

Annual Report 1st September 2008 to 31st August 2009

Overview

This has been another busy year, with many encouraging results, but also one in which we have seen comings and goings amongst workers and trustees.

The Trust

The trustees have met eight times, with Tony Buck, our senior worker, often present for the first part of the meeting. We have continued to use well-established sub-groups to plan for the Annual Open Meeting, Halifax Charity Gala, our Vision day and the editions of 'In-form'. Other sub-groups have been called for specific purposes, including one on linking churches and schools, which resulted in the production of a useful pack of information and advice for all Calderdale churches. Two supporters helped trustees with this initiative.

In October both Mark Stephenson and Mark Priestley resigned as trustees, due to heavy work commitments. We are very grateful for all they have done for CICS, especially to Mark Stephenson for his long service on the trust. For much of the year we have had only six trustees, so the work load has been heavy. We are pleased that Julie Harris from St. John's, Cragg Vale became a trustee in July; but we are actively looking for more members of the team.

John Hoyle continued to act as Treasurer though he had hoped to hand on this role before the year began. In July Rosemary Wright, while still continuing to be the trust Administrator, took on the Treasurer role – but only on a temporary basis. We thank her for doing this but urgently need others to step up and help. John has done a sterling job on the finances since 2002 showing faithfulness, skill, realism and vision.

Twice a year Scripture Union run Associate Body Days to update trusts on such key matters as employment law, the complex and changing pattern of child protection, and developments in schools work. We thank S.U. for all that we gain from such days, for their ongoing email advice, for the worker training they provide, and for the presence of a staff member whenever we interview.

We have also benefitted from the generous gift of time and advice on fund-raising from John Kirkby, the founder of Christians Against Poverty, and a fund-raising training session from Voluntary Action Calderdale.

The Workers

After contributing much to the work of CICS and to the young people, Beth Bentley left at the end of October, and we were pleased to see so many young people and some supporters at Beth's farewell evening. Tony handled a heavy work-load on his own for the rest of that term with great efficiency and effectiveness – aided by a number of invaluable volunteers, most of whom have helped all through the year. Esther Woolcock began her work with CICS on Jan. 1st 2009. She settled in quickly under Tony's guidance and leadership, and has made her own contribution to the work. We feel very blessed by God to have two gifted workers of such quality, who communicate effectively both with young people and staff, and who work together well as a team. We thank Karen Arnold for her perceptive work as their line-manager, and pastor Stephen Bowers and all at Huddersfield Christian Fellowship who have given spiritual support to Tony and Esther respectively.

Tony and Esther have benefitted from the training and mentoring provided by Scripture Union. They have also attended a 2-day course run by a Christian charity, MARS, and are now qualified to deliver their course on Marriage And Relationship Skills.

(For full details of the schools work, please see the workers' report enclosed.)

The Supporters

We constantly thank God for the many supporters who are involved in various aspects of our work. Tony and Esther are supported in school lunch-time and after-school clubs by many adults and senior students, without whom the full programme could not run.

This year 1900 *'It's Your Move'* transition books for year 6 pupils, paid for by churches and individuals, were distributed in 68 primary schools, almost entirely by supporters.

CICS church reps do an excellent job communicating the exciting opportunities which our workers are taking up in schools. We would love to have a committed enthusiast doing this in every church in Calderdale. Our news letter 'In-form', edited by Pauline Edwards and designed by George Smith, was published each term and copies delivered to every church. The CICS web-site is regularly updated with reports on what the workers are doing, a current daily prayer diary and details of forthcoming events. Information is also sent to all on our email list. We believe that keeping supporters informed is vital so that they are encouraged in their faithful praying, giving and volunteering.

Prayer

Prayer bookmarks, listing all the lunch time clubs and leaders, were distributed with 'In-form' in January. Trustees, workers and supporters met for a Prayer Breakfast in the autumn, on a snowy Prayer Evening in February, and for a Prayer and Paint Evening before the Gala. Prayer is fundamental to all this work and we are so grateful for faithful prayer back-up all the year round.

Part of our vision is the establishment, throughout Calderdale, of local prayer groups for schools, and in 2010 we hope to encourage this by joining in with a new national initiative, *Pray for Schools*. A start was made when a group in the Upper Calder valley held a successful evening hearing about and praying for their local schools.

Finance

Despite the credit crunch CICS supporters have continued to give generously. Much fund-raising has been done – from very large events to small individual efforts – all of which have been an encouragement and have contributed considerably to our funds. However we have continued to use, as planned, the accumulated reserves ear-marked for our second worker, and these reserves are running low. We urgently need to see a growth in income if we are to continue to employ two workers. We desperately need people with fund-raising skills to offer help especially with grant applications. We received a welcome grant from the Paristamen Foundation and a very generous grant of £6000 from the diocese of Wakefield, but were disappointed when several other applications were unsuccessful. As a Christian charity we do not easily fit the requirements of many grant-making bodies.

Our gratitude

CICS is above all dependent on team-work, and we are heartily thankful to all who contribute. In this report we can only highlight some aspects, but without everyone playing their part the work could not go forward as it does. CICS seeks to keep God firmly at the centre of all we do, so that the good news of Jesus can reach the young people of Calderdale for whom CICS exists.

Daphne Cansdale (Chair of CICS trust)