



Churches Together Around Ludlow



PRESS NOTICE – 30 NOVEMBER 2012

SOCIAL NEED IN LUDLOW – A CALL FOR ACTION

Some 200 residents of Ludlow packed an open meeting at the Broad Street Methodist Church last Thursday (29 November) to hear about the report 'Ludlow under Pressure'.

Prepared by a group drawn from the local churches against the background of the financial crisis of 2008 and the recession, the report tells the bleak story of increasing social need in Ludlow where some wards are amongst the most 20% deprived in England. It identifies in particular the deep anxieties and unacceptable suffering of older people at risk, the desperate needs of people in the 16 - 24 age group, the real impact limited community transport has for those seeking work and health care, and the serious shortage of social and affordable housing.

The meeting heard the authors of the report describe how, motivated by the increasing demand for the churches' food parcels, their enquiries and face to face meetings with representatives of Ludlow organisations working in the area of social care had confirmed that needs were increasing, the resources to meet them were diminishing, and all the signs were that the situation would only get worse as spending cuts bite even deeper.

The report calls for action on four fronts. For older people at risk, it calls for a town-centre base where isolated elderly people can enjoy companionship and refreshment, an Older People's Forum for Ludlow and a coordinated volunteer scheme for visitors to older people who are housebound.

For young people there is a need for a drop-in centre staffed by volunteers with professional help aimed at helping young people into training, work experience and employment opportunities.

In terms of transport, the report recommends a number of measures including community transport and shopmobility schemes and a campaign to urge the local authority to improve accessibility of train and bus services, and the range and frequency of bus services.

Finally, as regards the severe shortage of rented accommodation in the town and surrounding area, the report calls for sustained informed campaign for a greater measure of housing justice.

The meeting enthusiastically endorsed the creation of a group to co-ordinate offers of help and support, to monitor progress and to encourage people and organisations to tackle these issues. Anyone interested in being involved should contact the chair of the group who prepared the report, Methodist minister The Revd Dr Neil Richardson (01568 780710)

Speaking afterwards about the report, Dr Richardson said “Despite its alleged affluence, Ludlow has areas of significant poverty and deprivation. Severe cuts to services are being implemented. So far only 20% of them have been made, and more severe cuts to welfare budgets are in the pipeline.”

“Although our country now has to find ways to live within its means, we still have choices we can make about our priorities. Making adequate provision for the poorest and most vulnerable people should be a top priority.”

“So our hope is that our report will be a catalyst for change. We all need to appreciate what is happening and why, and decide how we are going to respond. The wellbeing of our community depends in part on state provision. It also depends on neighbourliness, a sense of belonging, trust between people, and a greater measure of equality. So this report is concerned with what we can all do to improve the quality of life for everyone in our local community in these harsher economic times.”

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. For further information about the report contact The Revd Dr Neil Richardson on 01568 780710.
2. Copies of the report ‘Ludlow under Pressure – A Report on Urgent Social Needs’ can be obtained from Barry Forrester on 01584 878872