

Churches Together in Barnstaple (CTiB) Annual Report for period to August 2025



'Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds... and all the more as you see the Day approaching.' **Hebrews 10:25**

This is the second annual report since the recommencement of the work of CTiB in 2023. We are blessed and encouraged to have welcomed One Life Church, Barnstaple Baptist Church and North Devon Christian Fellowship into membership in the last 12 months. This currently makes 19 members comprising of 14 churches and 5 local Christian organisations.

The Enabling Group was appointed in September 2024 and has met eight times since then to build relationship, pray, and co-ordinate activity, the focus of which remains prayer and mission. Members of the group are nominated by member congregations/agencies and have a heart to encourage, bless and serve the body of Christ in Barnstaple and simply see Jesus lifted high through the work of unity.



They are:

- Paul Taylor (Chair) – Trinity
- Gary Owen (Vice Chair) – Two Rivers MC
- Paula Clarke (Treasurer) – Grosvenor
- Roger Bartlett (Secretary) – Freedom
- Rachel Keenan – Trinity
- Phil Pugsley – Christians Against Poverty (CAP)
- Mary Ware – North Devon House of Prayer (NDHOP)
- Shirley Baxter – Christchurch Bear Street
- Joanna Pay – St John's Bishop's Tawton

Christmas activities included the annual Christmas Day Community Lunch now in its tenth year and hosted by Grosvenor Church providing company, love and hope for 90 people who would otherwise be alone. Ruth Richardson from One Life Church kindly co-ordinated 25 singers from across congregations to form a 'Flash Mob' Christmas choir that sang carols at Tesco Extra through December. Tesco staff were delighted & would love the choir to return. The Nativity Trail and Christmas Quest events for children also went well.

For the first time since covid, as many as 150 people took part in a Good Friday walk of witness organised by Robin Smith from Trinity with contributions from other churches at the 4 stations around the town. A team of 14 evangelists engaged with passers-by. Whilst the weather was very wet, the act of collective witness was very powerful with many on-lookers taking 'Why Easter' booklets.



At Pentecost, CTiB helped to organise activities for the 'Love South West - North Devon' campaign which covered the wider North Devon and Torridge areas. A separate report from that event is available, but there was a great sense of blessing, especially from the week of prayer that was organised in the lead up and plans are in place to repeat this in 2026.



On 12th July, CTiB partnered with St Marys Pilton and St Peters Ashford to provide opportunities for Christians to join with thousands of others across the South West to pray on the SW Coast Path for God to move in our region. Events were held on the Strand, at Baggy Point and opposite Ashford Garden Centre with more than 60 people taking part in total.

CTiB members have been able to support Marilyn Saunders and members of St Paul's Sticklepath as they launched their 'free hot chocolate outreach' to students at Petroc between 8.15 and 9.15am each Thursday in term time. They are really encouraged by what God is doing through this - how well they have been received; how relationships are growing with students & staff and how they have been able to pray with individuals. They plan to restart in September and hope to grow the team further and offer bacon baps too. For more information, do contact Marilyn at St Paul's.





We relaunched a CTiB Facebook account and have an email circulation list currently of 122 and a WhatsApp broadcast of 163 who receive regular messages about CTiB activities. In the Spring, the team also launched a CTiB website www.ctib.org.uk which was designed by Caleb Hopkinson from *Flint Cloud* as well as NDHOP. The site is intended to enable Christians to find out more about the work of unity and upcoming events but it also provides individuals who may be exploring Christianity with details of member churches and agencies as well as local alpha courses. At the same time, CTiB postcards have been produced for use in churches or by ministries on the street. These can be given to contacts directing them to the website with an option for providing personal contact details to help with follow up contact.

The team organised nine monthly prayer breakfasts this year, usually at Trinity, but occasionally visiting other churches that were willing to host including St John's Newport, St Paul's Sticklepath & Grosvenor. These are precious times of prayer & fellowship open to anyone (not just leaders) with a heart for building unity. In April we prayed with local members of the emergency services who shared their experiences and challenges. In addition to these times, following on from Love SW, NDHOP are now also kindly hosting an hour of prayer for unity on the second Monday of each month between 7 and 8pm.

CTiB have provided finance/resources for the work of Street Pastors, CAP, the Try Praying Street Team as well as the Community Cupboard which operates from the House of Prayer three mornings each week providing free essentials and prayer to those in need. The team there have had the joy of leading two customers to faith in Jesus already. 😊



We have been able to help promote a number of events run by members and other groups. These include the CAP Breakfast, Quiz, Christmas Party and visit by evangelist Michael Emmett; a Growing Faith Mission Shed day; an Integrated Mission training event run by Amigos; a Billy Graham Life and Witness training event as well as Men of Devon & United Generation events.

In February, local church leaders and their spouses came together for a 3-course evening meal held at Grosvenor Church and arranged by members of the enabling group. This was a very precious evening of fellowship, encouragement and prayer together that we hope will be repeated on an annual basis.



Local Church Leaders @ Fellowship meal

We sense that a God is beginning to move in a very significant way in our nation and the tide may be turning. We need to prepare ourselves and believe that, central to this, is building unity in response to the prayer of our Lord Jesus in John 17 – *'That they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.'* This is not about 'short term campaigns' but is a life-long commitment to 'journey together' in love not just for the blessing of the local church, but to see our community transformed by the power of God's Holy Spirit.

We humbly share this report with thanks to Jesus not to, in any way, seek recognition for 'what we have done' but simply to encourage others and because we really want to be accountable, as an Enabling Group, to those who appoint the group each year. Our heart is to lift up the name of Jesus by blessing, encouraging and serving our church leaders and the wider body of Christ. If you have any thoughts, ideas or a sense from the Lord about anything you feel will strengthen this work, please don't keep it to yourself. We would really value you sharing it with us so we can all contribute to this work together.

Thank you all for your support and prayer for this precious work. **Kingdom come!**

Roger Bartlett – On behalf of CTiB Enabling Group