



Churches Together Around Ludlow



PRESS NOTICE – 16 NOVEMBER 2012

SOCIAL SERVICES IN LUDLOW AT BREAKING POINT

A day centre for older people, a drop-in centre for teenagers and young adults and community-based transport schemes, all supported by volunteers with professional help, are just three of the recommendations to emerge from a wide-ranging review of Ludlow's social needs commissioned by Churches Together Around Ludlow.

Prepared by a group drawn from the local churches chaired by Methodist minister, The Revd Dr Neil Richardson, the report 'Ludlow under Pressure' recommends targeting priority help to older people at risk and to young people in the 16-24 age group. The report also recommends increasing the resources given to social and affordable housing and to community transport.

Introducing the report Neil Richardson said: "Many Ludlow people are feeling the effect of cuts to benefits and services funded by central government and the local authority following the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent recession. But some are suffering real hardship as evidenced by the increasing demand for the churches' food parcels."

"CTAL decided to investigate what is happening to our local community at a time of economic downturn by talking to people from a large number of local organisations. Our report makes for sober reading."

"Needs are increasing, the resources to meet them are diminishing, and all the signs are that the situation will only get worse. The full impact of the recession and of cuts in public expenditure have yet to be felt. On top of previous large cuts, Shropshire Council is aiming to reduce spending by over £20m for 2012-13, by almost £18m for 2013-14 and by over £9m for 2014-15. In this growing crisis, the poorest and those dependent on state support are the first to suffer, and they must be our main concern."

"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."

An open meeting at which the report will be discussed is to be held at the Methodist Church in Broad Street at 7.30pm on 29 November. Meanwhile copies of the report can be obtained from any of Ludlow's churches or by contacting Barry Forrester on 01584 878872.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

For further information about the report contact The Revd Neil Richardson on 01568 780710.