



## Churches Rural Group

Representatives of Christian denominations with a significant rural presence and other organisations concerned with rural life and ministry meet as a Co-ordinating Group of Churches Together in England to discuss issues of common interest. At the meeting in June 2017, topics discussed included:

**‘Everybody Welcome!’ Rural Mission Sunday – 16 July 2017.** An opportunity to celebrate the life of the rural church, reflect on Christian hospitality, and host a community event to make everybody welcome. See <http://germinate.net/mission/rural-mission-sunday/rural-mission-sunday-2017/> for more information and resources, including a special prayer for the day written by the Archbishop of Canterbury. ‘Country Way’ Issue 75 also focuses on welcome and hospitality and is available free on-line at <http://countryway.org.uk/>



**New Housing Areas, mission and building community.** Jim Currin reported on a CTE visit to the new garden city development at Ebbsfleet in North Kent, hosted by Penny Marsh. He noted the range of different responses and creative forms of engagement by local churches, which provide a good example for rural churches in areas where there is new housing development.

**Brexit and its implications.** A recent conference at the Arthur Rank Centre looked at the implications of Brexit for rural areas. Churches can provide pastoral support for those who are affected, and also offer safe space for reflection, discussion and reconciliation where communities are divided. A helpful resource is ‘Calling people of good will’ – a series of 6 studies on the common good. [http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/496433/Home/News/Latest\\_news\\_articles/Calling\\_People\\_of.aspx](http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/496433/Home/News/Latest_news_articles/Calling_People_of.aspx)

**Movement Day.** Actually two days, to look at praying, sharing, listening and learning to help churches to transform their communities. 6/7 October at Westminster Central Hall in London <http://movementday.uk/>

**Thy Kingdom Come.’** ‘Rural’ stories from global wave of prayer were reported, eg prayer on a different hill in Shropshire each day; prayer meetings at the National Agricultural Centre; a major prayer conference of ‘rural’ intercessors; local rural schools and churches praying etc. The Shropshire hills story is in News on [www.cte.org.uk](http://www.cte.org.uk)

**And finally:** ‘Growing Together.’ The 4-yearly International Rural Churches Association (IRCA) conference will be held in Lincoln, New Zealand from 15-21 April 2018. Experience a rural church learning community, hear about rural ministry in New Zealand and share stories with others from around the world. Full details are on the website <https://irca.online/conferences/> including arrangements for optional pre-and post-conference tours or homestays in New Zealand. There will also be a ‘young adult stream’ running alongside the main conference, for 16-25 year olds. Early-bird discount for bookings made before 30 September 2017. Why not plan an Antipodean holiday around this interesting conference!



**Present:** Elizabeth Clark (Chair & ARC / Methodist / URC), Jim Currin (CTE), Jill Hopkinson (ARC / C of E / Fresh Expressions Rural Hub), Christopher Jones (Farming Community Network / Agricultural Christian Fellowship), Jerry Marshall (ARC CEO), Barry Osborne (Smaller Free Churches Group / REN), Ann Wright (C of E / IRCA Europe), and Chris Oxley (FCN)