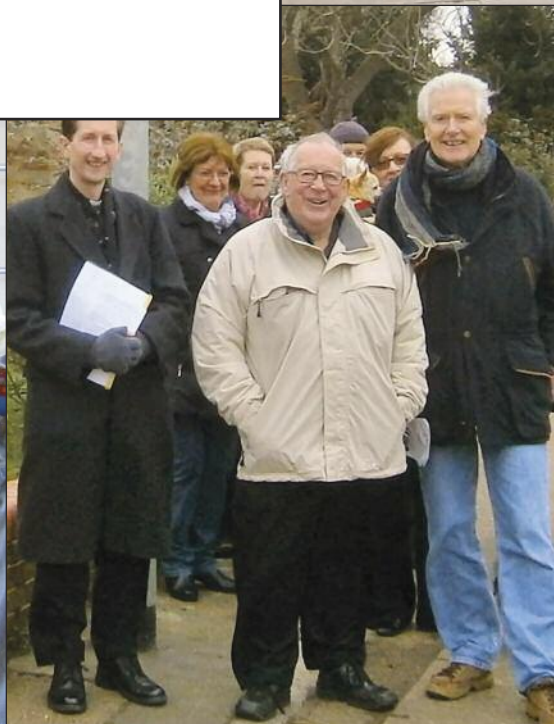




Ecumenism in East Anglia 2015 - 2016



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Cover picture captions

Front page pictures, from the top left: Bishop Alan and the Bishop of Norwich at St Walstan's anniversary celebration near Norwich, a refugee support march from St John's Cathedral in Norwich, St Benedict's Sawtry members join Anglicans and Methodists as part of the Open the Book project telling Bible stories in local schools, Acle churches together walk, St Louis school pupils in Bury St Edmunds take part in an event during the Week of Christian Unity.

Back page pictures, from top left: Muslim students at the Catholic Bethlehem University met by a group from Pilgrimage People, the Wisbech Inter Faith Forum, CAFOD rep Judith Tooth from Diss at the Climate Summit in Paris with President Francois Hollande and other faith representatives, Pilgrimage People visit the Tunes for Peace Project at the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement Between People in Bethlehem, and Christians, Jews and Muslims attended an historic Nostra Aetate inter-religion symposium at St John's Cathedral.

Useful contacts:

Diocese of East Anglia

Bishop Rt. Rev. Alan Stephen Hopes BD AKC
The White House, 21 Ugate, Poringland, Norwich,
Norfolk NR14 7SH
Tel: 01508 492202
Email: office@rcdea.org.uk

The Diocesan Commission for Dialogue and Unity
Chairman Rev Geoffrey Cook,
20 Brierley Walk, Cambridge CB43NH
Email: gmc1000@cam.ac.uk

FOREWORD

The Diocesan Commission for Dialogue and Unity conducted an Ecumenical Survey covering the whole of the Diocese over the period 2015 - 16 and the results are now available in this report.

In 2015, the Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council document *Nostra Aetate* concerning the relationship between the Christian Church, Jews and Muslims.

This anniversary was marked in the Diocese by a one day symposium, involving Christians, Jews and Muslims on Sunday 1st November 2015 at the Cathedral, Norwich.

2017 is the 500th Anniversary of the writing by Martin Luther of his 95 Theses, which unleashed the Reformation. This anniversary takes place at a time when relations between Catholics and Lutherans have entered a new era of friendship. Both these events bring into focus how in our present world there is a need for constructive dialogue between peoples of all faiths.

The last time that the Commission conducted a similar survey was in 2001 - 2002. At that time the overall conclusion was "There is clearly a substantial ecumenical awareness in the Diocese" and the present survey doesn't suggest any diminution of that awareness. Indeed the conclusion is that "there is significant involvement of members of the Diocese working both locally and as officers of Local Ecumenical Bodies". The Report shows that much Parish involvement is highest in 'Food Banks', 'Traidcraft' followed closely by chaplaincy work in prison, hospitals and universities and colleges and 'Street Pastors'. The Report concludes "The Ecumenical activities between the churches are much more detailed in this survey and are very impressive. Both Spiritual Witness and practical projects show the churches working together well".

In the 'Foreword' to the 2001-2002 Report it was stated that in East Anglia "There is a great need for mutual understanding and respect and plenty of opportunity for working together for the good of all". The present Report indicates that there has been a positive response to the opportunities referred to in the earlier Report. In the present document it is clear that members of the Diocese have responded well to the challenges facing our present society and in doing so have given considerable witness to the ecumenical cause.

I would like to thank all those involved in carrying out this survey and for putting the report together.

UT UNUM SINT- That we may be one!



Rt Rev Alan Hopes
Bishop of East Anglia



Ecumenical Survey 2015 - 2016

1a On which local Ecumenical body is your parish represented?

- 38 Churches Together
- 9 Christians Together
- 9 Other – Give details.
- 2 Church Network
- 2 Fraternal Meetings
- 1 Women’s World Day of Prayer
- 1 Food Bank
- 3 None

1b State the number of clergy and lay representatives from your church on the above Ecumenical bodies.

124

1c. What is the average number of meetings of the Ecumenical body per year?

6

*There were three NIL RETURNS to the questions in this section!

2a Over the last five years have members of your parish community held any of the following offices:

- 15 Chairperson
- 6 Vice chairperson
- 9 Secretary
- 5 Treasurer
- 17 Member of the Executive

2b Over the last five years have members of your parish community served on any National Ecumenical body?

- 5 Yes
- 3 No

3 Are there regular clergy/minister meetings between other local churches? - Please list:

Clergy Fraternal/meeting - from 1 to up to 6 times a year
Meet at Costa Coffee for prayer, lunch and planning
Occasional lunch and meeting
Prayer Breakfasts - Sudbury and Hadleigh- impossible for me

Clergy Meetings lapsed- but local area based churches meet, plan, services and events

Monthly meetings with RC, Methodist, Salvation Army

Meetings with RC Baptist, Methodist, Walsingham Orthodox, Salvation Army

Meetings with C of E , Baptist, Methodist, Quakers and New Wine

Meetings with RC, Methodist, C of E, Congregational Church,

Meetings with RC, C of E, Methodist, United Reform, Alive, The Hub Project

4a Is your parish community in a covenant with another ecclesial community? - Give details please:

3 Yes

33 No

Drayton, Taverham C of E,

Thorpe Marriot Ecumenical,

Today's Family Tree Life Church Drayton,

Taverham Evangelical.

With Churches Together Groupings -

North Walsham,

Aylsham,

Wroxham and Hoveton.

Bungay dating back to 2000 but seems to be passé now - inter communion a problem.

No but privileged to use URC church for Mass

No but used to support a Tanzanian Community- now dissolved

5 Does the parish take part in any other Ecumenical activities?

3 Social action

14 Street/town pastors

40 Food bank

2 Open door

9 Night shelter

5 Soup kitchen,

8 Clothing making/bank

28 Traidcraft

4 Open the Book

18 Prayer group

- 11 Bible study group
- 1 Alpha Course discussion group
- 33 Lent group
- 8 Worship music group
- 15 Hospital chaplaincy
- 17 Prison chaplaincy, university/college chaplaincy
- 5 Hospice chaplaincy
- 5 Sea port chaplaincy
- 3 Work place/industrial chaplaincy - please add any other activities
 - 2 Service Chaplaincy
 - 1 Eco Faith Network.
 - 1 Lent Lunches
 - 1 nil return

*This is a more detailed response than last time when only 1 reply came for Traidcraft and now there are 28! Both practical and spiritual witness is all very impressive. There is a much greater awareness of social action and working together

6 Do you take part in?

- 26 Remembrance Day Services,
- 22 Advent services/events
- 38 The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 8 Holocaust Memorial Day
- 29 Lenten Activities
- 8 Pentecost Events
- 17 Meditation /Prayer Day
- 1 Women's day of prayer
- 1 Harvest

Pilgrimages - Please give details:

- 3 Walsingham
- 2 Lourdes
- 1 St Walstan's Well
- 1 Bamberg

-
- 1 Red Mount Pilgrimage with the C of E
 - 1 Boulogne sur Mer
 - 2 Israel
 - 1 Taizé

7a Is there an exchange of pulpits during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?

- 14 Yes
- 22 No

8a What is the proportion of Catholics to non-Catholics in your parish school?

- Catholics Ranged from 18% to 99%
- Non Catholics Ranged from 1% to 82 %

8b How many Catholics attend the local non catholic schools?

Most replies were just guesses or unable to specify

- 21 Range 5-200

8c Do you have access to them?

- 16 Yes
- 18 No

9a Does your parish have a Youth/Young Adult Group? - Give details:

- 11 Yes
- 19 No
- 1 "Hope to start one "

Examples: Kids for Christ, Youth for Christ, Altar Servers, Young people's choir,
Informal Ablaze Mass

9b Are there any Ecumenical Youth/ Young Adult Groups locally? - Give details:

- 18 Yes
- 20 No

Examples: Baptist/C of E, Methodist/Cof E, "The Holy Hangout", Messy Church,
Beach Mission, FAYAP, Fun Day - City Centre Churches,

“The Point”, Youth Bus”, Dance class run by a parishioner.

10 What joint action leads to understanding of other ecclesial communities? – Give details:

- 8 Meetings/shared activities
- 7 Unity Services
- 7 Easter Activities
- 3 Advent
- 3 Prayer Groups/Spaces
- 3 Songs of Praise
- 3 Women’s World Day of prayer
- 2 Social with Baptists
- 2 Lunches
- 2 Justice and Peace work
- 2 Lent discussion groups
- 1 Town Christmas Carol Service
- 1 Inductions
- 1 Fraternal
- 1 Harvest Supper
- 1 Bible Study Group
- 1 Welcome given
- 1 Town pastors
- 1 Fairtrade
- 1 VE Day Celebrations
- 1 FEPOW – Far East Prisoners of War
- 1 Healing Service
- 14 Nil Returns

11 How many of your congregation attend Ecumenical events and services?

14 on average Ranged from 3- 50

12 Did you do something to mark 50 years since the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism-Christian Unity – Give details:

- 94% said “NO” or did not respond.
 “ No, doubt if they have ever heard of it
 “ Not as a parish, but individually answered a questionnaire”
- 2 “Planned for later in the year”
 “Mentioned in a Homily”
 “No, but mentioned in a fraternal discussion in preparation for a Magna Carta Songs of Praise”.
 “Talks and inserts into the weekly bulletin”

13 Which other Non-Christian religions are there in your parish?

- 15 Islam
 10 Judaism
 8 Hindu
 6 Jehovah Witness
 4 Buddhism
 4 Unitarian Church
 3 Sikh
 2 Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints
 1 Spiritualist Church
 1 Baha’i
 1 Pagan
 1 Hare Krishna
 3 Unspecified
 1 Inter religious unspecified.
 2 “No idea, I do not think any”
 “ Unsure, I don’t think we have a mosque or Synagogue in our parish”
 “A variety of faiths within prison and good relations with their leaders”
 2 “There are individuals but no place of worship!”

Places of Worship include:

Peterborough: 5 Mosques, 1 Temple, 2 Gurdwaras, No Synagogue - meet in a school.

Coastal Deanery: 1 new Hindu Temple, 1 Mosque in a room above a shop, Baha'i meets at home.

Norwich: 2 Synagogues

14. Is there anything you would like to add?

33% Yes

8% No

59% made no response

- The comments reflected a good positive relationship with most of the other churches. There are some Churches from other denominations which do not participate locally.
- Isolated rural communities and an aging population were mentioned too, however efforts are being made to get together to pray and socialise.
- Some church leaders are lacking in enthusiasm and are unwilling to take on extra activities and dominate meetings. The laity feels frustrated by this and says it is a backward step.
- Several mentioned that the Catholic schools are spread out and not easily accessible to all. Pupils have to travel a long way to a Catholic High School.
- Mention was made of working with a Trust and being Governors of local schools- not Catholic.
- Relationships with Interfaith groups are friendly. They tend to be in city areas but can be found all over the Diocese.
- One very negative comment about another Christian Church!

**Diocesan Commission for Dialogue and Unity
Ecumenical and Inter Religious and Inter Faith Survey 2015-2016.**

Notes:

Two copies of the survey were sent out to all parishes so that the clergy and a lay person could fill it in separately.

The last survey was sent to Deaneries who asked each parish to fill it in. This was usually undertaken by the clergy.

Survey Summary and Commentary

Here is a summary of the findings with relevant comments and comparisons.

Question 1-2b:

- Last time there was a 92% response to this question.
- There were 127 people – 53 clergy and 74 lay people who acted as Ecumenical representatives over a 5 year period.
- *Before*-17 people were Chairpersons, 15 held the position of Vice chairperson, 4 were Secretary, 2 were the treasurer with no one else on an executive.
- *Now* the total was 124 with 15 as Chairperson, 6 as Vice chairperson, 9 as Secretary, 5 as Treasurer and 17 on the executives which is good.
- This demonstrates there is a significant involvement of members of the Diocese working both locally and as officers of Local Ecumenical Bodies.
- At the National level there are 5 people on National Bodies.

Question 3:

- Were there regular clergy meetings with other local ministers- 45% yes with 23% reporting no. The churches represented at these meeting depended on the locality and often involved a meal.

Question 4:

- *Before* the number of Covenants with other church community was 12 yes and 43 no. *Now* the number for yes is 3 and 33 for no with a lot of nil returns. Are these covenants broken, or the time period is finished, or do people not know about them?

Question 5:

- The Ecumenical activities between the churches are much more detailed in this survey and very impressive. Both Spiritual Witness and practical projects show the churches working together well.

Question 6:

- All these events are greatly improved in participation with the exception of the Holocaust Memorial and Pentecost events.

Question 7:

- The exchange of pulpits during the week of prayer for Christian unity has declined. It used to be 24 yes with nine no and is now 14 yes with 22 no.

Question 8a:

- There is a very big range here from 99% Catholics in one school down to only 20%. For non-Catholics in a Catholic School it is a similar range from 82% down to 1%. Immigrants and migrants are not asked or offered automatically the option of the Roman Catholic school in the area. There are a good number 19 of responses indicating there was no Roman Catholic school in their parish.

8b:

- Most were unable to give the number of catholic children attending non-Catholic schools the range was from 5 to 200 with the 21 just a guess or unable to specify.

8c:

- 47% were able to say yes they do have access to the schools and 53% replied no.

Question 9a:

- There are roughly the same number of youth groups in parishes with 11 answering yes and 19 replying no, compared with 10 yes and 12 no before. These groups include kids for Christ, youth for Christ, altar servers, young people's choir and informal ablaze mass.

9b:

- There is however an increase in Ecumenical Youth groups with 18 stating yes These include "The Holy

Hang Out”, Messy Church, Beach Mission, Youth Bus, a joint Baptist and Church of England Youth Group and FAYAP.

Question 10:

■ Joint action which leads to understanding of other religious communities included-religious activities such as prayer groups, songs of praise, Town and Christmas carol service, harvest supper and a healing service. Social activities-included fair trade, justice and peace work, V E Day celebrations and FEPOW the Far East Prisoners of War association. There were however 14 nil returns on this question.

Question 11:

■ The average number in a congregation attending ecumenical events and services was 14. The range was from 3 to 50 people in any parish. Those that responded with a percentage the range of people in the congregation attending ecumenical events was 1 to 30%.

Question 12:

■ Only 6% celebrated the 50 years since the Vatican II decree on Ecumenism -Christian unity. It was mentioned in a homily or in the weekly bulletin and 2 events are planned for later in the year.

Inter Faith Section Questions:

Question 13:

■ There were 13 non-Christian faith religions identified in various parishes. The major responses indicated Muslim 15, Jewish 10, and Hindu 8.

■ There are only about a dozen places of Worship identified in the Diocese.

Concluding remarks:

Question 14:

■ 33% of the replies wanted to add further comments. Most of the comments reflected a good positive relationship with the other Churches.

■ The laity in some cases felt frustrated by the lack of enthusiasm of some church leaders to engage more and felt the clergy dominated meetings.

■ The long distances pupils have to travel to a Catholic High School was highlighted. The Primary Schools too were spread out over the Diocese and not accessible to everyone. It was good that local Catholics were working and supporting local schools too as teachers and governors.

■ Inter faith groups were friendly, mainly found in urban areas but found throughout the Diocese.

Thoughts from a County Ecumenical Officer

The Cambridgeshire Ecumenical Council (CEC), which employs me as the part-time County Ecumenical Officer (CEO), is what is known as an Intermediate Body (IB), which were set up throughout England in the early 1990s following changes to ecumenical structures at national level.

CEC has a core membership taken from the major denominations in the county – Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Society of Friends (Quaker) and URC. In addition representatives from the Congregational Federation, Lutherans, Orthodox and others sometimes attend meetings. Church Leaders or their representatives meet together privately one or twice a year. Four of Cambridgeshire's Church Leaders (the two Anglican Bishops of Ely and Huntingdon, the Quaker 'church leader' and the URC Eastern Synod Moderator) live within the county, which can be extremely helpful. The executive arm of CEC is the Standing Committee, which comprises CEC's Chair, the Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs) and the CEO. This group meets three or four times a year and is in close contact between meetings.

One of the original tasks undertaken by IBs was as 'Sponsoring Body' to Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) and CEC therefore has oversight of the LEPs in Cambridgeshire, in particular those with single congregation or covenanted partnership status. Supporting LEPs is a key role for the CEO, and I am in regular contact with most of ours. It should be noted, however, that not all LEPs need or look for the same kind of oversight, and some of them now have little need of direct support from a CEO or IB.

Catholics are, of course, unable to be full partners in single congregation LEPs but in two of them (Bar Hill and Cambourne) Mass is celebrated on a Saturday evening (served from Our Lady and English Martyrs): there is a covenant between the Catholic community and Bar Hill Church and it is hoped that the existing good working relationship at Cambourne can be further developed. In addition, Geoff Cook is a member of the support groups for Bar Hill, Cambourne and Whittlesford/Pampisford (which he chairs) LEPs. The Chaplaincy to People at Work also has LEP status and Bishop Alan is one of its Patrons.

Another key role for a CEO is maintaining links with CT groups: these are present in all the market towns and some of the larger villages across the county. CEC, unlike other IBs, has never adopted a membership structure for CT groups and this has had the disadvantage that it has been impossible to establish a really strong network. This means that it is difficult for me to know exactly how widespread Catholic involvement is, but there seem to be some surprising gaps and it would be good to think that in the future even more encouragement could be given to Catholics to participate in local ecumenism.

Beyond LEPs, CT groups and other clearly ecumenical groupings a CEO's job description may hold some surprises - I had not anticipated that representing CEC (and indeed 'Faith Groups') on bodies such as the Local Strategic Partnership or the Resilience Forum, for example, might fall within my remit! Moreover, a major priority for ecumenical working in recent years is the issue of faith provision in areas of new housing. Cambourne has grown fast and more houses are now planned both east and west: major developments are coming in Alconbury Weald, near Huntingdon, Northstowe (north-west of Cambridge off the A14), where after years of stop and start building has finally begun and North West Cambridge (a major University of Cambridge development). A new town is planned near Waterbeach, a large development is proposed on land at RAF Wyton and there is also significant new build continuing around Cambridge, Ely and St Neots in particular, to say nothing of smaller builds wherever developers can find land. CEC and CT groups are attempting both to secure faith provision and to contribute to the development of community in these places, but it is not an easy task. Geoff Cook chairs Shared Churches (Ely) Ltd., which is the vehicle used by the mainstream churches in Cambridgeshire for the provision and ownership of shared church buildings where this approach is possible. It has to be said, however, that it is not likely in the current financial climate that any denominations, separately or together, are in a position to build the number of new churches that will be needed and so creative and flexible working around the issues is required.

One area of ecumenical working that has been increasing in recent years is joint action on social justice issues, and this has seen the establishment of foodbanks, money advice centres, credit unions, refugee support groups and similar groupings in many places. These are all areas in which people of faith (and indeed no faith) can work together in their local context 'for the common good' and the Catholic Church's strong history of social teaching and actions supports this practical way of helping people who are in difficult, sometimes desperate, circumstances. It has the advantage for many people (non-Catholics as well as Catholics) that the 'difficult' issues such as Eucharistic sharing are not in the forefront while working together to help others reflects the gospel message in a very clear way.

Another area of increased importance is that of inter-religious dialogue, and the Dialogue and Unity Commission's Inter Religious sub-group works hard to encourage closer contact with other faiths in whatever ways are practical and permissible. The event held at St John's Cathedral in November 2015 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Vatican II document 'Nostra Aetate' is one example of this.

More formally, Churches Together in England is working to produce 'A New Framework for Local Ecumenism': this is a 'work in progress' at the moment, but it is hoped that it will enable more creative and flexible ways of ecumenical partnership in the future that will better reflect the current ecumenical landscape.

Priscilla Barlow
County Ecumenical Officer,
Cambridgeshire
December 2016

The work of the East Anglian Diocesan Inter Religious and Inter Faith Sub Committee of the Commission for Dialogue and Unity

Composition of the Sub Committee

Who we are?

■ We are a group comprised of representatives from each of the Deaneries of the Diocese, although at present there are vacancies for the Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich Deaneries.

■ The current members are Brian Keegan (Coordinator), Sean Finlay, Priscilla Barlow and Mags Bulmer.

How we operate?

■ Our group members join and participate in the work of the existing Inter Faith Groups where they exist i.e. Cambridge, Norwich, Peterborough and Wisbech.

What do we do?

■ We participate in events organised nationally by the Bishops Conference.

We receive greetings for Faith Groups from the Vatican via the Bishops Conference on their significant days of celebration i.e. Yom Kippur. Katharina Smith-Muller, the secretary to Archbishop Kevin McDonald the Bishops Conference Bishop responsible for Inter Religious Dialogue also sends suitable bidding prayers for these occasions which are passed onto Parishes for them to use.

■ We have met with the Diocesan Directors of Education and Youth service to share ideas about promoting Inter Religious Dialogue and discuss cooperation.

■ We have organised events.

▼ In 2008 we organised for the British Version of the Global Ethics Exhibition to be displayed in Our Lady and the English Martyrs Cambridge, St John's Cathedral in Norwich and Peterborough Cathedral. Local Faith Groups and dignitaries attended these events to help communities across East Anglia to understand the common aims of the major religions.

▼ In 2012 we sought and obtained money so we could purchase our own copy of the Global Ethics Exhibition complete with display boards.

▼ We have lent on free loan our copy of the Global Ethics exhibition to several schools in the Diocese including St John Fisher in Peterborough, St Mary's in Lowestoft as well as various Inter Faith Groups including Huntingdon, Wisbech and Peterborough.

▼ 2015 we organised a seminar in St John's Cathedral to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate. Archbishop Kevin McDonald from the Bishops Conference spoke on behalf of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, Dr Jonathan Gorsky on behalf of the Jewish Faith and Dr Musharraf Hussain the Muslim Faith. The seminar was attended by over 100 people including local faith groups and civic leaders.

▼ In 2017 we are planning to organise an Inter Faith Pilgrimage to Walsingham.

Brian Keegan

November 2016

