

#13 It is recommended that IBs ensure their agenda and working arrangements are consonant with the needs of Church Leaders.

#14 It is recommended that there is proper consultation between Leaders and others representing their denominations.

#15 It is recommended that IBs take steps to welcome new Leaders and to include them in Leaders’ Covenants where they exist.

⁴⁸ Marsh, C. “Mission-shaped ecumenism” (2011)

11 STRATEGIC PLANNING : MISSION TOGETHER

Mission as the priority

When asked in the recent Survey what they would like more of on the Agenda of IBs, members indicated their greatest wish was for “Attention to church planting / mission strategies / fresh expressions”.⁴⁹

Members of IBs felt that the elements that the IB was least good at were “being well-equipped for mission opportunities” and “a good forum to plan the strategy of the Churches.”⁵⁰

Presented with the option “Identifying and facilitating opportunities for the churches to share their life and mission” CEOs at their May 2011 Consultation rated this equal first as an ideal priority, and ranked it 6th among the actual priorities of their IBs.⁵¹

The apparent disconnection between unity and mission had been recognised prior to this Review. The March 2010 CTE-coordinated consultation between missionaries and ecumenists raised these discussion points directly relevant to this Review:

“Entrepreneurial evangelicalism (e.g. HOPE08) is in tension with inherited ecumenical and denominational structures, but new and unlikely coalitions are beginning to emerge.

“There are ecclesiological tensions between those who understand the nature of the church to be one of progressive growth and adaptation into the fullness of Christ, and those who understand the historic church to have a given definitive shape which is unalterable. Those tensions have always been part of ecumenism, but they are underlined by a process like Fresh Expressions. A Catholic understanding of a fresh expression of church would be very different to a Protestant one.

“In contemporary practice we have to accept the contingent, historical reality that we are where we are. We are the inheritors of denominationalism, of diversity in theology, order and ministry which frustrates our best missional intentions. No church planting comes without baggage, and the process is therefore freighted with possibilities of disagreement and misunderstanding, and we all run the risk of planting our own versions of Christianity. The old ecumenical agenda is persistent. It will not go away because it is the reality of half a millennium of division and separate development that has made us who we are.”

The consultation concluded that “a conversation needs to continue between Fresh Expressions and CTE about the ways in which ecumenism is re-formulating itself around mission.”

Missio Dei

Dr Colin Marsh has taken the concept of *Missio Dei* and its focus on Churches participating in God’s mission. He contrasts it with the understanding of Christian mission that prevailed within the colonial era when mission centred on the actions of the Church, and explores its application in the context of today’s Britain. In using the phrase, ‘Mission shaped ecumenical space’, he is referring to space that is shaped by Churches at a local level seeking to share together in *Missio Dei*.

⁴⁹ Appendix B7 Changes In the scope of Intermediate Bodies

⁵⁰ Appendix B6 Members Views of the Intermediate Body

⁵¹ Appendix A3 The Purposes of Intermediate Bodies

“Mission shaped ecumenical space implies a radical shift of emphasis from the earlier Council of Churches model, most especially as doctrinal and structural unity is not the primary focus for sharing in God’s mission. Listening to the voice of the Spirit in the contributions of others will be a key characteristic of discussion aimed at developing mission partnerships. A stronger emphasis on sharing of events already being undertaken separately will be placed alongside the existing focus of organising common occasions to demonstrate unity and ecumenical solidarity. Within a group of churches, a variety of different partnership arrangements will emerge criss-crossing among the people and groups within the congregations involved. Whilst two churches may share a youth activity, three churches might arrange services for the elderly and a single church organise a Good Friday Walk of Witness for all to participate. The result will be a network of inter-locking relationships that connect people across a particular local group of Churches as together they reach out in mission partnerships into the wider community.

“Christian unity viewed through the lens of *Missio Dei* will be realised through fellowship that supports mission partnerships. To this end, ecumenical space will be a place of fellowship that enables one Church’s participation in God’s mission to be connected relationally with another. The space will increase Churches’ mutual understanding of the separate ways they are being led in mission by God and inspire participants to embark on a spiritual journey of discernment aimed at increasing shared participation in mission.”

This in turn suggests that ecumenical life will at any time be a “partnership of the willing” - that is, those who are committed to sharing in *Missio Dei* - rather than a fellowship of the whole body. Whereas traditional Churches Together working involved movement by consensus, which meant going at the pace of the slowest, this mission-shaped ecumenism implies going at the pace of the quickest, and joining in as and where partners can. The strength of the model is that it recognises that the mission is God’s, God is active in diverse ways; the weakness is that the significance of the Church as symbol and foretaste of the Kingdom is diminished.

The Five Marks of Mission

The Five Marks of Mission,⁵² developed in the Anglican Consultative Council in the 1980s, came to the fore in the English ecumenical context in *Called to be One* (1996)⁵³ and at the 1997 CTE Forum. The Five Marks have subsequently been used both to define the life of some IBs and as part of the review process of IBs.⁵⁴ The Review of the Life of Milton Keynes Christian Council in 2008 quotes the Five Marks, and went on to add:

“In addition we have sought to recognise that:

- It is God’s mission. God is working; how do we engage in that work? (we are joiners, not initiators)
- If God’s mission is ‘to reconcile all things; to bring all things into unity in Christ’, then our involvement in God’s mission requires us to work more inclusively.”

Inclusion

Inclusion is dealt with in Chapter 14 of this Review. It is to be noted here that a substantial amount of “mission” is undertaken by well-established groups which are not part of the IBs, in what is an increasingly

⁵² proclaiming the good news of the kingdom;
teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers;
responding to human need by loving service;
seeking to transform unjust structures of society; and
safeguarding the integrity of creation, sustaining and renewing the life of the earth

⁵³ *Called to be One* CTE London (1996) (re-issued 2002)

⁵⁴ *Between the Local and the national : A health check for Churches working together in the counties and large cities of England* CTE London (2001)

diverse Christian community. Their relationship with the IB differs – the differences attributable to style, personalities, the involvement of denominations and denominational leaders, and sometimes theological stance. These can be “parallel ecumenical movements”, independent of the IBs, and often relating to a city or large town within the wider IB area. Among them may be noted:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|--|
| ○ Network Ipswich | | www.networkipswich.org.uk |
| ○ redeeming our communities | | www.redeemingourcommunities.org.uk |
| ○ Pray for the City | Carlisle | www.prayforthecity.org.uk |
| ○ Impact Reading | | www.impactreading.org |
| ○ Lincoln Christians in Mission | | www.lcim.org.uk |
| ○ Leeds together in mission | | www.networkleeds.com |

A quick comparison of websites shows these groups more likely to be young, lay and female, than the IBs, a reflection not so much about ecumenical relations as the nature of leadership in the mainstream denominations.

REFLECTIONS

Though they have served well in building and sustaining relationships between the mainstream Churches and their Leaders, IBs have not been as good at responding to the calls for a “mission agenda”, especially those aspects of mission related to new forms of proclamation and Christian presence. IBs need to be generous and confident further developing networks and broadening relationships. Thereby they may be more truly representative of Christianity in England today and strengthened in their role of oversight, and may help to ensure that the new expressions of being Church are espoused by the historic Churches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#16 It is recommended that IBs encourage local CT groups to explore new ways of sharing in mission.

Churches Together in England

#17 It is recommended that consideration is given to the relationship between CGLU and other Co-ordinating Groups of CTE, including the Group for Evangelisation, Church in New Housing Areas, and the Spirituality Group.

12 RELATING TO SOCIETY AND STAKEHOLDERS

Oversight of local / regional “secular” concerns⁵⁵

Concern for local or regional issues of secular society is an increasing feature of the life of IBs, and one which members wish to see developed further.⁵⁶

For their part, IBs may see this as the collective exercise of oversight over the whole area and its people, not solely an ecclesiastical oversight. This may be a view that is most attractive to those Churches whose self-perception is territorial, parochial or “folk church”; equally it may be an expression of what it means to be a servant Church.

Some IBs are already deeply involved, with representation on various public bodies. Public bodies also need to be able to show that they have consulted widely with “civil society” or the “third sector”, and they may consider it most fair – not to say, convenient – to consult with an ecumenical body rather than with a multiplicity of denominations, or solely with the Church of England.

Some Intermediate Body areas have specialist social responsibility personnel –Bristol, Cumbria, and Dorset. In London a parallel structure to the IBs exists in the London Churches Group for Social Action, with a strong network of Ecumenical Borough Deans and its own executive officer and website.

Stakeholders

Other identified stakeholders are:

- Schools, concerning admissions
- Burial authorities
- New housing developers
- Health authorities, Primary Care & NHS Trusts
- The police and emergency services
- Various charities seeking support and endorsement

IBs are presented with great opportunities, but this raises big questions about the capacity in terms both of time and of skills of the IB - or most likely of its CEO - to respond to the overtures from these stakeholders.

Addressing society’s needs

There is an impressive list of the involvement of IBs in addressing the needs of society, among them work with asylum seekers, the elderly, homeless people, street pastors, overseas students, young people, and the provision of food banks.

Opportunities arise here to build relations with those outside the mainstream ecumenical movement, whose increased involvement in social projects has been a new and welcome aspect of their mission in the past decade, something to which HOPE08 bears witness.⁵⁷

“There has been a significant increase in churches collaborating together during the course of 2008.

⁵⁵ “Secular” is put in inverted commas here, but not subsequently, in recognition that sacred and secular are not to be divided.

⁵⁶ Appendix B6 Members’ Views of the Intermediate Body

⁵⁷ The whole Church, for the whole Nation, for the whole Year: An Evaluation of HOPE08, Theos (2009) p 40

This is suggested by the overwhelming amount of stories coming from field researchers, interviews and surveys of HOPE participants.

- 88.2% of HOPE Champions reported that as a result of HOPE08 their church's attitude towards other Christian groups and denominations improved.
- In areas where inter-church partnerships were already in place, 71% thought that these working relationships were strengthened by the activities of HOPE08.
- No one thought that their church's attitude towards other Christians became worse as a result of their involvement in HOPE08."

The future: A Big Society?

The IBs appear to be more resilient than some of the stakeholders with whom they have been involved. The journey ahead is uncertain; the future of Regional Faith Forums is in the balance. Following on from Local Strategic Partnerships, coalition government plans for the Big Society mark "a new stage in the development of local partnership working... in which government plans for localism, the Big Society, and public service reform are all impacting on relationships between councils, local partnership bodies, the third sector, and local communities."⁵⁸

REFLECTIONS

Churches want to engage more with secular society ecumenically, and the recent broadening of the "mission" agenda in evangelical and BME churches adds to this groundswell. Meanwhile, governmental and secular bodies recognise the need both to consult and to court the "third sector" and "community groups", with which the churches uncomfortably align themselves. The Agenda in IBs is shifting to take notice of these new opportunities, and may call for new skills and understanding both from the CEOs and from those who support them nationally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#18 It is recommended that IBs give priority to their engagement with social issues, responding positively to the opportunities for cooperation with the wider Christian community, and for working in partnership with other bodies.

Churches Together in England

#19 It is recommended that CTE strengthens the support given to IBs in engaging with social issues and in developing the expertise of CEOs, through the Field Officers and other staff, especially in the light of the uncertain future of Regional Faith Forums.

⁵⁸ Local Government website <http://www.idea.gov.uk> accessed 20/6/11

13 RELATING TO OTHER FAITH COMMUNITIES

The Local Context

The priority given to inter-faith matters depends largely on the area that the Intermediate Body serves, and inter-faith is regarded more as inter-communal (that is, relations between communities espousing different faiths) than about inter-religious dialogue. Local groups of Churches Together, when these groups are themselves involved in inter-communal relations, may look to the IB and the CEO for support and for connection with national resources.

A survey of County Ecumenical Officers in 2010 by the Churches Together in England Inter-faith Officer provides this summary:

- Currently inter-faith impinges 'very little' on a CEO's work, but this is 'growing'.
- It behoves the CEO 'to concentrate on inter-church matters' which give them 'more than enough to do!' and because others have 'time, expertise, and responsibility'.
- CEOs support those within the churches who are promoting inter-faith awareness.
- Where CT groups are involved in inter-faith relations then there is more demand on the CEO's time to pass on information.
- In other areas CEOs are involved where inter-faith activities are done ecumenically, e.g., shared premises, multi-faith chaplaincies.
- Public life matters also generate ecumenical discussion with an inter-faith context, e.g.,
 - the Sustainable Communities agenda,
 - the response to civil emergencies,
 - collaboration with the police on 'Safer Neighbourhood' agendas,
 - involvement with Local Strategic Partnerships.
- In large cities, Church Leaders are also in faith leaders groups. Some matters might be aired in the faith leaders group and not within the intermediate body.
- Some intermediate bodies are supportive of grassroots activity without being proactive or high profile about it.

A range of responses⁵⁹

The above summary from 2010 is supported by responses to the recent Survey. Of those responding, 10 said that Inter-faith issues were always touched on in their IB, 33 that they were often touched on, and 60 that they were seldom or never touched on.

Some County Ecumenical Officers described here their involvement:

- Not at all so far
- Inter-faith work has a very low priority! You cannot get alongside people of other faiths if they are very small in number locally.
- This is one of the areas that the Church Leaders have asked me to be involved with. I am currently chair of X Council of Faiths. I am a board member and trustee of XX Faith Forum. There are times when I feel that it acts to the detriment of what I do ecumenically as it eats into my few hours a week that I am employed.
- When I came into post inter-faith was towards the bottom of the list of 'things to engage with if you have time'! Since then it has become increasingly important.

⁵⁹ Appendix B12 Inter-faith on the Agenda

- I link with the Inter-faith body when joint responses are needed to events where other faiths are being demonised or need support - e.g. we produced a joint faiths leaders' statement in run up to General Election, and there's always a good turn-out of Church Leaders for Holocaust Memorial Day,

Asked whether inter-faith matters came to the attention of their Intermediate Body, some CEO responses were:

- Not discussed at the Sponsoring Body or Standing Committees I have attended since being in post.
- The local churches are not of one mind in terms of whether we are looking for dialogue or conversion.
- Yes, but not in a proactive way.
- They might do so as an item of notice or correspondence.
- No, apart from a recent approach from the County Council seeking for a joint 'all faiths' response to a X County Council Vision Document.
- We have had meetings on Inter-faith cooperation and the Inter-faith Friendship Walk is widely advertised through Churches Together networks
- Very little, however the work is connected particularly to three other bodies in the city:
 - Churches Council for Industry & Social Responsibility
 - Regional Faith Forum
 - X Multi Faith Forum (funded by city council).
- We have a One World group in X which is a small but lively forum for discussion and usually has people of different faiths as speakers. We give publicity to that and they have been influential in the development of the transition towns movement which is gaining ground in the county.

Others wrote of conversations related to chaplaincies for prison, hospital, further education, and palliative care, the hire of church halls, environmental and climate change concerns.

The new ecumenism?

One CEO wrote:

Some feel that inter-faith is something that ought not to be confused with ecumenism and others are expressing the view that Inter-faith is the 'New Ecumenism'. I tend towards the first view; that does not mean that inter-faith has little importance but that it is a separate thing from ecumenism and with societal rather than theological ends.

CEOs have encountered misunderstanding about "ecumenism" for years; for example, being asked by the media about inter-faith relations during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. And perceived liberalism can be a deterrent to new, or BME or evangelical Churches engaging with the mainstream ecumenical instruments.

Yet there is little or no evidence that the Churches are diverting their resources – human or financial – from inter-church to inter-faith, and in areas where inter-faith or inter-communal relations are most crucial, specialist officers handling inter-faith matters and CEOs support one another.

Similar skills, attitudes and temperaments may be evident and beneficial in both sets of relationships; but they need not be confused. As David Cornick wrote,

The achievements of the last ecumenical century have been notable, and the techniques and methods of respect, understanding, deep empathy and sharing of spiritual gifts which have provided its engine are transferable skills, and very similar to those employed in inter-faith dialogue. No one can underestimate the importance to the future of the world of dialogue between

faiths, nor the fact that the ecumenical vision is ultimately that of the whole inhabited earth. However, to muddle the two theological tasks of perceiving the role of religious pluralism within the divine economy and the rather smaller canvas of healing the wounds of the divided and fissiparous body of Christ would not be helpful. Inter-faith work may well be an ecumenical task, but to call it the 'new ecumenism' detracts from its uniqueness and at the same time suggests that the command of our Lord that his disciples should be one is otiose. Neither venture will be aided by such confusion.⁶⁰

REFLECTIONS

"Inter-faith" is more inter-communal than inter-religious, and IBs where there are inter-communal issues are more likely to see Inter-faith on their agenda. The national picture – perhaps dominated by the London scene post 11th September 2001 and July 7th 2005 – does not seem to be replicated in other parts of the country. Yet IBs need to remain aware of the new context, not least because civil authorities are committed to a multi-culturalism that may be more theoretic than real in some places.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#20 It is recommended that IBs facilitate ecumenical relating to other faith communities, and encourage the member Churches to share resources and personnel.

Churches Together in England

#21 It is recommended that CTE continues to support the inter-faith agenda and the inter-change of resources, insights and expertise between the local, intermediate and national.

⁶⁰ Cornick, D. *Retrospect on an Ecumenical Century* Crucible (October 2010)

14 INCLUSION AND MEMBERSHIP

The changing scene

The diversity of Churches existing at all levels - national, intermediate and local - has been increasing rapidly in the last 20 years.

- The Afro-Caribbean and African based churches have grown stronger and more numerous, often with a propensity to follow the movement of the Spirit which results in fragmentation.
- Churches, new to this country, have arrived with new citizens from many other parts of the world;
- Independent, evangelical/charismatic churches, mainly white-led, have grown in number and influence.
- The increase in the strength of Orthodox Churches and the increased confidence of churches of the disaffected.
- Churches which are spin-offs from the historic denominations and claiming to maintain the integrity of the tradition.

While many of these Churches operate at local community level, some are part of wider networks, regional or national. Some notable IBs have worked very hard to relate to these Churches, and have had some success in opening up membership of the IB to them. Contacts have sometimes been made through university chaplaincies, or through the denominations whose church halls and schools have been used for worship. Yet many Churches remain outside the Churches Together movement.⁶¹

Broadening Membership

There is a very strong desire in IBs that their membership should be broadened.⁶² CEOs seek out opportunities to relate to independent, Pentecostal and Black and Minority Ethnic Churches, as well as to Orthodox Churches.

In the desire for greater inclusivity, the Church Leaders in Birmingham aspire for the IB to become a 'big tent', an image of an ecumenical space that is open at the sides, able to be added on to, flexible, welcoming and allowing people to look in as well as out - a Bedouin tent rather than a highly structured marquee. Yet with any "open" membership there remain issues of accountability and the need for rigorous governance.

In response to diversity IBs need to be clear about the process and criteria for admitting a Church to membership. The main criterion seems to be orthodoxy: the Church must hold a Trinitarian Faith. There are, however, some Pentecostal Churches (for example the United Pentecostal Church of Great Britain) which have a sub-Trinitarian faith in word, but confess it implicitly in worship and practice. How should these Churches be welcomed?

The most difficult and contentious issue is how far orthopraxy should be a factor in deciding membership. Ethical issues and moral behaviour are increasingly church-dividing on the ground. In considering membership of the IB, the key question for the Churches to ask is: Are there limits to the diversity which can be embraced by the IB? What profit in an open arrangement, if admitting one Church to membership results in other member Churches resigning?

⁶¹ Marsh, C. "Mission-shaped ecumenism" (2011) indicates that Birmingham Churches Together represents 60% of the 700 Christian places of worship in Birmingham.

⁶² Appendix B13 Broadening the Membership and Appendix B6 Members' Views of the Intermediate Body

Representation

The difficulty is sometimes in achieving proper representation, or indeed any representation. One IB has had an evangelical/independent churches “voice”. One IB has a representative of HOPE. One IB has a representative from a strong new church Network. Where there are networks of BME Churches, they may present the opportunity for representation. Yet it is to be noted that “representation” itself can be problematic, and that what is needed is people who have a real connection with the thinking and decision-making of their Churches, not only willingness or availability to turn up to meetings.

On an equal footing

The disparity of size between Churches clearly affects their capacity to participate in the work of the IB and to support in terms of personnel or finance. In highlighting a theology of *Missio Dei* Colin Marsh sees a way forward in the interrelationship of disparate groups: *Mission Dei* is, he says,

“deeply ecumenical and challenges Churches to become reconciled with each other in order to participate together as partners in *Missio Dei*. Participation in God’s mission assumes the spiritual union of Christians and churches as equal partners.”⁶³

Membership and belonging

Membership of IBs may be sought, not out of a desire for fellowship or for equal participation in the Mission of God, but for the benefits that may accrue. Some “stakeholders” and outside bodies have used membership of the IB or of CTE (not usually of a local Churches Together grouping) as a legitimating criterion for acceptability or accreditation. The most acute example has been the selection criteria in some Church of England Schools (determined by their Governing Bodies), something which is currently under consideration by the Church of England. Other examples are chaplaincies in prisons or hospitals, or the capability of being gazetted under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act.

Thus it is difficult to build warm, open and friendly relations which enable a sense of “belonging”, when what is wanted and needed by applicant groups is actually evidence of card-carrying membership.

.... or prefer not

Apart from the perceived inequity of not being members, some Churches are happier outside the current IBs. Some comments from those outside the IBs are

- Ecumenical movement not really functional
- Increase prayer to gain direction from God
- Rather frosty relations at the ministerial level
- Tired at the institutional/structures level
- Work well in creating special services but little interaction otherwise
- Culture - too committee based, perhaps words rather than action, possibly more bureaucratic, and relying on meeting in day working hours rather than evenings.

The IBs are not generally seen as mission-focused, something alluded to in Chapter 11.

⁶³ Marsh, C. “Mission-shaped ecumenism” (2011) - this is expanded in Chapter 11 “Strategic Planning: Mission Together”

REFLECTIONS

The laudable desire to make intermediate ecumenical life accessible to all Christian bodies is not without its difficulties in terms of governance and accountability, orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and acceptability to the existing partners on the ecumenical journey. Discernment is needed to eradicate prejudice and cross-cultural misunderstanding and to move forwards with an expectation of mutual enrichment. Relationships at different “levels” of ecumenical life are different and may point towards different decisions about membership being made at each level; but it is important to recognise that what happens at one level affects what happens at the other, albeit autonomous, levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#22 It is recommended that IBs value and work with Churches not currently in membership, to ensure the broadest formal or informal representation of the whole Christian community in their area.

#23 It is recommended that IBs review their criteria and procedures for membership, being aware of the implications that a Church’s membership of the IB may have upon that Church’s expectation of membership of other bodies, including CTE.

Churches Together in England

#24 It is recommended that CTE, in developing criteria and procedures for membership of CTE, provides resources to assist IBs review their own criteria and procedures.

#25 It is recommended that CTE continues to value and work with Churches not currently in membership, to ensure the broadest formal or informal representation of the whole Christian community in England.

#26 It is recommended that staff within CTE with particular knowledge and experience of Churches not currently in membership continue to develop links between them and CTE and between them and IBs.

15 INCREASING UNDERSTANDING

A place of encounter, enrichment and dialogue

The Intermediate Body presents immense opportunities for those well-schooled in their own traditions to dialogue and share with one another. Members of IBs have indicated that they would value more theological discussion.⁶⁴ This dialogue is within the context of prayer and spiritual reflection together.

The valuing of one another and the preparedness to learn from one another has become known latterly as “Receptive Ecumenism”:

“The basic principle of Receptive Ecumenism is that considerable further ecumenical progress is indeed possible but only if each of the traditions, both singly and jointly, makes a clear, programmatic shift from prioritising the question, “What do our various others first need to learn from us?” to asking instead, “What do we need to learn and what can we learn – or receive – with integrity from our others?”⁶⁵

This was itself a development of the mutual enrichment envisaged in *Ut Unum Sint*:

“Dialogue cannot take place merely on a horizontal level, being restricted to meetings, exchanges of points of view or even the sharing of gifts proper to each Community. It has also a primarily vertical thrust, directed towards the One who, as the Redeemer of the world and the Lord of history, is himself our Reconciliation. This vertical aspect of dialogue lies in our acknowledgment, jointly and to each other, that we are men and women who have sinned. It is precisely this acknowledgment which creates in brothers and sisters living in Communities not in full communion with one another that interior space where Christ, the source of the Church's unity, can effectively act, with all the power of his Spirit, the Paraclete.”⁶⁶

There comes a stage in the life of Church Leaders in particular that they are more ministering to than being ministered to, more giving than receiving (more preaching than preached against): the inter-relationships within an IB may help to counteract this, and may be for the Leaders a source of refreshment and renewal.

A resource for enrichment, understanding and training

The IB has a role to encourage understanding, to provide training and to disseminate information about ecumenical developments internationally and nationally. Though not regarded as a high priority by most CEOs, clearly for a few this is a very important element of their work.

There are several facets: teaching and learning delivered ecumenically, teaching and learning about ecumenism, teaching and learning about “other” traditions.

For CEOs themselves, there is the need to be able to stand inside a variety of traditions and to empathise with them, knowing where the sensitivities are that may in fact be insights and enrichment for others.

⁶⁴ Appendix B7 Changes in the Scope of Intermediate Bodies

⁶⁵ Murray, P. Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning: Receiving Gifts for Our Needs. *Louvain Studies* 33 (2008) 30-45

⁶⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) #35

A lack of familiarity with inter-church dialogues has been noted –ARCIC, Anglican-Methodist Covenant, or foundational documents such as *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. If the IB is not the repository of that knowledge and familiarity, who is?

There may be creative partnerships between IBs and Regional Training Partnerships, to enable both learning about ecumenical matters and learning ecumenically.

A practical way, already happening in some places, to make better use of ecumenical guests at Synods and Councils, since to see ourselves as others see us can be informative.⁶⁷

REFLECTIONS

Great opportunities are presented to the intermediate level for dialogue and the development of mutual understanding. Being “between the local and the national” those involved in intermediate ecumenical life have the opportunity of influencing national (and international) thinking, since as Church Leaders they are actively involved in bi- and tri-lateral dialogues both nationally and internationally. Equally, they have the opportunity to stimulate and influence conversations locally, and to draw insights from them. The IB needs to give time and resource to enable these processes to happen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Churches Together in England

#27 It is recommended that the Churches Theology and Unity Group reviews its purpose and agenda, so as to reflect the theological insights and concerns of IBs and to resource theological dialogue and reflection within IBs.

#28 It is recommended that CTE improves its resourcing and continuing theological development of CEOs.

Intermediate Bodies

#29 It is recommended that IBs develop opportunities for theological dialogue and reflection among their member Churches.

#30 It is recommended that IBs work with Regional Training Partnerships to enable both learning about ecumenical matters and learning ecumenically.

⁶⁷ Mentioned by the Preliminary Report of the Review of Churches Together in Surrey (November 2010)

16 CONNECTING WITH THE WIDER OIKOUMENE

Nationally

Reviewing the work of Churches Together in England, the General Secretary reported to the Enabling Group in 2010:

“We need to consider how we relate to wider ecumenism in Britain and the rest of the world. The question of what and how we could learn from African and Asian Councils of Churches was raised at the consultation, as were relations with CTBI, CEC, Kirchentag and the WCC. It is not a dimension of ecumenism that we have given much attention to recently, but it is one to which we should attend, if only to work out how we can avoid duplication and needless expense.”⁶⁸

The Intermediate Body

The IBs are not a separate denominational stream. They are not Councils of local Councils of Churches on the one hand, or on the other hand sub-branches of national or international ecumenical bodies. They are not the haven of the disaffected or an enclave of ecumenical enthusiasts. They are places where Churches come together, and those Churches themselves have a world-wide presence and have international networks and links.

With these caveats, the IB may have a role in connecting with other ecumenical bodies, though this was noted by only one or two CEOs. “Oikoumene” has the connotation of the world-wide church; and it has the connotation of the whole world. The “ecumenical vision” is not to be lost, be it the vision of the one Church of Jesus Christ, or concern for the whole inhabited world and its well-being and sustainability.

The IB may benefit from receiving resources and insights from the Bodies in Association of Churches Together in England and from other local interest groups, as well as from the two agencies which have traditionally related to IBs through their own regional structures - CAFOD and Christian Aid.

REFLECTIONS

Reservations about, and tiredness with, international structures of Churches coming together should not cloud the ecumenical vision or detract for places and movements which retain the vision – Taizé, Kirchentag, Focolare, for example; and IBs would do well to draw upon their resources and enthusiasm, without losing their focus that they are Churches relating to one another.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#31 It is recommended that IBs have regard to the wider ecumenical family and that IBs are kept aware of their member Churches’ international links and partnerships.

Churches Together in England

#32 It is recommended that CTE continues to build networks between international and national movements, Bodies in Association, and the IBs; and that the work of CTE’s European Officer is known in the IBs.

⁶⁸ Where to from here? Reviewing CTE, A paper for the Enabling Group, March 2010 CTE London

17 THE COUNTY ECUMENICAL OFFICER

County Ecumenical Officers – Various terms, various conditions

Virtually all the IBs have a designated officer, most commonly called the “County Ecumenical Officer”; in 9 instances the officer is called “County Ecumenical Development Officer”. Other titles used are County Ecumenical Officer and Social Responsibility Development Officer, County Ecumenical Missioner, County Ecumenical Secretary, Ecumenical Dean, Ecumenical Development Officer, Ecumenical Facilitator, Ecumenical Mission Officer, Ecumenical Moderator, and Mission and Unity Coordinator. The name-changes indicate a desire to move from the maintenance of the status quo, to more proactive work that recognises the link between unity and mission.

The remunerated hours of the County Ecumenical Officers (CEO) are:⁶⁹

- 4 1 day
- 8 2 days
- 15 2.5 days
- 3 3 days
- 5 4 days
- 5 Full time
- 5 voluntary

In one IB, the Anglican Denominational Officer has the role of CEO; in another a team of Denominational Officers fulfil the role collectively.

With a few exceptions, IBs have remained committed to having CEOs; their funding for them has remained in place, and any denominations’ reductions in funding have been much the same as reductions for other work.⁷⁰

Yet funding is always a concern, and the prevailing culture is one of objectifiable outcomes. CEOs need to be able to give a good account of themselves, and to be able to show where expectations have been met, and equally where expectations are unrealistic.

Of CEOs responding to the recent Survey, 8 felt they were very well treated by their IB, 9 well, 10 OK; 8 felt they were treated badly, and one very badly.

The key role of CEOs

The role of CEO is key to the well-being of the IB. Different IBs expect different things. CEOs are the “face” of the IB, and all need a mixed set of skills. Though in theory the facilitator of others, the CEO in reality is the agent of the IB, the implementer of its policies and priorities, the main conduit of communication and the custodian of its public profile.

Crucial Relationships

The CEOs must have a healthy relationship with Church Leaders. The CEO is not a Church Leader, but has a broad and useful oversight of the whole area served by the IB and in this sense shares *episcopate* with the Leaders. The CEO will be consulted by stakeholders, but is not *per se* the spokesperson of the Church

⁶⁹ Appendix B14 Being a County Ecumenical Officer

⁷⁰ Appendix B15 Funding the Intermediate Bodies

Leaders. CEOs often feel frustrated by the lack of priority that Leaders give to ecumenical work or relationships; Church Leaders may have mixed feelings about CEOs' enthusiasms. The CEO-Leader relationship is one which benefits from the sensitive and openness of all concerned; and sometimes it comes down - painfully - to "personalities".

Much depends on the relationship between the CEO and Denominational Officers. Some CEOs record frustration that DEO posts go unfilled, or that DEOs are not able to give the time to the IB that is hoped for; some CEOs are not team players and do not co-ordinate the DEOs as best they could.

Other necessary characteristics

- Commitment to the mission and unity of the Church
- Theological awareness
- Capacity to interpret one to another, and to represent those absent from the conversation
- Awareness of those outside the mainstream ecumenical movement
- Mission development skills
- Education and training skills
- Reflective and analytical skills
- Mediation skills
- Facilitation skills
- Communications and IT fluency
- Organisational and secretarial competence
- Flexibility in dealing with a wide range of people with different needs, roles, seniorities and responsibilities

Because of the need to be committed to the mission and unity of the Church, and with the role of interpreter, and indeed arbiter, the theological competence of the CEO is an important area to be kept under review. If the CEO does not have the theological understanding of ecumenical relations, who has? Even in the much-vaunted "post-denominational" age, sensitivities and nuances - as well as gifts - need to be acknowledged and honoured in the field of reconciliation tended by the CEO.

The support of CEOs

The responsibility for the CEO rests primarily on the IB. Employment and remuneration issues are addressed in detail in Appendix C3. What is clear from comments is that work reviews and appraisals are not taking place as they might, and that line-management is weak, not helpful if the CEO is the agent of the IB and if the IB's expectations are unrealistic.

CEOs also look for support from Churches Together in England. Virtually all CEOs speak highly of the support they receive, and particularly cite the personal support from the CTE staff.⁷¹ They ask for more "professional mentoring" and perhaps this should be read alongside their concern about line-management within the IB itself.

Peer-mentoring is another possibility, and with this comes the use of and priority given to regional meetings of CEOs.

⁷¹ Appendix B16 How CEOs rate CTE

REFLECTIONS

In virtually all IBs the CEO is the lynch-pin, yet the wide variety of CEOs is equalled only by the wide variety for employment practice, from the generous to the exploitative. CEOs have multifarious sets of skills, and their remuneration needs to reflect this. But CEOs depend on, need and benefit from, the Denominational Ecumenical Officers (where they exist), and undoubtedly a team-work approach works best.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate Bodies

#33 It is recommended that IBs consider the various employment options and issues outlined in Appendix C3.

#34 It is recommended that CEOs' skills and responsibilities are properly recognised and remunerated, bearing in mind the full benefit package of those with whom comparisons are made, not solely the headline rate of pay.

#35 It is recommended that budgets include provision for CEOs' training and professional development.

#36 It is recommended that good line-management is in place to ensure a proper understanding of what is expected and what is reasonable.

Churches Together in England

#37 It is recommended that CTE reviews

- the training needs of CEOs bearing in mind the changing agenda of IBs.
- the training methods of CEOs, including greater use of IT, for example in the dissemination of material and outcomes of training courses and consultations.
- the support of CEOs, including peer-mentoring and more frequent regional meetings.

#38 It is recommended that CTE considers how it can or should help CEOs in the regularisation of their terms and conditions.

18 NATIONAL SUPPORT AND RELATIONSHIPS

Churches Together in England

The discussion paper presented by CTE to its Member Churches in 2009⁷² regarded Priority 1 as the support of local and intermediate ecumenism, the “ecumenical frontier”. “We support that”, said the paper,

- By the work of two full-time Field Officers, one for the north and midlands, one for the south and west. They support ... the intermediate officers, making regular visits to meetings, providing training courses, and offering expertise and advice.
- By the work of a half-time Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs Officer who works primarily with the Black Majority Churches.
- By the work of other staff members who are encouraged to accept speaking and training opportunities across the county.
- By the provision of appropriate resources, both in paper and electronic form.

Virtually all CEOs speak highly of the support they receive from CTE.⁷³ Particular areas where additional support would be welcome were identified as Professional Mentoring, Regional Issues (Local Strategic Partnerships and Theology. “Professional mentoring” may reflect the CEOs’ awareness of their need to be accountable and “more professional” in an age of scrutiny; “Regional Issues” (or “Secular issues”) and “Theology” reflect the changes hoped for by members of IBs.

Communications from CTE (CTe-news) were praised in the recent Survey, though there is always the need for more good news stories both within CTE’s channels and more widely in church media. The CTE website has been found hard to navigate, and the welcome and essential information it contains hard to find.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Churches Together in England

#39 With regard to other networks and forms of ecumenism, it is recommended CTE considers how to continue to build relationships, make them known and model them for intermediate and local ecumenical life.

- #40 With regard to communications, it is recommended that CTE considers:
- how can the website, and especially its navigation, be improved?
 - how can its communications give more profile to CTE itself, its personnel, work and the breadth of its interests and networks?

Member Churches

a It is recommended that the Member Churches continue to affirm the significance of Intermediate Bodies, to resource their work, and to appoint and support denominational ecumenical officers of standing both nationally and at intermediate level.

#42 It is recommended that the Member Churches work with the Churches Theology and Unity Group to encourage and facilitate the study and reception of dialogues by Intermediate Bodies.

⁷² *A strategy for Churches Together in England* December 2009 CTE

⁷³ Appendix B16 How CEOs rate CTE

#43 It is recommended that the Member Churches ensure ecumenical learning in ministerial formation, and that familiarisation with the expectations and opportunities of Intermediate Bodies is part of the induction of emerging and new Leaders.

19 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Churches Together in England

London

#1 In the light of the complexity of the London situation, not addressed in this Review, we recommend that CTE discusses with the IBs for London and the London Churches Group for Social Action, and their member Churches, how their current work may be further enhanced and how the needs of West London may be addressed ecumenically. (Chapter 4)

Governance, Structure and Membership

#4 We recommend that CTE offers support and resources for IBs in seeking appropriate governance structures. (Chapter 6)

#21 We recommend that CTE continues to support the inter-faith agenda and the inter-change of resources, insights and expertise between the local, intermediate and national. (Chapter 13)

#24 We recommend that CTE, in developing criteria and procedures for membership of CTE, provides resources to assist IBs review their own criteria and procedures. (Chapter 14)

#25 We recommend that CTE continues to value and work with Churches not currently in membership, to ensure the broadest formal or informal representation of the whole Christian community in England. (Chapter 14)

#26 We recommend that staff within CTE with particular knowledge and experience of Churches not currently in membership continue to develop links between them and CTE and between them and IBs. (Chapter 14)

#39 With regard to other networks and forms of ecumenism, we recommend CTE considers how to continue to build relationships, make them known and model them for intermediate and local ecumenical life. (Chapter 18)

Information Technology and Communications

#6 We recommend that CTE in association with CTBI continues to encourage and resource the use of IT by IBs. (Chapter 7)

#40 With regard to communications, we recommend that CTE considers:

- how can the website, and especially its navigation, be improved?
- how can its communications give more profile to CTE itself, its personnel, work and the breadth of its interests and networks? (Chapter 18)

Churches Group for Local Unity

#8 We recommend that the Churches Group for Local Unity (CGLU) provides resources for new models of churches working together locally, and addresses the challenge for local churches of moving from a “Council of Churches” to “Churches Together” way of working. (Chapter 8)

#10 We recommend that CGLU, in conjunction with the Enabling Group, reconsiders how best to resource and support LEPs, while developing an agenda which reflects and resources the breadth and structures of local ecumenical life and mission. (Chapter 9)

#11 We recommend that CGLU revises its advice on the function, extent and methodology of reviews of LEPs, with a view to limiting the reviews to what are the essential roles of the Sponsoring Body, what rightly belongs to the participating churches, and what it is reasonable to expect of the LEPs. (Chapter 9)

#17 We recommend that consideration is given to the relationship between CGLU and other Co-ordinating Groups of CTE, including the Group for Evangelisation, Church in New Housing Areas, and the Spirituality Group. (Chapter 11)

Churches Theology and Unity Group

#27 We recommend that the Churches Theology and Unity Group reviews its purpose and agenda, so as to reflect the theological insights and concerns of IBs and to resource theological dialogue and reflection within IBs. (Chapter 15)

Social issues, wider ecumenism

#19 We recommend that CTE strengthens the support given to IBs in engaging with social issues and in developing the expertise of CEOs, through the Field Officers and other staff, especially in the light of the uncertain future of Regional Faith Forums. (Chapter 12)

#32 We recommend that CTE continues to build networks between international and national movements, Bodies in Association, and the IBs; and that the work of CTE's European Officer is known in the IBs. (Chapter 16)

County Ecumenical Officers

#28 We recommend that CTE improves its resourcing and continuing theological development of CEOs. (Chapter 15)

#37 We recommend that CTE reviews

- the training needs of CEOs bearing in mind the changing agenda of IBs.
- the training methods of CEOs, including greater use of IT, for example in the dissemination of material and outcomes of training courses and consultations.
- the support of CEOs, including peer-mentoring and more frequent regional meetings. (Chapter 17)

#38 We recommend that CTE considers how it can or should help CEOs in the regularisation of their terms and conditions. (Chapter 17)

Recommendations to Intermediate Bodies

Planning, Governance and Membership

#2 We recommend that IBs develop their work in a cycle of reflecting on vision and purpose, identifying priorities, planning and acting on reasonable and achievable objectives, agreed with the County Ecumenical Officer, in order to meet more effectively the needs of their member Churches. (Chapter 5)

#3 We recommend that IBs adopt clear governance structures which affirm and facilitate the centrality of relationship and encourage a mission focus. (Chapter 6)

#22 We recommend that IBs value and work with Churches not currently in membership, to ensure the broadest formal or informal representation of the whole Christian community in their area. (Chapter 14)

#23 We recommend that IBs review their criteria and procedures for membership, being aware of the implications that a Church's membership of the IB may have upon that Church's expectation of membership of other bodies, including CTE. (Chapter 14)

Communications and Information Technology

#5 We recommend that IBs ensure full use is made of IT through email, newsletters and websites which are kept up-to-date, and are prepared to include IT development within their budgets. (Chapter 7)

Support for the whole breadth of local ecumenical life

#7 We recommend that IBs support and resource a variety of models of churches working together locally, and encourage the transition from Councils of Churches to “Churches Together” as local churches collaborate in the whole range of their activity rather than on a solely “ecumenical” agenda. (Chapter 8)

#9 We recommend that IBs reassess their role and function as Sponsoring Bodies by differentiating clearly between the responsibilities of the Sponsoring Body and those of the Churches participating in an LEP. (Chapter 9)

#16 We recommend that IBs encourage local CT groups to explore new ways of sharing in mission. (Chapter 11)

Church Leaders

#13 We recommend that IBs ensure their agenda and working arrangements are consonant with the needs of Church Leaders. (Chapter 10)

#14 We recommend that there is proper consultation between Leaders and others representing their denominations. (Chapter 10)

#15 We recommend that IBs take steps to welcome new Leaders and to include them in Leaders’ Covenants where they exist. (Chapter 10)

Social issues, inter-faith and wider ecumenism

#18 We recommend that IBs give priority to their engagement with social issues, responding positively to the opportunities for cooperation with the wider Christian community, and for working in partnership with other bodies. (Chapter 12)

#20 We recommend that IBs facilitate ecumenical relating to other faith communities, and encourage the member Churches to share resources and personnel. (Chapter 13)

#31 We recommend that IBs have regard to the wider ecumenical family and that IBs are kept aware of their member Churches’ international links and partnerships. (Chapter 16)

Theological Reflection

#29 We recommend that IBs develop opportunities for theological dialogue and reflection among their member Churches. (Chapter 15)

#30 We recommend that IBs work with Regional Training Partnerships to enable both learning about ecumenical matters and learning ecumenically. (Chapter 15)

County Ecumenical Officers

#33 We recommend that IBs consider the various employment options and issues outlined in Appendix C3. (Chapter 17)

#34 We recommend that CEOs’ skills and responsibilities are properly recognised and remunerated, bearing in mind the full benefit package of those with whom comparisons are made, not solely the headline rate of pay. (Chapter 17)

#35 We recommend that budgets include provision for CEOs’ training and professional development. (Chapter 17)

#36 We recommend that good line-management is in place to ensure a proper understanding of what is expected and what is reasonable. (Chapter 17)

Recommendations to the Member Churches

Commitment to Intermediate Ecumenical Life

#12 We recommend that member Churches of IBs encourage their leaders to participate in the appropriate meetings and structures of the IB, and that denominations nationally make the IBs' significance and role in the Church's mission part of the formation and induction of potential and new Leaders. (Chapter 10)

#41 We recommend that the Member Churches continue to affirm the significance of IBs, to resource their work, and to appoint and support denominational ecumenical officers of standing both nationally and at intermediate level. (Chapter 18)

Training and Induction

#43 We recommend that the Member Churches ensure ecumenical learning in ministerial formation, and that familiarisation with the expectations and opportunities of IBs is part of the induction of emerging and new Leaders. (Chapter 18)

Dialogues

#42 We recommend that the Member Churches work with the Churches Theology and Unity Group to encourage and facilitate the study and reception of dialogues by IBs. (Chapter 18)

APPENDICES

The Intermediate Bodies

- A1 Intermediate Bodies and County Ecumenical Officers
- A2 Intermediate Body Websites
- A3 The Changing Scene
- A4 IBs' Constitutions
- A5 The Purposes of Intermediate Bodies - from the CEOs' Consultation May 2011

Survey Results

- B1 About Intermediate Bodies
- B2 Your personal involvement in Intermediate Bodies
- B3 The work of the Intermediate body
- B4 A "no longer needed luxury"
- B5 The structure of the Intermediate Body
- B6 Members' views of the intermediate body
- B7 Changes in the scope
- B8 Activities of IBs, Millennium, Secular issues
- B9 Local Churches Together Grouping Feed-back
- B10 Local Ecumenical Partnership Reviews – CEOs' Comments
- B11 Local Ecumenical Partnership Feed-back
- B12 Inter-faith on the Agenda
- B13 Broadening the Membership
- B14 Being a County Ecumenical Officer
- B15 Funding the Intermediate Bodies
- B16 How CEOs rate CTE

Guidelines

- C1 Reviewing Local Ecumenical Partnerships
- C2 Membership Criteria
- C3 The employment of CEOs – remuneration, terms, conditions, models of who is the employer

Review Methods

- D1 Methods, sources and papers

Where	Intermediate Body	Remunerated days of week "2.5 days" = half-time
Bedfordshire	Churches Together in Bedfordshire	1 day
Berkshire	Churches Together in Berkshire	2.5 days
Birmingham	Birmingham Churches Together	4 days + 1 as Regional Officer
Black Country	Black Country Churches Engaged	2.5 days combined with Staffordshire
Bristol	Churches Together in Greater Bristol	No post, F-t SRO
Buckinghamshire	Churches Together in Buckinghamshire	2.5 days
Cambridgeshire	Cambridgeshire Ecumenical Council	2.5 days
Cheshire	Churches Together in Cheshire	2 days
Cornwall	Churches Together in Cornwall	1 day
Cumbria	Churches Together in Cumbria	2.5 days
Derbyshire	Churches Together in Derbyshire	2.5 days
Devon	Churches Together in Devon	2.5 days
Dorset	Churches Together in Dorset	2.5 days
Durham	see North East Christian Churches Together	see North East
Essex	Churches Together in Essex and East London	2 days
Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Churches Together	2 days
Guernsey	Churches Together in Guernsey	voluntary
Hampshire & Isle of Wight	Churches Together in Hampshire & the Isle of Wight	under review
Herefordshire	Churches Together in Herefordshire	1 day
Hertfordshire	Churches Together in Hertfordshire	3 days
Isle of Man	Churches Together in Man	voluntary
Jersey	Christians Together in Jersey	voluntary
Kent	Churches Together in Kent	2 days
Lancashire	Churches Together in Lancashire	Full time
Leicestershire	Churches Together in Leicestershire	3 days
Lincolnshire	Churches Together in All Lincolnshire	4 days
London - North Thames	Churches Together North Thames	2.5 days
London - South London	Churches Together in South London	2.5 days
London - West	Churches Together in West London	disbanded
Manchester	Greater Manchester Churches Together	Full time
Merseyside	Churches Together in the Merseyside Region	Full time
Milton Keynes	Mission Partnership of MK Christian Council	Full time
Newcastle	see North East Christian Churches Together	see North East
Norfolk	Norfolk and Waveney Churches Together	1 day
North East	North East Christian Churches Together	A group of Denominational Officers
Northamptonshire	see Shire and Soke	see Shire & Soke
Nottinghamshire	Churches Together in Nottinghamshire	under review
Oxfordshire	Churches Together in Oxfordshire	2 days
Peterborough	see Shire and Soke	see Shire & Soke
Shire and Soke	Churches Together in Northants & Peterborough	3 days
Shropshire	Churches Together in Shropshire	2.5 days
Somerset	Churches Together in Somerset	2.5 days
Staffordshire & Stoke	Churches Linked Across Staffs & Potteries CLASP	see Black Country
Suffolk	Churches Together in Suffolk	2 days
Surrey	Churches Together in Surrey	4 days
Sussex	Churches Together in Sussex	2.5 days
Swindon	Swindon Churches Together	was 2.5 days; under review
Telford	Telford Christian Council	Full time
Warwickshire	Churches Together in Coventry and Warwickshire	2 days
Wiltshire	Wiltshire Churches Together	2.5 days
Worcestershire	Churches Together in Worcestershire	Led by Anglican Ecumenical Officer
Yorkshire - East Yorkshire	Kingston 'on Hull & East Yorks Churches Together	under review
Yorkshire - North York Moors	North York Moors Churches Together	voluntary
Yorkshire - South Yorkshire	Churches Together in South Yorkshire (CTSY)	
Yorkshire - Vale of York	ENVOY - Ecumenical Network in the Vale of York	voluntary
Yorkshire - West Yorkshire	West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC)	4 days

Intermediate Body	Website
Churches Together in Berkshire	www.just1.org.uk/churchestogetherberkshire
Birmingham Churches Together	www.birminghamchurches.org.uk
Black Country Churches Engaged	www.bcce.org.uk/welcome.htm
Churches Together in Cheshire	www.cheshire-churches-together.org.uk
Churches Together in Cumbria	www.churchestogethercumbria.co.uk
Churches Together in Derbyshire	www.churchestogetherderbyshire.org.uk
Churches Together in Devon	www.churchestogetherdevon.co.uk
Churches Together in Dorset	www.ctdorset.org.uk
Churches Together in Essex and East London	www.churchesinessex.com
Gloucestershire Churches Together	www.gloucestershirechurchestogether.org.uk
Churches Together in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight	www.cthi.org.uk
Churches Together in Hertfordshire	www.ctherts.org.uk
Christians Together in Jersey	www.ctj.org.je
Churches Together in Kent	www.ctkent.org.uk
Churches Together in Lancashire	www.ctlancashire.org.uk
Churches Together in Leicestershire	www.churchestogetherinleicestershire.co.uk
Churches Together in All Lincolnshire	www.ctal.org.uk
Churches Together North Thames	www.ctnt.org.uk
Churches Together in South London	www.ctslondon.org.uk
Greater Manchester Churches Together	www.gmct.org.uk
Churches Together in the Merseyside Region	http://ctmr.btck.co.uk
Milton Keynes Christian Council	www.missionpartnership.talktalk.net/
Norfolk and Waveney Churches Together	www.nwct.org.uk
North East Christian Churches Together	www.northeastchurches.org.uk
Churches Together in Nottinghamshire	www.churchestogethernottinghamshire.org.uk
Churches Together in Northamptonshire and Peterborough	www.shireandsoke.org.uk
Churches Together in Oxfordshire	www.communigate.co.uk/oxford/churchinoxon
Churches Together in Shropshire	www.chtogshropshire.co.uk
Churches Together in Somerset	www.sctog.org.uk
Churches Linked Across Staffordshire & the Potteries (CLASP)	www.clasptogether.org.uk
Churches Together in Suffolk	www.ctsuffolk.org.uk/
Churches Together in Surrey	www.ctsurrey.org.uk
Churches Together in Sussex	www.gilco.org.uk/together
Swindon Churches Together	www.swindonchurches.org
Telford Christian Council	www.telfordchristiancouncil.co.uk/
West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC)	www.wyec.co.uk
Churches Together in Coventry and Warwickshire	sites.google.com/site/churchestogethercovandwar/home
Wiltshire Churches Together	www.wiltshirechurches.net

Extracts from three recent IB Reviews describe well the changes in society and the Churches alluded to in Chapter 5:

Surrey (2010)

- Continued pressures on the resources of membership, ministry and finance in the traditional ecumenical partners.
- The continuing growth of independent churches and congregations.
- The growth and expansion of Christian Voluntary Organisations, frequently with a specific focus, most commonly children and young people.
- The arrival of a slowly increasing number of congregations from other world church traditions and of congregations who may be part of a denomination but worship in their own language.
- The greatly increased profile of inter-faith relationships post 9/11, the role of the Regional Faiths Forum.
- The evolving relationships between faith organisations and statutory agencies particularly through partnership working.
- The need for charity registration and revised constitutions.

Milton Keynes (2008)

- The Church in extended transition > Questions are being asked about traditional and modernist ways of being church, and post-Christendom models are being explored. Overall in the UK church attendance is in decline. There is also evidence to show that Christians are more mobile in their church allegiance. Many people have rejected 'religion' in favour of 'spirituality'. The church can be perceived as exclusive, irrelevant and narrow. Increasingly the wider church is experimenting with new expressions of church community.
- A Wider Constituency of Churches in MK > Since the MK Churches Council first came into existence, many other churches, representing a wide range of traditions and ethnicity, have been established in MK. Many of these churches express the desire to be partners with us in mission without having to 'buy in' to Mission Partnership or LEP structures.
- Existing national ecumenical structures > Ecumenical life in MK was created at a time of great ecumenical excitement at a national level. Since then, enthusiasm at national level for structural unity has waned, funding for ecumenical posts has diminished, and the search for unity, if a priority at all, is understood in other ways.
- The location of power within the denominations > legislation and charity registration require that the denominations be clear about their responsibilities and lines of accountability.

Lancashire (2008)

- As well as technological change with its opportunities for new ways of communication and dangers of information overload, we now live in a 'post Christian', 'post denominational' society where there is a sharper debate between secularists and faith communities. There is fear and hostility towards the stranger and lack of peace in our institutions.
- The Churches themselves are changing, on the one hand congregations are older and smaller, on the other hand there is increasing variety in ethnic churches, especially with new immigration from the Eastern Europe accession countries.
- Denominations *per se* are largely irrelevant to young people and 'ecumenical' has become a bit of a 'dirty word', unattractive and off-putting.

Bedfordshire (2010)

to advance the Christian Religion and Education by

- (i) participating in the life and work of Churches Together in England (CTE) as an intermediate body ;
- (ii) sponsoring Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEP);
- (iii) encouraging those bodies and individuals in the Churches who share a similar remit or concern to work together;
- (iv) taking any further actions which may encourage the development of the ecumenical agenda.

be a visible sign of the Churches' commitment to one another and to assist the Churches in the visible expression of Christian unity

affirm, support and service local ecumenism, whether it be formal or informal, structured or unstructured and in particular to encourage the formation and affiliation of local Churches Together groups.

act as Sponsoring Body for present and future Local Ecumenical Partnerships, ensuring for them the provision of appropriate ongoing advice and support and proper periodic review.

encourage shared worship and prayer, learning, service, and evangelism, with each church sharing with others the treasures of its tradition.

encourage full and early ecumenical consultation so that the churches may use resources, including buildings and deployment of personnel, with sensitivity and in the interest of good stewardship.

provide a meeting point for Church Leaders and representatives within its area.

keep the churches informed about ecumenical initiatives within Bedfordshire, Luton and beyond, in particular those promoted by Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

encourage the fostering of good relations with other faith communities.

enable churches to respond to the needs and opportunities of society, to assist them in their relations with local government, and other statutory, voluntary and private bodies, and, where appropriate, make representations on behalf of the Churches, either independently or with others.

Christian Churches in Essex and East London (2009)

To be a visible sign of the churches' commitment to one another, in obedience to Our Lord's prayer "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you: may they also be one in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me". (John 17.21) (New International Version);

To enable the churches to develop growing and changing relationships, as pilgrims together, in the living and sharing of the gospel, and to facilitate further steps towards fuller unity of the churches, including consideration of theological and practical questions, especially those arising from local ecumenical partnerships;

To work together in mission and evangelism;

To affirm, support and serve local ecumenism in Essex and East London, whether it be formal or informal, structured or unstructured; representing the local concerns at the intermediate and, where appropriate, at national level;

To promote the theological reflection necessary to support the ecumenical movement and to enable continuing discussion of Faith and Order issues, especially of the nature and purpose and unity of the Church in the light of its mission;

To encourage shared worship and prayer, learning, service and evangelism, with each church sharing with others the treasures of its tradition;

To enable the churches to respond to the needs of society at all levels in Essex and East London, to explore church and society issues, and, when appropriate, to make approaches to secular authorities independently or with others;

To enable the churches, as they grow together in unity, to seek a common mind and to share decision-making in common;

To foster inter faith discussion, awareness and consultation and to promote joint action, where appropriate, amongst the faith communities of Essex and East London.

To act as sponsoring body for all existing Local Ecumenical Partnerships (as defined by Churches Together in England) in the area by supporting, advising and monitoring those partnerships as required by their own constitutions. This normally includes: periodic ecumenical reviews; liaising with each Local Ecumenical Partnership and denominational authority on staff changes; making available training on ecumenical matters; and maintaining close contact with Churches Together in England;

To seek to ensure that the departments, boards and committees of the churches at the intermediate level of the churches work together as closely as possible;

Surrey (2008)

(To be a visible sign of the churches' commitment to one another, in obedience to our Lord's prayer "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you: may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me". (John 17.21) (New International Version)

To affirm, support and service local ecumenism *in Surrey and North East Hampshire* whether it be formal or informal, structured or unstructured; representing the local concerns at the intermediate and, where appropriate, at national level.

To promote the theological reflection necessary to support the ecumenical movement and to enable continuing discussion of Faith and Order issues, especially of the nature and purpose and unity of the Church in the light of its mission.

To encourage shared worship and prayer, learning, service and evangelism, with each church sharing with others the treasures of its tradition.

To enable the churches to develop growing and changing relationships, as pilgrims together, in the living and sharing of the gospel, and to facilitate further steps towards fuller unity of the churches, including consideration of theological and practical questions, especially those arising from local ecumenical partnerships.

To enable the churches, as they grow together in unity, to seek a common mind and to share decision-making in common.

To enable the churches to respond to the needs of society at all levels in *Surrey and North East Hampshire*, to explore church and society issues, and, when appropriate, to make approaches to secular authorities independently or with others.

To seek to ensure that the departments, boards and committees of the churches at the intermediate level of the churches work together as closely as possible.

To appoint and support full-time or part-time ecumenical officers or their equivalents.

To encourage the review of ecclesiastical boundaries *of Surrey and North East Hampshire* where this promotes the shared mission of the churches.

At their Annual Consultation in May 2011 County Ecumenical Officers were asked to consider what they thought might be the purposes of an Intermediate Body, if they were starting with a blank sheet of paper, and thinking not of their own situation but of the general principles of Intermediate Ecumenism.

They were then asked to reflect on the actual priorities of their own Intermediate Bodies.

About 20 CEOs participated in the exercise ("about" because not all completed all parts).

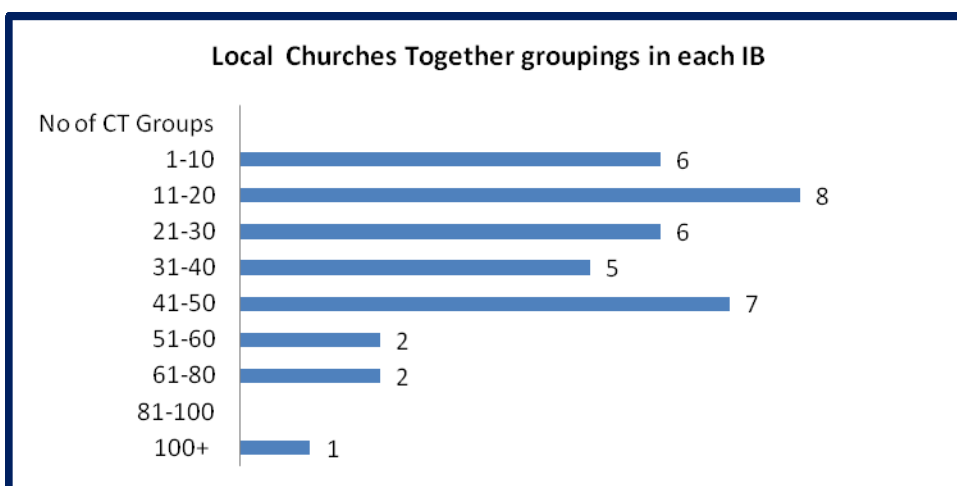
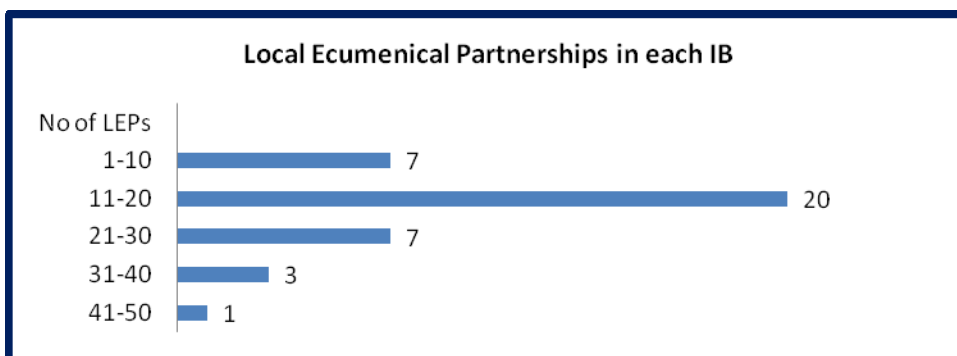
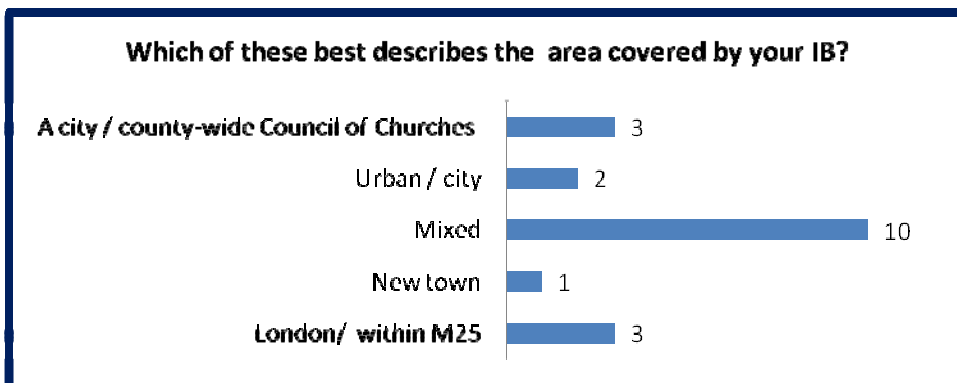
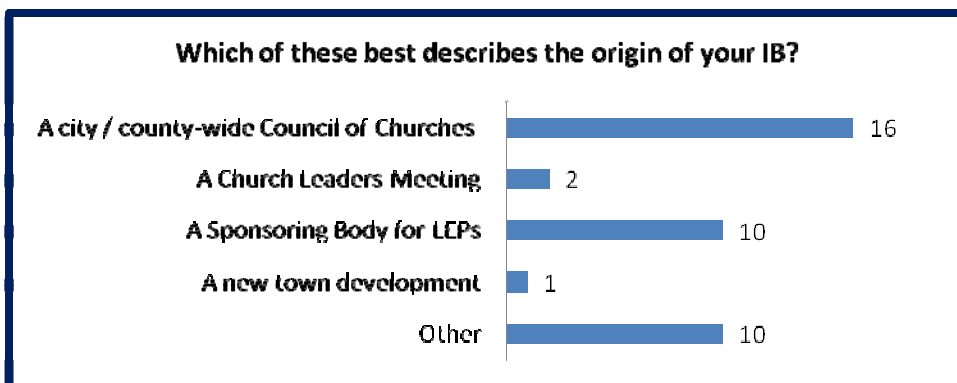
Ideal ranking	PURPOSES OF INTERMEDIATE BODIES	Actual Prioritisation
1	Sign and symbol of unity	5
1	A forum for strategic planning	6
3	Communications /network	1
4	Local endeavour and CT groups	2
5	Church leaders relationships and meetings	3
6	Agency of relating to government and statutory bodies	7
7	Accountability to one another	9
8	Sponsoring Body	4
9	Accepting ecumenical partners	8
10	Written in - Encounter, enrichment and understanding	10

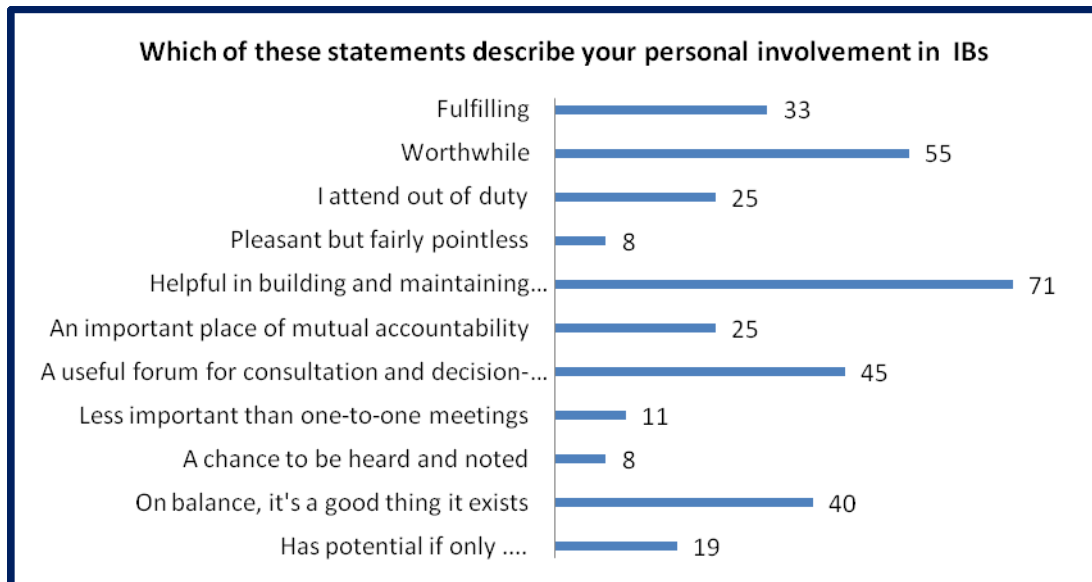
* Highest figures denote most important purpose / highest priority .

How are the priorities of your Intermediate Body, identified above, addressed?

CEOs were then asked to say how the actual priorities identified above were addressed by their IBs

17 (incl 3 shared with DEOs and Churches)	Largely delegated to me to implement on behalf of the Churches.
4 (incl 2 jointly with delegated to me) 3 more said they would share IF there were DEOs to share with.	Largely undertaken by the Denominational Ecumenical Officers and me combined.
2 (incl 1 jointly with DEOs and delegated)	Largely undertaken by the Churches coordinated by me





- We can tend to go round in circles year after year. It's a little hard to know how to break out of this.
- My role has become very demanding. I feel I am holding it altogether.
- Enables churches to speak with one voice, something which some other bodies find uncomfortable.
- My IB is wonderful because it is made up of such good people who have ideas of their own and are prepared to listen. Together we have worked out our direction and purpose - mainly one which sees the churches as being all about social action and a voice for the marginalised.
- Can be frustrating.
- Ecumenical work demonstrates our strength in diversity.
- Our IB is going through a difficult phase and its structure and terms of reference are being removed. I participate in the Presidents' Meetings only.
- Good source of ecumenical information and its dissemination.
- There are various other ecumenical fora not least in the Christian social action agencies which are naturally ecumenical (and wider) as well as other bodies set up by the diocese with an ecumenical dimension.
- Some churches only give lip-service.
- Needs a paid member of staff.
- They were prepared to listen to others.
- Too many CLs unwilling to give Ecumenism priority.
- It works well because it has a clear role in [the city].

Please indicate the extent to which the items listed feature in the work of your IB.-

	Always a major part	Always touched on	Often	Seldom	Never	As needed
A time of worship together	40	38	10	13	2	11
Administration & Finance	25	48	28	8	3	6
Arranging events	25	27	29	19	2	12
Chaplaincies	6	17	29	29	12	21
Evangelisation	3	15	29	45	6	13
Inter-faith	4	6	33	44	16	12
Local / regional "secular" issues	9	24	43	26	3	10
Local Ecumenical Partnerships	31	33	26	13	2	6
Local Churches Together groups	27	36	25	18	1	9
Minority Ethnic Christian affairs	2	4	17	51	21	20
Mission initiatives / fresh expressions	7	16	30	31	7	20
New Housing areas	7	9	18	35	23	16
Planning church presence / ministry	7	15	26	30	14	19
Promoting prayer / spirituality	6	12	37	39	6	14
Public statements	2	8	22	41	17	23
Theology	2	13	24	45	12	18

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications/Press
- Quarterly Newsletter, Churches Directory
- Communicating resources and equipping churches with what is available for churches to use.

FRESH EXPRESSIONS

- Mission-shaped-Ministry course

NURTURE AND TRAINING

- Nurture - Pastoral and Formation in Ministry/Discipleship.

RELATIONAL

- Outcomes of Church Leaders meetings.
- Guest speaker to provide theological stimulus for annual overnight gathering.
- Visits to localities.
- Developing relationships across the Christian traditions

STRUCTURES

- Internal restructuring
- Ecumenical officer's post
- Reviewing our constitution
- Formulating new Constitution, securing financial ownership by the denominations

SOCIAL CONCERNS & JOINT PROJECTS

- Asylum seekers
- Bi monthly prayer
- Campaigning on social issues
- CAP and a food-bank
- Church census
- Church Tent at local Show.
- Church unity through joint projects.
- Elderly
- Engaging with the County Council and other agencies
- Environmental issues
- Fresh Expression Holiday Bible club
- Homeless people
- Inter-church sports events
- Multi-ethnicity reports
- Poverty
- School support
- Seasonal witness events in the town
- Street pastors
- Support of individual denominational projects
- Supported Chaplaincies - FE, Airport.
- Working with overseas students.
- Young people

PRIOROTIES OF ONE INTERMEDIATE BODY

- Regaining Gospel Confidence, Prayer, Developing Discipleship, Identifying Leaders, Fresh Expressions, Research, Maximising Ecumenical Opportunities, Closing the gap (engaging with the local groups).

APPENDIX B 4

“A NO LONGER NEEDED LUXURY”

Please indicate how the following statement reflects your view about your Intermediate Body: **“A no longer needed luxury”**

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Church/ denominational leader eg Diocesan Bishop	2	4	3	15	3
Church/denominational leader eg Suffragan	0	1	0	3	2
Denominational Ecumenical Officer	0	2	3	14	11
Representative of LEP	0	0	0	2	0
Representative of local Churches Together group	0	0	1	3	1
Treasurer	0	0	1	0	0
Other	0	1	8	7	4

Please indicate the structure of your IB and the frequency of its meetings.

	Monthly	Quarterly	Half-yearly	Annually	Every 2-5 years	No such thing
Executive	2	22	3	0	0	3
Sponsoring Body	1	17	4	3	2	2
Full Intermediate Body	0	10	7	4	0	4
Broader Council or Forum	1	3	1	5	6	8
Subject-focussed Open Meeting	0	1	5	5	6	10

- Our Sponsoring Body and Full Intermediate Body are one and the same thing. A "Standing Committee" meets probably 10 times in the year to update, to execute business decided at Ecumenical Council, deal with any issues arising etc
- We have a Church Leaders meeting (equivalent to Exec) and DEOs' meeting. Each meets 3 times a year, once in combination. We also have the occasional sponsoring committee to oversee LEPs. We had one County forum in 2001 and have just held one in 2010.
- The DEOs and CEO meet together every other month and we have a full Council Meeting (Church :eaders, DEOs, CEO and ecumenical reps.)twice a year.
- Church Leaders meet for breakfast half-yearly.
An Enabling Group, consisting of two church leaders (the current Chair and Vice-chair), denominational ecumenical officers and the treasurer, is the 'Executive' and also serves as the sponsoring body - it meets half-yearly
A Council, consisting of two church leaders (the current Chair and Vice-chair), denominational ecumenical officers, the treasurer and representatives of local churches together groups and ecumenical organisations - plus anyone else who wants to come - , meets half-yearly to receive the ecumenical officer's report, to do a small amount of business and then to focus on an ecumenical theme.
- The Council meets twice a year for business, presentations, discussions and decisions: it functions as the Sponsoring Body/Intermediate Body. An annual service for renewal of covenants has also been held for many years.
- The Executive Council acts as the sponsoring body on behalf of CTiX.
Celebrating Together is our annual forum, which is subject-focussed.
We also have a Social Responsibility Forum which meets 4 times a year and manages the work of the Social Responsibility Development Officer.
- Trustee to oversee the policy and governance of BCT as a charity - this includes the 3 Presidents of the IB. It meets 3x year. This meeting is followed by a meeting of Church Leaders - including the leaders of members and a few other significant leaders by invitation
An ecumenical development group meets to connect the leaders group with local ecumenism
- The executive committee is the denominational ecumenical officers and links + the Chair of our social responsibility committee. This provides the Sponsoring Body function for the LEPs. It is always chaired by a Church Leader.
- The full Intermediate Body consists of all church leaders and all ecumenical officers
- Ecumenical Officers Team quarterly
- The Presidents and Deputy Presidents meet two or three times a year to discuss strategy and the larger vision.
The Reference Group meets four times a year. They are the working group, made up of the Deputy Presidents and DEOs.
There was a sponsoring body plus a town CT group. Both dysfunctional and largely involving same small group of people. None with local stature.

Please indicate how the following statements reflect your view about the IB.

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
IB is well equipped for mission opportunities	8	78	74	97	23
IB is a good forum to plan the strategy of the churches	12	93	58	93	23
IB supports LEPs well	21	115	90	42	11
IB is too bureaucratic	14	39	94	115	15
IB supports local ecumenism well	16	154	59	44	7
IB gives a needed voice to smaller churches	11	72	110	63	22
IB needs to broaden its membership base	47	107	87	33	3
IB is a no-longer-needed luxury	9	21	62	138	50
IB is essential if churches are to work together	70	107	41	52	8
IB should focus on needs of the major churches	2	23	72	144	35
IBs should re-think their geographical boundaries	23	47	122	72	16

(Highlighting added)

HEADLINES

The IB is GOOD at

- Supporting LEPs
- Supporting local ecumenism

The IB COULD DO MUCH BETTER at

- Strategic planning for the churches
- Taking mission opportunities

The IB should BROADEN ITS MEMBERSHIP

The IB does not need to focus on the needs of the major churches

Changes in boundaries excite little enthusiasm

Which statements describe your personal involvement?

	Church leaders including Diocesans	Church leaders' nominees	Denominational Ecumenical Officers
Fulfilling	4	2	6
Worthwhile	12	3	14
I attend out of duty	10	2	6
Pleasant but fairly pointless	3	0	2
Helpful in building relationships	18	3	22
An important place of mutual accountability	4	1	1
A useful forum for consultation	9	2	14
Less important than one-to-one meetings	4	1	2
A chance to be heard and noted	1	0	2
On balance, it's a good thing it exists	10	1	
Has potential if only ...	2	0	5

HEADLINES

The IB is seen as **HELPFUL IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS**

The IB is regarded as **WORTHWHILE**

CHURCH LEADERS' COVENANTS

Please indicate the significance of the Leaders' Covenant.

	Very much	Quite a lot	Not much
How significant is the Covenant to you personally?	3	9	6
How significant do you feel the Covenant is to other convenanters?	1	12	2

BI-LATERALS

The International Anglican- Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, 2006

The Anglican-Methodist Covenant, 2003.

The Methodist and United Reformed Churches investigations into "Joint Areas"

How have these bi-lateral relations affected Intermediate Bodies?

	Anglican/ RC	Anglican/ Methodist	Methodist/ URC
No discernable effect	66	56	49
More bi-lateral conversation omitting others	9	20	11
More bi-lateral conversation extended to others	8	16	10
Weakening of the multi-lateral IB	4	4	1
Enriching the multi-lateral IB	15	15	13

SOME COMMENTS

- Fresh Expressions initiatives have been some of the biggest beneficiaries extending to URC as well as Anglican Methodists
- The bi-lateral relations are the basis for the CTxx but are not specifically mentioned,
- The Ordinariate really has challenged ecumenical partnership.
- Relationships between individuals on all sides have been good throughout my time, so high level covenants etc have been taken for granted.
- Inter-personal relationships at IB and local levels have been good for the last 7 years. Higher level "stuff" appears to have little effect, except that there is a general reduction in enthusiasm for ecumenism.
- CTxxs in the process of supporting a Tripartite agreement between Anglican, Methodist and URC on a county level with a view to the formation of the county as an LEP.
- Concentration on shared worship within shared buildings has meant Intermediate Body spending most time on LEPs in role as Sponsoring Body and less on imaginative projects.
- We have a large number of LEPs which means that the structures are already present.
- The Covenant has made our informal arrangements more difficult by the pressure to make them more formal.
- ARCIC probably has more effect in xx, and Anglican/Methodist in xx. This may well be a result of Church Leaders' own predilections!

How has the scope of the IB changed in the past three years or so and how would you like to see it change?

	MORE than previously	The SAME	LESS than previously	Would LIKE MORE	Would LIKE LESS
Theological discussion	14	70	12	25	1
As Sponsoring Body	13	68	18	6	9
Relating to local Churches Together groups	29	61	12	17	2
Attention to local/regional "secular" issues	24	69	4	23	1
Attention to church planting/ mission strategies / fresh expressions	23	63	8	31	1
Management of declining resources	17	70	8	15	7
Promoting prayer / spirituality	14	64	19	33	1

LOCAL SUPPORT

- More focus on how to encourage local ecumenical groups in 'being the church' in their communities.
- Much greater representation from local CT groups
- Promotion of best practice by local CT groups might help.
- A digest of ecumenical news to be circulated by IBs added to present newsletters.
- More “face to face” contact with local CT groups.

MEMBERSHIP & REPRESENTATION

- Better attendance by traditional denominations. Independent churches are supporting us more.
- Would like to see things we already do done much better!
- Better representation of church bodies and leaders.
- My main regret is that the Church Leaders are too separate from the Intermediate Body. Whilst the DEOs & I are invited by them to an annual meeting with them, it really is only tokenism.
- Efforts to bring in the smaller and independent churches especially Pentecostal and Baptist churches
- The scope needs to widen to include ownership from other than the historic denominations and also to build links with the very real mission work that is happening in the area.

STRATEGIC PLANNING & MISSION

- Wider commitment from church/denominational leaders more strategic planning.
- The model needs to change in an environment of scarce resources and be closer to the needs of the mission of the churches in the area.
- A clearer more overt statement of vision and values both internally and within the community in order to involve us more effectively in Gods pan.
- More emphasis on sustainable living issues.
- Less talk more action.

What was, or will be, the extent of the IB’s involvement in these national initiatives?

	Greatly	A little	Not at all	Not heard of it
The Millennium	17	8	6	2
Set all free	11	14	5	3
HOPE08	2	23	9	1
Bible Fresh	5	20	2	4
HOPE Together	6	25	6	1
More Than Gold	8	19	5	5

How has the scope of the IB changed in relation to attention to local / regional “secular” issues”?

	More than previously	The same	Less than previously	Would like MORE	Would like LESS
Church leaders incl Diocesans	8	18	1	7	0
Church leaders' nominees incl Suffragans	1	4	0	1	1
Denominational Ecumenical Officers	4	21	1	5	0
Representatives of LEPs	1	1	0	3	0
Representatives of local Churches Together groups	0	3	0	0	0

Please indicate the extent to which you receive advice, help and support for your local Churches Together grouping from your Intermediate Body / County Ecumenical Officer.

	More than enough	As much as needed	Not enough	Not something I'd expect
Charity Registration, insurance & compliance	0	16	6	40
Chaplaincies	2	23	9	28
Communication	7	34	13	9
Elections (General & Local)	1	29	7	24
Evangelisation	2	22	11	25
Local economy / industry / employment	2	16	10	32
New Housing area	0	13	13	34
Planning the future of church life in your area	1	19	25	17
Relations with Minority Ethnic Christians	1	19	21	18
Relations with other faith communities	1	29	15	17
Prayer resources	2	23	14	22
Theology	0	16	10	32
Communication FROM Intermediate Body	2	44	13	2

Communication

- Would like more information.
- The only communications I have had are helpful. Specific questions have been answered very well indeed.
- Broadband gives access to sources of advice, but suggested links could be useful. IB could forward material.
- I used to receive regular communications from CEO but not anymore. We have a new officer and this is being established with promising signs of greater help and examples of best practice and opportunities in our community.
- More communications including what they cannot do.
- We receive a good e-mail letter from X.X which has more than enough to keep us busy.
- Limited contact with the County Body but the CEO has visited us and we know is available to assist if called upon. We do receive the regular Newsletter. Our focus is of course on Xx. We also appreciate that resources are limited.

Negative comments

- As Secretary of Churches Together in Xx we have little communication from CTE/EO.
- Have tried unsuccessfully to find out whether CTinXX communicates with local Churches Together groups.
- I am not aware that we receive any help.
- Our CEO turns up occasionally, promises the earth, and then disappears again and nothing promised ever materialises.
- Currently the post of CEO has been vacant for over a year hence we are receiving no support in any of the above.
- It's everything I'd expect from the Churches' current ultra-leftist, PC-obsessed, Islam-appeasing 'leadership'. Leftist.
- We get on very very well as it is.
- A bit isolated.
- We have more direct interaction with [city-wide mission-orientated grouping].

Please write in here any comments you wish to make about the ease, process and effectiveness of LEP reviews.

Why?

- This is a very difficult area as no-one seems to understand the process or why we, as an intermediate body, are involved. It seems to work best if the respective DEOs liaise with the church and simply keep me advised.
- They are necessary but are rarely welcomed! Finding reviewers is never easy, and the new URC 4-year system may yet confuse things. One may wonder whether Church Leaders or others actually take much notice of the reviews when done.
- I am not sure how seriously the reports are always taken - certain issues which are often caused by factors outside of the LEP can be flagged up review after review.
- The benefit of the [specific] review for the LEP comes as much from the preparation (reflecting on its life and identifying topics) and follow-up (working on the topics in the light of the review report).
- Aim to have reviews owned locally and by denominations so that recommendations are seen as relevant and realistic. This means they have to have a mission focus.
- Two key issues that emerge are i) the problem of keeping the LEP genuinely ecumenical in terms of denominational input when the URC and Methodist capability to provide ministry is shrinking and ii) appointments of ministers not able or willing to work ecumenically.
- While reviews are conducted well, outcomes and follow up are patchy at best.
- Increasing challenge of reviews against a landscape of rapid church and organisational change.

When?

- CTXX does these at the request of an LEP.
- Confusion about when inspections are due.
- Carrying out our first review in 2011 after many many years without any being done.

Who?

- Review by one or two nominated Reviewers from different denominations.
- They become increasingly difficult to arrange, largely because numbers of partnerships are increasing but numbers of people willing to be involved in reviews is decreasing.
- It is becoming more and more difficult to find people to carry out these reviews, and especially to find someone to be the co-ordinator/leader. This can result in slippage as far as the timing of the reviews is concerned.
- Difficult to find appropriate people to carry out reviews. Reviews are often regarded with suspicion/resentment by the LEPs.
- Almost impossible to find people willing to undertake. Little interest at any level. Usual suspects exhausted.
- It's difficult to find reviewers.
- Staffing review groups is challenging given a shrinking pool of ecumenical officers and while it is good to draw in expertise from elsewhere it is essential to have some ecumenical expertise and links to denominational decision-making.
- We have generally run light touch reviews which are less resource heavy; however finding reviewers is increasingly difficult.
- My experience of Reviewing an LEP was interesting but immensely time consuming, as was the experience of a colleague who reviewed another LEP. The paper work was immensely tedious.
- Finding people to be part of a review team is hard work. It tends to come down to a few again and again, mainly key denominational EOs, and the CEO.

How?

- The process has been streamlined recently – more self-assessment. The effectiveness depends on the response of the LEPs.
- We are on the process of re-considering how our Reviews should be carried out, having moved to a self-review model which does not seem to work any better than the previous one.
- There must be a better way of doing them! We have tried several patterns but they are usually scuppered by the local ministers who often not really committed to the partnership or like to go their own way.
- The DEOs have met to discuss reviews and have set out a plan for reviewing LEP's in a light touch way.
- We are in the process of rolling out a new way of doing reviews, which take the broad format of a mission audit. Any technical questions that emerge in conversation with an LEP e.g. concerning constitutions are dealt with outside of the review. We have adopted this new approach as the former model was felt to be too burdensome upon an LEP, and often the report that was produced was regarded as unsatisfactory by church leaders and LEPs.

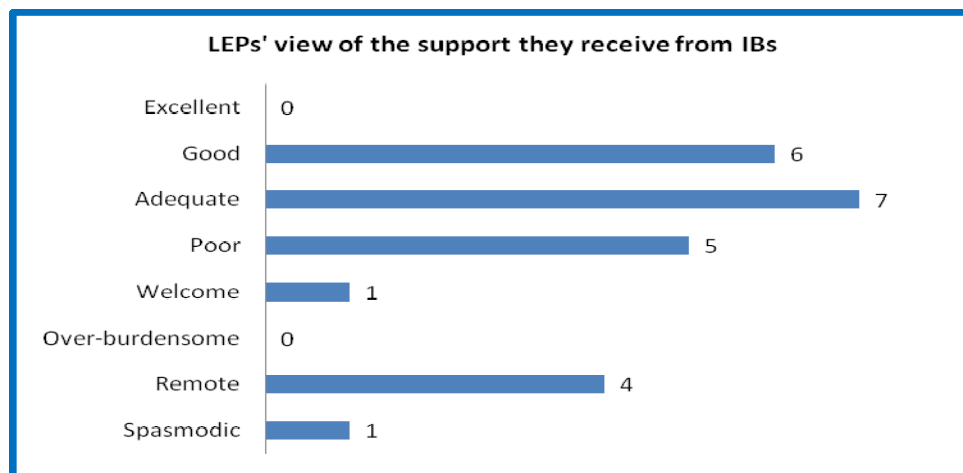
Appendix B 10 continued:

- We are currently devising a system which will be more 'light weight' than a heavy formal review programme.
- We try to carry out the LEP reviews as indicated on the LEP constitution. Our experience is that when the URC denomination is present within the LEP the URC are keen that reviews are completed. The review approach is to work in complete cooperation with the LEP and make the process as informal as possible.
- We are developing an approach to reviews which is helping to improve the relationship of XCT and DEOs to the partnerships. Working on the principle of self-review and encouraging LEPs to think about their mission strategy, reviews are ceasing to be a once every 5 years event - but a part of an ongoing relationship with XCT through the CEO and DEOs. Constitution and formal arrangements are seen as a support for shared mission strategy.
- These have become assisted self appraisals and have become separated from the discussion the church leaders have about their renewal.
- They are not easy, the process is invariably awkward/unwelcome and their effectiveness is limited
- Although a lot of time at meetings of denominational EOs is spent on LEPs, I don't think care of LEPs is a strong point of CTinX. We are behind on reviews, so some LEPs must feel unloved. Issues I would identify include:
 - not having clear expectations – on either side
 - not having a standard template (the CTE material is horrendous – I gave all the 'Art of Review' papers to one person I'd recruited as Chair of a review group and he pulled out as it looked such a massive exercise);
 - not having clear guidelines on what a final document might look like.
 - not doing much (any?) follow up
- CTinX X developed a fresh approach to LEP reviews because by 2009 only 6 of Chin's 23 LEPs had been reviewed in the previous 5 years, and CTE had published new possibilities in "The Art of Review". Conferences were held in for representatives of the LEPs with the CTinX Church Leaders and Ecumenical Officers' Team, for the LEPs to tell their stories and to consider different formats for reviews. From these a 5-year programme of reviews was developed.
- Uneasy! Ultra sensitive priests!
- Only set up when requested by IB, LEP or Church Leader. Too many have foundered: neurotic parsons, why "picked on" etc.
- These have become assisted self appraisals and have become separated from the discussion the church leaders have about their renewal. In depth reviews with a fully representative review team have gone in recent years. What have become more useful are the annual 4 questions I send to them:
 - What have you done this year that is different?
 - What do you give thanks to God for this year?
 - What do you plan that is different for next year?
 - Are there any issues you would like the wider Church to address for you?They, and the Sponsoring Body find these helpful, they do flag up items for attention and are useful in showing Church Leaders good stories as well as problems.
- We have simplified to a Self-Assessment situation with a member of the LEP Sub Committee, either myself or the Chair of the Sub Committee sitting as 'friend' / advisor looking at ten basic questions followed by a goal-setting exercise.

Please indicate the extent to which you receive advice, help and support for your LEP from the IB / CEO

	More than enough	As much as needed	Not enough	Not something I'd expect
Charity Registration, insurance & compliance	0	9	3	15
Finance & apportionments	0	5	3	18
Initiation - Baptism & Confirmation	0	7	2	18
Membership	0	8	4	16
Ministerial Appointments	1	9	6	11
New Housing areas	0	4	3	20
Planning the future of church life in your area	0	3	7	16
Relations with denominations	0	9	8	12
Sacramental theology / worship	0	6	3	19
Communications FROM IB	1	18	6	6

Overall, which of these statements describe the support you receive from your IB?



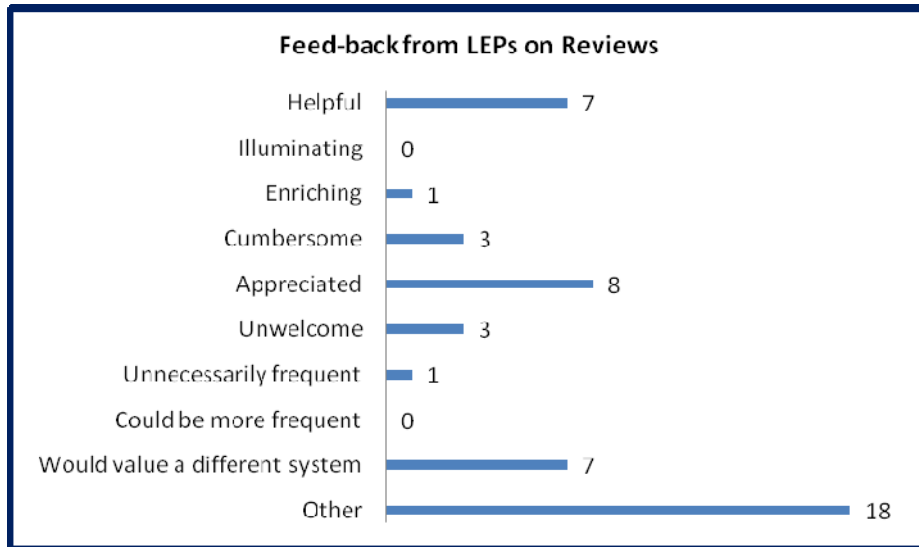
Some Comments

- The intermediate body is never mentioned
- More communication and in time to be able follow it up
- Our church gets on with mission with very little real reference to the sponsoring body unless we have to comply with CTE requirements. We have consulted with individuals and the previous chair who were helpful.
- I don't think Xxx Churches in Covenant is aware of the link to CTinXX. At least the invitation to a CTinXX meeting caused a marked lack of reaction and comprehension.
- In the past, the advice that the church was given was incorrect and has caused a lot of problems and heartache so to be honest we go to our two denominations for guidance.
- None. What we receive is sufficient.
- Have received info re the updating of constitution / governing documents. May need more help.

- Appendix B 11 continued:

Reviews

Which of these statements express your opinion of the REVIEWING of your LEP by the Sponsoring Body?



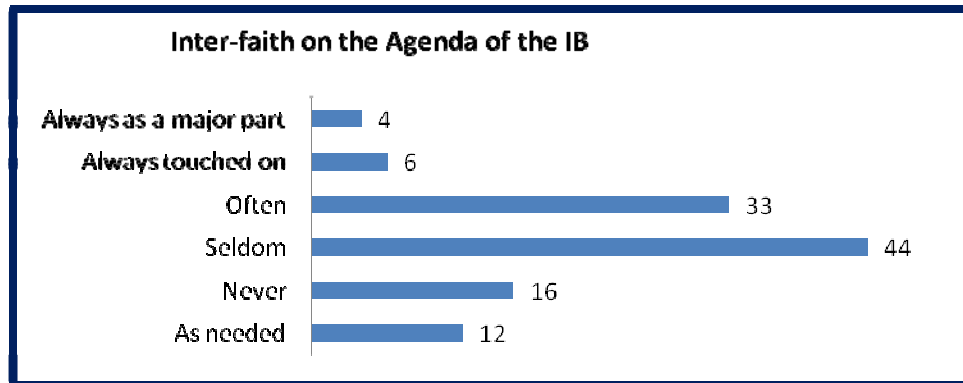
Some positive comments

- Encouraging is the missing word, which is what we got from our last review.
- A review has not been done in the last 10 years or so but the last one was helpful and supportive.
- All reviews should be discussed in meeting of the county body. Anyshire does not do this but has been persuaded to hold meeting of all LEPs.
- The model used for our recent review was very good and we felt was to be recommended for future reviews
- That contribution was invaluable. We find, in practice, that we relate directly to each of our parent denominations rather than through CTinX. It seems to us this is how it should be, but we value the potential for support from CTinX if an issue should arise with a parent denomination. We do not view CTinX as an alternative denomination.

Some less positive comments, and suggestions for improvement

- I don't think we've ever had one.
- Never happened despite 4 years worth of requests after it was already late.
- Not sure when it last happened. Don't really feel a need. We just consider ourselves one church with good links and involvement in both denominations.
- We had to ask for it.
- Only stated the obvious.
- Be carried out by someone with leading experience in the particular setting and mission of our church - that way they might have constructive comments, criticism and advice for us. The present system feels like a box ticking exercise with little value other than waving an ecumenical flag.
- Being transparent and not manipulative.
- A simple response to our concerns would have been nice. Once the initial report was delivered we heard nothing, and got no answers to questions raised or corrections offered. The report is therefore practically irrelevant and will not be informing our planning and decision making.
- Defined timescale from inception to completion.
- Tighter guidance to give a greater lead in the way forward, to develop further.
- We're always reviewing our life and witness. A formal review is an unnecessary distraction; doesn't help us move forward.
- The feeling was that it would be like a school inspection where it would be a box ticking exercise, time and admin heavy, and everyone was too busy anyway.
- It was a struggle to find suitably qualified reviewers

INTER-FAITH ON THE AGENDA



FROM CTE INTER-FAITH OFFICER'S SURVEY OF CEOS IN 2010

Summary

- Currently inter-faith impinges 'very little' on a CEO's work, but this is 'growing'.
- It behoves the CEO 'to concentrate on inter-church matters' which give them 'more than enough to do!' and because others have 'time, expertise, and responsibility'.
- CEOs support those within the churches who are promoting inter-faith awareness.
- Where CT groups are involved in inter faith relations then there is more demand on the CEO's time to pass on information.
- In other areas CEOs are involved where inter-faith activities are done ecumenically, e.g. , shared premises, multi-faith chaplaincies
- Public life matters also generate ecumenical discussion with an inter faith context, e.g.,
 - the Sustainable communities agenda,
 - the response to civil emergencies,
 - collaboration with the police on 'Safer Neighbourhood' agendas,
 - involvement with Local Strategic Partnerships.
- In large cities, Church leaders are also in faith leaders groups. Some matters might be aired in the faith leaders group and not within the intermediate body.
- Some intermediate bodies are supportive of grassroots activity without being proactive or high profile about it.

RESPONSES FROM 11 CEOS TO FURTHER ENQUIRIES IN MAY 2011

To what extent do matters with an inter faith dimension impinge on your job?

- This is becoming an increasingly key issue for us as staff and as for CTinX
- Inter-faith work has a very low priority! You cannot get alongside people of other faiths if they are very small in number locally.
- This is one of the areas that the Church Leader's have asked me to be involved with. I am currently chair of Oxford Council of Faiths. I am a board member and trustee of SE England Faith Forum. There are times when I feel that it acts to the detriment of what I do ecumenically as it eats into my few hours a week that I am employed.
- Not at all so far
- I attend the meetings of in inter-faith group when I can and keep in touch with them.

Appendix B 12 continued:

- When I came into post inter faith was towards the bottom of the list of 'things to engage with if you have time!' Since then it has become increasingly important. This might have happened anyway after 9/11, but three other factors have been the high profile of the XX Faiths Council, the increasing willingness of (some parts of) the public sector to engage with faith communities and the increase in multi faith teaching in XX.
- Very infrequently - not part of my job spec.
- Inter-faith matters do not directly impinge on my job at all in that they are not specifically within my remit. However, here in Suffolk we are unbelievably fortunate to have Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource (SIFRE) with whom I keep in close contact.
- I link with the Inter-faith body when joint responses are needed to events where other faiths are being demonised or need support - e.g. we produced a joint faiths leaders' statement in run up to General Election, and there's always a good turn-out of Church leaders for Holocaust Memorial Day
- None at all, apart from a recent approach from XX County Council seeking for a joint 'all faiths' response to a Vision Document for the county for the next 10 years.
- Very little

Do inter faith matters come to the attention of your Intermediate Body?

- Yes, but not in a proactive way.
- Inter-faith matters do come to the attention of the intermediate one of the members represents us on the Council of Faiths
 - Citizens MK concerns a wide range of churches from the Mission Partnership who are paid-up members
 - Several of our churches based in community halls rent their buildings to groups from other faiths
 - Through contact with and support of the chaplaincies - prison, hospital especially
- We have had meetings on Inter-faith cooperation and the Inter-faith Friendship Walk is widely advertised through Churches Together networks. Some feel that inter-faith is something that ought not to be confused with ecumenism and others are expressing the view that Inter-faith is the 'New Ecumenism'. I tend towards the first view; that does not mean that inter-faith has little importance but that it is a separate thing from ecumenism and with societal rather than theological ends.
- Not discussed at the Sponsoring Body or Standing Committees I have attended since being in post.
- The local churches are not of one mind in terms of whether we are looking for dialogue or conversion
- No, apart from a recent approach from the County Council seeking for a joint 'all faiths' response to its KCC Vision Document.
- Very little, however the work is connected particularly to three other bodies in the city;
 - Churches Council for Industry & Social Responsibility
 - Regional Faith Forum
 - X Multi Faith Forum (funded by city council). There is an inter faith dimension to the ecumenical work in the city and we have has connections with multi faith chaplaincy issues
- They might do so as an item of notice or correspondence
- At Ecumenical Officers' meetings we do discuss inter-faith perspectives quite readily and naturally as they are relevant to much of what we do: e.g. in chaplaincy, civic life, public meetings, community engagement etc
- The most common example is areas of new housing where sometimes the churches 'speak on behalf of' other faith communities (a dodgy area this but we've got away with it so far!). We are part of a more formal Faith Reference Group engaging with the University on their huge development on the edge of the city. The more influential inter-faith group is the one based in the X conurbation which has agreed to concentrate on the environment and climate change as people of faith have a particular perspective on the created earth. This has meant that some of our environmental work and groupings have become inter-faith. This work comes to the attention of the county body.
- The chaplaincy teams in the different settings have people from the world faiths on them - police, hospital, prisons, and we are developing several voluntary chaplaincy teams for town centres, the FE College, the Palliative Care service. Each of these has a different perspective on how the world faiths are involved but it is an important part of the development discussions so an increasing part of my work.
- We have a One World group in X which is a small but lively forum for discussion and usually has people of different faiths as speakers. We give publicity to that and they have been influential in the development of the transition towns movement which is gaining ground in the county.

Initiatives to broaden the membership of Intermediate Bodies

- Generally keep a watching brief to be as wide as possible.
- At our last Regional Church Leader's meeting we resolved to start a small group who would discuss the possibility of expanding the membership of the Intermediate Body.
- I make a deliberate effort to make personal contact with independent black majority congregations and community churches and to encourage them to join local churches together groups and to come to Council meetings.
- I am hoping to start conversations with some of the more significant black majority/independent churches during the course of 2011. Whether this leads to formal membership of the intermediate body remains to be seen, although the current members are very open to this possibility.
- Now that Elim are part of CTE, we need to look at drawing them into the life of the county Intermediate Body.
- CTX is currently rebuilding itself - time will tell.
- New constitutional arrangements will enable wide participation/membership of an ecumenical mission-focused charity.
- We are examining this issue as the Leaders consider a Report recently completed by me, the CEO
- Building links with the locally engaged King's Churches, many of which belong to and actively participate in local Churches Together groups. The challenge we are working with them on is how to best identify appropriate church leaders.
- We need to clarify if there are any other gaps, including Orthodox
- On behalf of Church Leaders I am spearheading a review to enable XCT to adopt a new constitution that will enable the membership to be expanded.
- We have invited all the links for the independent churches of XX to the churches Olympic launch. Further Links have been built with independent evangelical churches for the evangelical initiative for a 5 day tented event in the area.-
- The Coptic Orthodox priest who added that dimension to our mix has now moved away. I need to make contact with the Antioch Orthodox priest in the area who succeeded the one who died.
- We need to rebuild the network of churches in Xx, where there is a wider range of ethnic minority churches. Currently the town centre group is not strong or fully representative.
- We are seeking to work alongside the independent churches and draw as many into closer relationship as possible. Though they are unlikely to become members individually, the representative of these churches is also keen to establish more ecumenical working between us. I'm not sure that we need to expand the membership as such at this stage - just build on our relationships to actually work together within the community.
- Tried and failed.
- None at present.

Comments from those outside the current membership

Responses were received, among others, from churches describing themselves as allied to

Church of God of Prophecy
 Evangelical Alliance Independent
 FIEC
 Ground Level
 New Wine
 Pentecostal
 Shechem Community
 Shilonite Gospel Church of Cherubim & Seraphim

Comments

- Ecumenical movement not really functional.
- Strategic discussions about church buildings and mission opportunities
- Increase prayer to gain direction from God.
- Very good laity cooperation
 Rather frosty relations at the ministerial level
 Tired at the institutional/structures level
- Work well in creating special services but little interaction otherwise
- Vital to sharing of information and encouraging local work but also vital for bringing church leaders together strategically.

Inhibiting issues

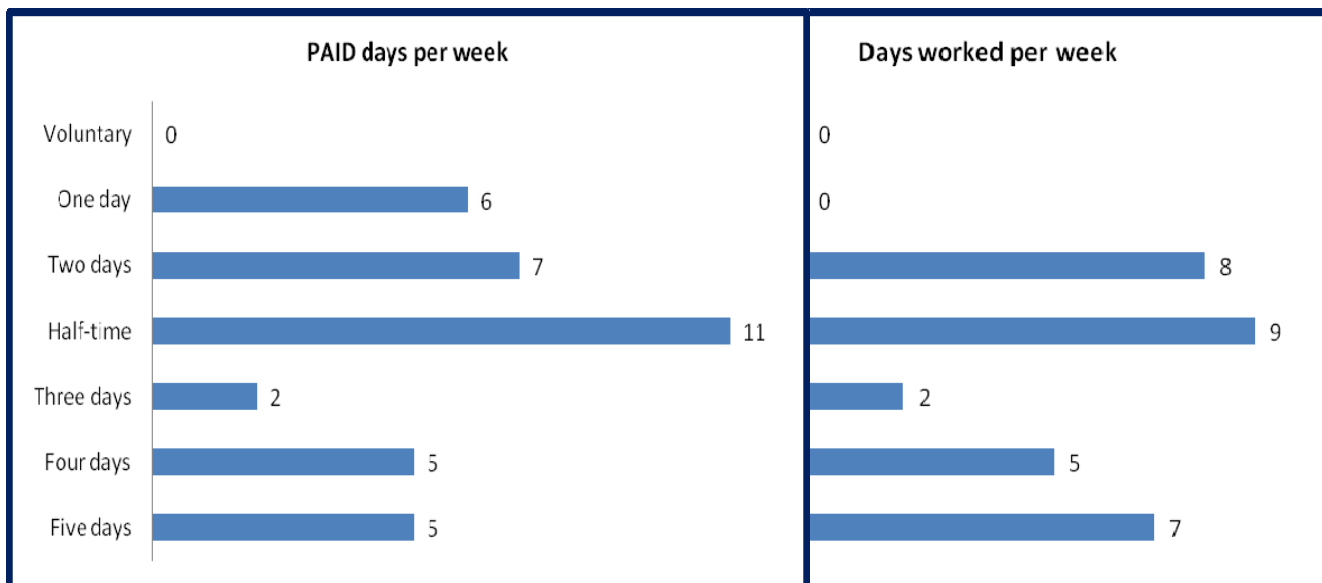
- Removing shoes in worship
- Human sexuality
- Authority

The wish list

- Mutual understanding of our different styles, tastes & ways of doing things (– be threatened by our differences) so that we can reflect Christ to our communities.
- Amnesia as to which denomination we each belong to and a real commitment to learn from each other by living the faith together.
- To speak with one voice so that the media may be accurate in reporting what "The Church" has to say.
- Occasional exchange of visit and/or exchange of pulpit between area denominations.
- That we could share the sacrament of Holy Communion. If we are the body of Christ we should show it in this way.
- That the movement become a more vocal and visible.
- That we'd get on with sharing the gospel together.
- That local churches would see one another as less of a threat, and more as an opportunity to work together more effectively to extend God's kingdom.
- That denominations could be freed from time consuming internal affairs and focus together externally on mission.
- Churches continue the shift from having meetings together to expressing the love of Christ to our communities together.

Other comments

- Reservations regarding Pentecostal churches (including black sector) are solely to do with their fragmentation and lack of representative structure, especially following demise of the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance.
- Problems less to do with theological views than with structures, occasionally cultures (especially where culture may be combination of Pentecostal and minority ethnic).
- Culture - too committee based, perhaps words rather than action, possibly more bureaucratic, and relying on meeting in day working hours rather than evenings.



INCREASE / DECREASE OF HOURS

Increased by a bit

- 2 reported an increase in last 2 years, 3 in the previous 3 years

Decreased by a bit

- 2 reported a decrease in 3- 5 years ago
- One post was declared redundant
- Hours in another were reduced at CEOs own request.
- One CEO anticipated money running out in 2 years time.

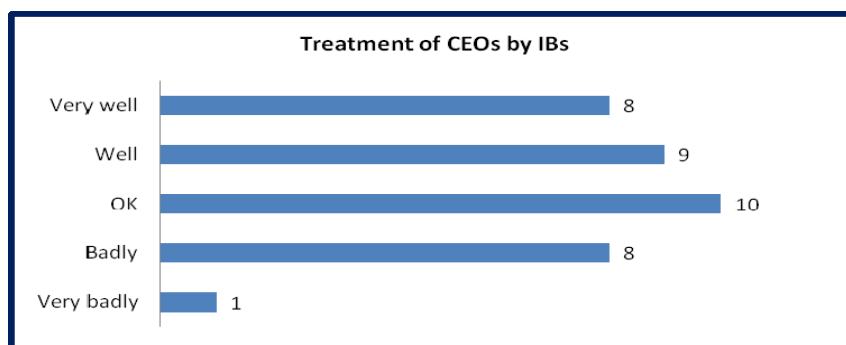
WORKING EXPENSES

- All expenses are met by IBs (though one or two CEOs voluntary meet some from their own pocket.
- One CEOs specifically mentions that s/he receives a home working allowance (others may, but do not mention it).
- One CEO mentions that expenses are paid in advance with a receipt/top-up mechanism.

REMUNERATION – HOW REMUNERATION IS FIXED

13	Comparable to stipend/ housing/ allowances of equivalent denominational minister
2	By reference to administrative posts within the churches
10	By continuing historic practice of what is affordable
3	Honorarium
6	Comparable to stipend of equivalent denominational minister but without allowances for housing or equivalent pension contributions
3 also suggested that the skills/operating level should be remunerated at a level higher than the standard denominational stipend.	

In terms of your remuneration, conditions, hours, etc, how well do you feel you are treated by your IB?



ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND HOME WORKING

- Due to budget constraints, I do not have enough admin support. I could not do my job description in the 40 hours a week which I am supposed to work!
- I work from home and have been told that I should claim for the relevant expenses or allowances.
- I benefit from rented office space, with computer services, in a building with other compatible church agencies. I have an excellent PA – liberating me to focus on the core job and not office administration.
- Work has changed and is more desk-based, communicating electronically, with less travel to local groups, which is a pity as the direct contact is vital for building strong relationships and giving support to local ecumenical activity.

DENOMINATIONAL ECUMENICAL OFFICERS

- My DEOs are a fantastic bunch of people to work with and very supportive.

FRUSTRATIONS

- Some members of CTxx want everything to go on as it always has, and getting across to them that some change is needed is very difficult. What has made the job far easier is the inclusion of the representative from the "HOPE for xxxx" group of churches whose work together is both an inspiration to CTxx and a platform onto which CTxx can come to join in with useful community projects. Those who are set in their ways can observe new ways of working together that are inspiring and a good witness.

JOB SATISFACTION

- It is always a fulfilling and challenging role and any appraisals are always appreciative of the role and functions I carry out and always say that I do more hours than I am paid for but they do not agree over what I should do less of!
- I eagerly accept as God's call
- I know where I stand and I will not be exploited.
- Whilst I don't carry out this ministry mainly for the salary, the variations around me can be irritating when I do more than contracted to do.

LINE MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

- Every few months I meet with a knowledgeable line manager.
- Since I started having annual reviews of the post in the last two years by the Bishop of Xxxxx, I have felt more appreciated and supported by management than in the previous five years. It would be helpful if CTE could provide guidelines for good practice for employment by IBs, to include, e.g., guidelines on salary, appraisal, line management, review, team working, organisational structure.
- Line management is not adequate. I am left to get on with things on my own for most of the time.
- I haven't yet been given a contract. It was not obvious to me who I report to (e.g. who do I tell when I'm on holiday?) – I've now been advised by my CTE field officer.
- No proactive line management, setting of goals, significant feedback. I asked for a review 15 months ago and am still waiting.
- Over a long period the post was under review for nearly half that time, an experience which might be a little demotivating. Practical support and interest from one of the biggest players was sadly lacking

CHANGES IN FINANCE OVER THE PAST YEARS

Please indicate how financing the IBs and other ecumenically-shared work has changed in the past years.

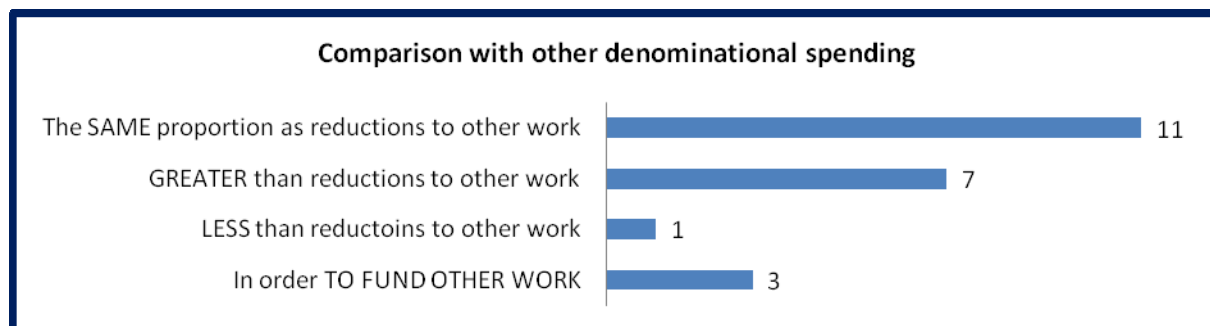
	MORE than 5 years ago	SAME as 5 years ago	LESS than 5 years ago	Not applicable
Funding IB	13	20	11	8
Funding other ecumenically shared work	5	14	8	14
eg: Educational Chaplaincy	5	10	8	19
Evangelism	5	15	5	15
World of work	6	19	11	10
Inter-faith	6	9	5	23
Other	0	5	4	22

NEW ECUMENICALLY-FUNDED INITIATIVES

- A post preparing for expected major house-construction
- FEAST
- Regional Training Partnership
- City Centre Mission Grouping
- Agricultural chaplaincy
- FEAST
- Chaplaincy to County Show
- Joint Anglican/Methodist Pioneer Ministry
- Work with asylum seekers
- Work with those whose first language is not English
- Mission and city wide evangelism
- Street Pastors

COMPARISON WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONAL SPENDING

If the denominations have reduced their spending in real terms on the IBs in the past five years, has this reduction been:

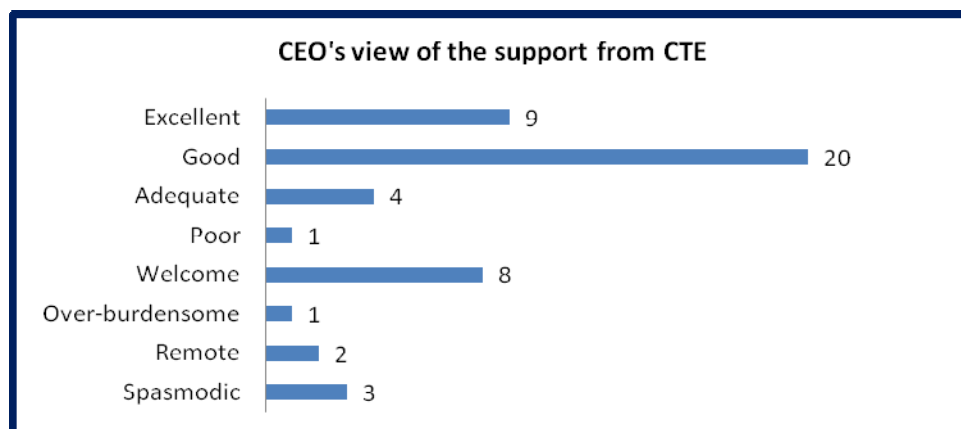


- We have problems with some of the other denominations as they are struggling within their churches.
- Loss of denominational income due to loss of members plus lack of ecumenical actions.
- One partner has cut significantly its contribution to CTinX with no prior consultation. This has put us in a very vulnerable position.

Please indicate how you rate the support from Churches Together in England (its staff and Coordinating Groups).

	Good	OK	Would like MORE
Personal support	26	7	2
Professional mentoring	10	11	11
Admin, Finance, Charity Registration	12	18	3
Evangelisation	6	17	3
Healthcare Chaplaincy	3	16	2
Inter-faith	11	18	2
Local Ecumenical Partnerships	17	17	3
Local Churches Together groupings	11	21	4
Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs	9	16	3
New Housing areas	7	11	4
Prayer Resources	3	19	7
Public Statements	2	18	8
Regional Issues / Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)	1	15	10
Spirituality	2	19	7
Theology	0	15	11

Overall, which of these statements describes the support you receive from Churches Together in England?



CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

- I think CTE does an excellent job already, itself with ludicrously limited resources.
- I appreciate the information received when I've contacted staff. They are always rapid and courteous.

WHERE MORE HELP WOULD BE APPRECIATED

Administration

- Help in moving the Intermediate Body to Incorporation, as CTxx is to become my employer.
- Employment issues

Communications

- The case for ecumenical working made more strongly and persistently to national and regional church leaders, whose lack of support for the ecumenical movement can undermine and discourage LEPs.
- A stronger stream of good news stories about LEPs in denominational media - not just CTE literature, as part of a strategy to bring LEPs out of the margins.
- Any influence on church leaders to engage together when they initiate new ventures or re-structuring - and reminders to live up to the commitments their denominations have already made.
- Greater high-level theological input on ecumenical matters, including Faith and Order questions.
- An introductory ecumenical pack for new Church Leaders?
- Publicity and material for national initiatives are welcome and helpful - but there is seldom any consideration by senior church strategists (at our county level) of whether these are to be seen as new ways for revitalising existing church and ecumenical activity. It would help if they were presented to show they can be.
- Any effort to improve access to material or to make summaries of papers from the work of the churches in social and community policy and action, would be helpful or a conversation with CTBI about how this can be done more effectively. The Joint Public Issues Team newsletter deserves a link on the CTE website.
- Clarification about how the IBs relate to CTBI (e.g. recent communication from CTBI about web site development offer to local CT groups, which came direct from CTBI to local groups, missing out the IBs).

Local Ecumenical Partnerships

- The legal complexities of SCLEPS; negotiating deployment and financial payments to denominations from SCLEPs.
- The charity registration of some of our LEPs has shown the need for close working together at national level to give structures and constitutions acceptable to our participating denominations and to the Charity Commission. Thanks to all involved for all that background work and for the ongoing support in getting the work done locally.

Local ecumenism

- I think CTE has great potential to offer more support for IB's relationship with local Churches Together groups. The work of national DEOs in developing a template constitution is invaluable and symbolic of the kind of support that makes a real difference for our daily work.
- Interestingly, one area of development which has (confusingly) now been taken up by CTBI is an online forum and providing the wherewithal for local CT groups to have a free website. It's good that someone is doing this. It would have been a direction for CTE to head along otherwise.

Regions

- There needs to be more regional encounter for mutual support and shared interest.
- Maybe facilitate more interaction between CEOs in similar areas – e.g. large urban metropolitan areas. This crosses north/south organisation. Actually, we could do this ourselves, but it helps to be given a nudge.

Training

- I haven't been able to attend the training for new CEOs/CEDOs. Could I find out the information covered in the training and "train myself" at home, able to ask questions of CTE if needed?
- Some more thoughts about in-service training – I know the annual CEO conference is an important part of this, but even nearly four years in I'm aware of so much I don't know. The means to stay up to date with one's documentation, including the horrendous Ecumenical Notes, would be helpful.

THE APPROPRIATE TYPE OF REVIEW

Different LEPs need different levels of support and different types of review at different points in their lives. The first step in the review process is for the IB, through the CEO, to discuss with the LEP what methodology is appropriate.

DEFINING THE TASK

LEPs remain the responsibility of the participant denominations, with these specific roles for the IB as

Sponsoring Body:

- Approval of Amendments to the Constitution and Dissolution of Charity
- Support, encouragement and advice
- The approval of rites, practices and procedures for Baptism and Membership.
- The approval of specific rites of worship
- Consultation about ministry
- Developments of the LEP
- Review

ASSISTED SELF APPRAISAL

Churches Together in Hertfordshire offers this check-list as part 1 of a process of accompaniment by the CEO or other “friend” of the LEP.

1. **Fabric**
Has ecumenical partnership enabled a better use of the space available and work stemming from it?
2. **Worship**
Has ecumenical partnership improved the style, openness, accessibility, and joy of worship?
3. **Ministry**
How well is partnership expressed in ministry - as exercised by both the paid and ordained and by the whole community of faith?
4. **Events**
Does ecumenical partnership help the Christian community to become more effectively engaged in the lives of people round about?
5. **'Social Work'**
Does ecumenical partnership help enable the Christian community to reach out to others and offer them fullness of life?
6. **Community involvement**
Does ecumenical partnership make it easier for the community to have a stake in what goes on in the LEP?
7. **Young People**
Has ecumenical partnership made the life of the LEP more open to the young?
8. **Communication**
Is partnership working at the level of ensuring that people know what is going on in all parts of the LEP?
9. **Congregation**
Is ecumenical partnership an aspect of their Christian life of which people are proud?
10. **Finance**
How does ecumenical partnership affect the finances of the local Christian community?

Part 2 of the process involves plans for the implementation of an “Action Plan”, again with the accompaniment of the CEO or “friend”.

AN ANNUAL REPORT

Churches Together in Dorset offers these questions for annual use:

- What have you done this year that is different?
- What do you give thanks to God for this year?
- What do you plan that is different for next year?
- Are there any issues you would like the wider Church to address for you?

“They, and the Sponsoring Body find these helpful, they do flag up items for attention and are useful in showing Church Leaders good stories as well as problems.”

The Churches Group for Local Unity suggests that LEPs routinely complete a short annual report based on a questionnaire and pro forma.

“The Sponsoring Body should not only receive the report, but also respond to it, sometimes with a simple acknowledgement, sometimes with reference to a particular point in the report, sometimes more fully... This annual reporting and responding should satisfy the constitutional requirement for review as well as being helpful and supportive in itself.”

A Minimal Annual (or periodic) Review

Changes in the Constitution or charitable status of the LEP need to be approved by the Sponsoring Body, as well as the denominations that are part of the LEP.

Please indicate what, if any, changes are planned.

The rites, practices and procedures for Baptism and Membership need the approval of the Sponsoring Body, as well as the denominations that are part of the LEP.

Please indicate what, if any, changes have been made since approval was last given, or what changes are planned.

Specific forms of worship (e.g., for joint services) need the approval of the Sponsoring Body, as well as the denominations that are part of the LEP.

Please indicate what, if any, approvals are sought or planned.

The Sponsoring Body has responsibilities for ensuring proper consultation about ministry in the LEP.

Please indicate what, if any, changes in ministry are anticipated.

The Sponsoring Body, as well as the denominations that are part of the LEP, should be consulted if there are plans to development of the LEP either in geographical terms or in the denominations participating.

Please indicate what, if any, developments in the LEP are under consideration.

The denominations that are part of the LEP and the Sponsoring Body share the oversight of LEPs.

Please indicate what, if any, denominational reviews have taken place recently or are anticipated.

The Sponsoring Body has a role of encouraging the range of forms of local ecumenical life including LEPs, learning from them, providing support and facilitating networks.

Please bring to the attention of the Sponsoring Body any matters of celebration or concern within the LEP, or areas on which you would value help and advice.

The Sponsoring Body in its role of facilitating the review of LEPs offers both personal support and materials for self-assessment.

Please indicate if you would like more information.

LINKING WITH DENOMINATIONAL REVIEWS

Some LEPs are subject to denominational requirements to review or visit, for example, the United Reformed Church's Local Ministry and Mission Review or where the Bishop's permission for the Church of England to be a partner in the LEP needs to be renewed after seven years. Or, the LEP may be the subject of a grant from a denominational mission fund which reviews regularly.

Any form of review instituted by the IB needs to achieve synergy with the denominational reviewing processes.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

At the founding assembly of the WCC in 1948 a brief Basis was accepted, stating the ground on which the churches were able to join and stay together in the WCC. The Basis was later extended to include references to the scriptures, the Trinity and the common calling of the churches. Since 1961 it reads:

"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND CONSTITUTION

Churches Together in England unites in pilgrimage those churches in England which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves:

- to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and
- to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Article iii membership

There are four categories of membership of Churches Together in England. Application for each category of membership set out below will need to be agreed by 75% in number of the existing full Member Churches.

(a) Full Membership

- (i) Member Churches at the date of adoption of this Constitution are listed in Schedule A.
- (ii) Full Membership of Churches Together in England shall be open to those Churches and Associations of Churches with a presence in England which have agreed to participate as full members of Churches Together in England (in this Constitution together referred to as 'Member Churches').
- (iii) A new application for full membership may be entertained from:
 - (A) any Church or Association of Churches which accepts the Basis;
 - (B) any Church or Association of Churches which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition and therefore cannot formally subscribe to the statement of faith in the Basis provided that it satisfies 75% in number of those full members which subscribe to the Basis that it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and it is committed to the aims and purposes of Churches Together in England and that it will work in the spirit of the Basis.

Current (July 2011) Procedures

A Church or Association of Churches shall make a formal written application for membership, sponsored by one of the existing Member Churches.

The Trustees will appoint from within the existing membership a Scrutiny Group composed of members from at least three of the Member Churches, and may include representatives from the sponsoring Church. The Scrutiny Group shall be charged with the task of entering into dialogue with the applicant Church, establishing an understanding of its ecclesiology and common life, and reporting in written form to a subsequent meeting of the Enabling Group.

In its decision the Enabling Group will normally consider four basic criteria which will be the basis of the Scrutiny Group's report, namely:

- 1 The applicant Church's demonstrable ability to subscribe to or manifest faith in accordance with the Basis and Aims of Churches Together in England.
- 2 The applicant Church's ability to demonstrate evidence of ecumenical engagement and commitment.
- 3 The applicant Church's demonstration of being organised on at least an English national level.

- 4 The acceptance by the applicant Church of the implications of the 'churches together' model of ecumenical engagement, including its willingness to contribute to the costs of the ecumenical instruments.

The Enabling Group will make a recommendation about the Church's (or Association of Churches') acceptance into membership. The recommendation is referred to the current Member Churches, of which a 75% agreement in writing is required.

EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE - from EA Website

Membership of the Evangelical Alliance UK is an important commitment to evangelical unity in the UK and one which brings both privileges and responsibilities.

The following criteria are set out in order to provide clear guidelines within which to maintain biblical unity among evangelicals:

1. The church/organisation must agree with the Evangelical Alliance's Basis of Faith
2. The church/organisation must agree to abide by the guidelines of the Evangelical relationship Commitment and the Alliance's Mission Statement. In addition, members should ensure that their integrity, both personal and corporate, is beyond question in all aspects of their life and ministry so that the credibility of the gospel is maintained. In particular, all members should seek independent corroboration where public claims are made in respect of their work.
3. The church/organisation should have been established for a minimum of two years. Applicants linked with an international ministry should have a congregation established in the UK for at least two years.
4. The church/organisation must be in good fellowship with other evangelicals - particularly in the local area. All applicants* are asked to submit the details of three local evangelical churches or organisations (one of which must be a member of the Alliance) that would be willing act as referees in support of your application. *for Elim churches only the letter from Elim HQ is necessary in support of your application.
5. An application may be refused if the Membership Committee is satisfied that:
 - a) The applicant is unable to accept the Alliance's Basis of Faith, Mission Statement or the guidelines of the Evangelical Relationships Commitment.
 - b) The applicant's relationship with other evangelicals falls short of the given criteria
6. Refusal of membership may be challenged by an appeal to the Board of Trustees and must be:
 - a) made within 90 days after formal refusal from the Evangelical Alliance.
 - b) in writing.
 - c) supported by at least one other local church, preferably a church member of the Alliance.

The Board of Trustees, having considered the appeal, may arrange for a formal meeting with the leadership of the church applying for membership.
7. Members will be expected to renew their commitment to the Alliance's Basis of Faith through a simple form with their annual donations.
8. The Alliance's Membership Committee deals with our Church and Organisation membership applications on behalf of the Alliance's Board of Trustees.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR INTERMEDIATE BODIES

The IB may wish to ask the sponsoring Churches to consider, before agreeing to support the application:

How well do they know the applicant Church?

How well does the applicant understand the guiding principles of the IB?

How will the applicant's membership affect the current Member Churches?

Has the applicant the capacity to contribute to, and to benefit from, membership of the IB?

Will the applicant be able to provide appropriate representation to the IB?

MILTON KEYNES

Fresh criteria are in development and should be available in the autumn of 2011.

ADVICE

Member Churches within the IB should have access to good employment advice, and should use it. Churches Together in England can offer some general guidelines and pointers,⁷⁴ but does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information.

RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYERS

“As Christian employers, churches ... are expected to operate ethically as well as within the statutory framework. Employees deserve to be employed competently and constructively.”

See www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=churchlife.content&cmid=578

WHO IS THE EMPLOYER?

Options include:

Employment directly by the IB, which needs to have a sufficiently robust governance structure in terms of trusteeship and liability

Secondment to the IB by a Member Denomination, which requires very clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Churches Together in South Yorkshire has produced a statement of “Accountabilities and Responsibilities” in respect of the employment of their Ecumenical Development Officer, in which the Church of England Diocese of Sheffield is the “Employing Church”.

Consultancy In order to claim tax status as a “Consultant” the CEO needs to have more than one than one “client”.

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Employers are legally required to provide employees with a written statement of the main terms within two calendar months of starting work. Contracts need to cover, among other things,

Hours of work

Holiday entitlement

Line management

Pay

Sickness

Pensions

Notice of termination

Disciplinary and Grievance procedures

See www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/EmploymentContractsAndConditions/DG_10027905

INSURANCES

Employers’ Liability Insurance is a legal requirement. IBs need Public Liability Insurance and may wish to consider Trustees’ insurance also.

REMUNERATION

Often the remuneration of CEOs is computed by reference to denominational bench-marks, usually for clergy/ministers. This should take account (but only on rare occasions does it) of the total benefits received by clergy/ministers in terms of housing provision and pension contributions. Thus clergy/ministers working as CEOs are frequently worse off than their counterparts working within denominations, and are effectively subsidising the ecumenical bodies.

Church of England clergy benefit from a non-contributory pension scheme; and the C of E’s Central Stipends Authority cautiously estimated the value of provided housing as £9740 in 2010.⁷⁵

HONORARIA

Honoraria are one-off *ex gratia* payments.

See www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoyou.content&cmid=65

⁷⁴ Churches Together in England cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information here, or its currency as employment law and practice changes.

⁷⁵ General Synod gs misc 977 (2010)

HOME WORKING

Home working saves the IB money, but involves costs for the CEOs which should be reimbursed.

IBs and CEOs need to be aware of the Health and Safety issues attached to home working.

CEOs need to be aware of possible tax relief on unreimbursed expenditure.

See www.hmrc.gov.uk/bulletins/tb79.pdf

LINE MANAGEMENT

Proper line management is important to ensure that the CEO's work priorities and performance are both realistic and in line with the IBs desires and expectations. They should identify the CEOs' training and developmental needs and any areas where support is required.

MENTORING

Some CEOs feel the need for more professional mentoring. They need to identify whether they will get this from CTE, from peer CEOs or from external consultants; and the costs involved need to be included within the IBs' budgets.

The Survey

Two on-line questionnaires were used: one intended for Churches, groups and individuals already involved in Intermediate Bodies, the other for those currently not involved. There was some cross-over between the two. The former provided good quantitative and qualitative information and is used extensively in this Review; the latter provided useful qualitative insights and comments which have informed the Review.

Interviews and Meetings attended

Extensive interviews and conversations were held with
 the Field Officers and some other officers of CTE
 the National Denominational Ecumenical Officers
 the Churches Group for Local Unity
 the Churches Theology and Unity Group
 the National & County Ecumenical Officers' Annual Residential Consultation
 several County Ecumenical Officers

In addition members of the Review Group were able to reflect on other conversations, particularly with denominational leaders.

Sources and papers consulted

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Reviews of Intermediate Bodies:

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 KEY 2003
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 Essex East London 2005
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 West Yorkshire 2006
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Intermediate Body websites

Churches Together in England website

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland website