



# CARITAS LEEDS

*Supporting parishes across the  
Diocese*





*“God is love” everything has its origin in God's love,  
everything is shaped by it, everything is directed  
towards it.*

*Love is God's greatest gift to humanity; it is his promise  
and our hope.*

**Pope Benedict, 2009**



**Catholic Care**  
Caritas Leeds

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# Foreword by Right Reverend Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds

*Thank you for your interest in Caritas in the Diocese of Leeds. I hope you will find this resource informative, and that you will want to support the Church's practical outreach, which gives concrete demonstration of our belief in a loving God.*

*In recent years, the Church has been rediscovering 'synodality', that is, ways of journeying together, listening together, acting together. My hope and prayer is that the work of 'caritas', love, will be enhanced by closer collaboration between the many charitable projects that exist in our part of Yorkshire.*





# Before reading further...

## Intended audience

This guidance is aimed at Catholic parishioners, priests, deacons and members of religious orders interested in organising, or simply participating in, community social activities with people living in their parish/local area.

A rich variety of work already takes place in parishes, communities and Catholic schools and colleges. Our guidance complements existing work, offering inspiration and practical tips on further activities.

Each section covers a stage of developing new activities. In practice the stages might occur in a different order or concurrently. The guidance is in a format to enable you to drop into individual sections and pull-out information in your own time and place.

The final section gives further information on key areas for action, should you decide to proceed with establishing a new activity. The process of building good relationships is key to successful activities, Sections 1-3 will help you lay good foundations together before choosing an activity.



# Using this guidance

If you have gathered a few like-minded and like-souled members of your parish community together, this guidance can be used within your meetings. We recommend exploring the different examples provided.

Each example is rich and represents lived experience.

You might want to discuss as a group:

- How is this like your situation?
- Would a similar group or activity be possible in your situation?
- What other information would be helpful?
- Could any of the stories form a basis for further exploration in your own parish community?
- Agree some actions following on from the discussion.

Appendix 1 offers a summary checklist of small steps you can take, arranged as questions that may help you work out whether you are ready to proceed, and what might benefit from further attention. You could use this as an individual or in discussions with others.

Add in section from booklet

You can edit the templates in the Appendices for use in your own parish. Each is available to download from Catholic Care Caritas Leeds resources page:

[catholic-care.org.uk](http://catholic-care.org.uk)





# Section 1: Building relationships with your parish community

## Introduction

One of the most distinguishing features of faith-based community work is its foundation on prayer. It is through prayer that the Holy Spirit guides our direction; it is in prayer that we receive encouragement to face the most challenging obstacles, and it is through prayer that we offer thanks when all goes well.

Praying about what we should do and ask in our church community, and praying for the work we participate in, expresses our dependency on God for all that we hope for.

Catholic Social Teaching emphasises the dignity of the human person at all stages of life. This has very important, practical implications for parish conversations about social activities, especially for particular groups in the community.

A dignified approach is not along the lines of, for example, 'What can we do to/for old people (as objects of pity/charity/service)?' It is cooperative; at all stages of forming activities, our focus is recognising and accepting the gifts and participation of each person towards the common good.

We seek to ensure no one is deliberately left out. We reject projects and processes that reduce people to passive dependence. If our work is to flourish, engaging others is key.



# Engaging with people

Engaging with people, and organised social activities, tend to be more successful when:

- People are active participants at all stages of identifying, developing and delivering an activity.
- Activities increase participants' sense of having a purpose that motivates them to continue.
- The activity includes people facing similar situations (e.g. recently bereaved) and/or common interests.
- There is flexibility for the participants: local, easy to get to and affordable.
- Activities are group based and can be repeated as often as the group wishes.
- Engagement is rooted in the place where people live.

It is important to listen to the stories that people can share regarding what they care about, their skills and motivation.

Who is committed to a leadership role, or has been in the past?

Listening will make it easier to work out areas of shared interest. You may be able to pull together a small group of people who have skills to lead any next steps.





# Engaging with the parish

Your parish may well already have a busy schedule of activities, run by volunteers who may consider that they are stretched and do not want to take on more. Consider what will motivate people in the parish to engage. This could include improving the range and quality of existing outreach by the parish, evangelisation, social justice and/or contributing to wider community development in the local area.

At an early stage, it is beneficial to discuss with the parish priest, deacon, religious (depending on the pastoral leadership arrangements in your parish) and parish administrator if appointed, your plan to consult others on the scope for new activities. They are key figures and can often help to achieve the goals you and others seek, in particular the parish priest has responsibilities for parish funds and property, under the oversight of the Bishop.

Talk about their experience of, and vision for, the parish. They will also have a good idea of who would be open to supporting any development in the parish. In our experience the support and expertise of parish priests, deacons and members of religious communities are enabling factors for these projects.

You will still have to undertake most of the relationship building with parishioners and others yourselves.

It is vital to establish contact with others in the local Catholic community who are already involved in activity. These may include:

- Union of Catholic Mothers/Catholic Women's League
- Local SVP group
- Parish home visiting group and/or Eucharistic Ministers within the parish
- Existing parish groups
- Members of the parish whose daily work may involve working with vulnerable people
- Catholic schools and colleges



# Engaging with the parish

To reach interested people who are already part of parish life, arrange with the priest to put a notice in the parish bulletin (and social media if used) and ask him if a request can be made at Saturday/Sunday Masses, so they can make themselves known to you.

Any new work or developments ought to build on what is already happening in the parish, not compete with it. It may even be that what is already there simply calls for more support, because those who have been involved may no longer be able to continue or are looking for others to take on the leadership after many years of service.

Beyond the Mass, plan to bring people together just to get to know each other. The goal is to inspire parishioners to discern and start their own activities and for people to realise for themselves that parish development can be fun, achievable and worthwhile.

You may also find it helpful to find out about relevant activities in neighbouring parishes and your deanery.



# Section 2: Finding out what's going on for people here and now

## Introduction

Before making any plans to run an activity, it's sensible to find out what's going on in your local area for people. You can do this by looking for published information including social media, and by contacting local organisations.

Local sources of useful information:

- Leaders of other local Christian communities and those of other faiths.
- Local libraries.
- Residents' associations and wardens of assisted living developments.
- Care home managers.
- NHS General Practices and Medical Centres – try the Practice Manager initially.
- Police Community Support Officers.
- Local Fire and Rescue services.
- Local community and voluntary service organisations, e.g. local Age UK.
- Reminiscence activities and groups.
- Local schools.
- Post Offices.
- Supermarkets' community outreach.
- Local social media, such as neighbourhood Facebook groups

It may also help to look more widely at the resources available locally, such as venues, skills and transport.



# What resources might be available in your local area?

- Parish meeting rooms and halls. Church halls are often under-used.
- Local community centres and halls.
- Local school hall or rooms.
- Minibuses owned by the local parish, school and other local organisations.

Record what you find out. You could start a folder where you and other parishioners can add details of organisations supporting activities locally. As well as helping to decide on activities, it could also be used for signposting people to other support in future.

When discussing ideas and how people could get involved, make notes of any conversations. If you want to talk and consult with larger numbers of people, then carrying out a survey could also be useful. Building effective relationships takes time – possibly a long time – and patience. It should not be rushed.

If you meet people in other organisations and places, ask about their challenges, what opportunities they could value, their advice and how they might wish to be involved or stay in touch. Some will be aware of vulnerable people and might be willing to refer them to you if the parish can help to establish activities.





# Did you know?

There is always more to learn about your local community. Talk to as many people as you can. It is useful to know who makes the decisions, who supports your aims and what parish people are passionate about.



# Section 3: Discerning opportunities to build on what is already available

## Introduction

If you know your local area, and who you can work with, you are more likely to be able to create a realistic plan of action. A new parish-led activity with older people is only one option. Working appropriately with other bodies is vital in the Church's social mission. You may find more than one of the following points is relevant in your situation.

### **If you have found there are already activities in the local area**

On its own, the fact that another organisation is delivering a voluntary activity nearby should not preclude you from starting something similar. It may be prudent to seek to learn from each other, to build on good practice and understand mutual intentions. Beyond exchanging information, if you work together more actively, you can sometimes both achieve more than you could on your own. For example, with support from those in existing activities, you might together address unmet demand, for instance through more venues or extra times.

### **Evaluate possible joint activities and funding with other organisations**

Each local organisation is likely to have its own purpose, objectives and ways of working. You should consider whether and how working with other bodies would align with the Church's mission, for example to promote the dignity of each person's life, promote participation in the community and fulfil any pastoral plans in the diocese. Some external funding for local projects may introduce conditions and approaches that sit uneasily with the voluntary nature of most parish activities. Caritas Leeds will be able to offer more advice before you enter into any formal agreements.

### **If it looks like new activity is needed**

Local conversations may have revealed a new area of activity that local people want to see. In that case, discuss with community leaders how this would build up community life or not – who might be excluded? Can that be addressed well? What impact would you anticipate on the parish/group?



# Nurturing discernment and action

Very often, individuals and families have deep roots in, and commitment to, the place where they live. They may want to get more involved in the community, but be unsure how, or just need to hear that they 'have permission'. In other words, parish-based action doesn't just happen on its own – it needs stimulating and nurturing on an ongoing basis.

Caritas Leeds can support parish-based action in this respect.

Relationships of trust and respect between people matter more than the 'start date' of a new activity group. Once you are having conversations about improving opportunities in the community, you have already started in some way to realise more community life.

The more you get to know what motivates people and what they can do, the clearer you will be about realistic prospects for action together. You will also be more able to recognise and work through any occasions where a change of focus is needed.



# Section 4: Getting new activities going

## Introduction

It is important to be creative in getting new activities off the ground. Caritas Leeds can assist by being an encouraging facilitator, who brings people together to catch a vision of what they want to do and helps them move through the practicalities of how an activity can be set up.

You could start by bringing parishioners together, perhaps over a tea and a cake to talk about ideas.

Do you want to bring people from the wider community into the discussion?

It is beneficial to bring together a team of people who have complementary skills.

You need to work out together how people's varied wishes, skills and resourcefulness could shape the activity.

Sharing ideas, skills and resources are all important factors in preparing for a new activity. Look at who the participants will be and where would be best to locate the new activity – consider accessibility and the timing of other established activities – you don't want to clash with them!

Encourage people who may well be participating in the activity to be part of the planning team: they will know what they really want to do – they may be willing and able to lead on it or at least get involved.

If there is a group of you, you may wish to set out responsibilities for each role in the group and discuss how you make use of skills and experience within your group.





# Tips on running a community event

Whether you want to get together with your neighbours over a cup of tea, organise a meal together or something different, here is some advice on areas to consider for organising a great community event.

## Safeguarding

It is recommended that any organised event with people you don't know well is held in a public place. It is probably best not to hold activities in people's homes. Building relationships with all people, including vulnerable people, is vital, but bear in mind that personal care activities and looking after people's money goes beyond support offered by a parish group and should be undertaken by the appropriate professionals.

## Plan a place to have your event

With permission from the owner/occupier, you may be able to hold a street party style event in your church grounds or in another location locally such as a communal, private or pub garden; café, a local park, driveway or school playground. You should check with your local Council what permissions are required to use a park, public building or space for your event.

If you're thinking of having a street party and you want to close the road, it's best to make enquiries with your council as soon as possible as it may take time to organise.

For more information see the Government's guidance: [www.gov.uk/organise-street-party](https://www.gov.uk/organise-street-party)



# Tips on running a community event

## Think about how you are going to record who comes to your event

It is really useful to know who comes to your event. This will enable you to get feedback from them on what they thought of the event. You will also be able to invite them to future events and activities. For a one-off event, such as maybe an exploratory meeting, you might opt to just have a registration form that you ask each participant to complete. An example of this can be found on page 56.



Name	Contact Details	Organisation	Please tick if you would like to receive notice of news and events

We will retain your details so we can keep you up to date with any events and news only if you have indicated you are happy for us to do so. You can opt out of receiving any further communications by contacting us directly at [info@catholic-care.org.uk](mailto:info@catholic-care.org.uk)

For ongoing, regular events you might opt for a register. You must ensure people consent to their personal information being kept by you and that you are not collecting any more information that necessary.

### Get film or photography consent

If you are taking any photos or films of your project or event to share with the general public or any third parties, then you must get written consent from everyone being captured on film.



# Funding your activities

Funding should never be what prevents you from carrying out an activity. Your activity may be free to deliver but if costs are involved, then there are funding opportunities to consider:

- Donations of goods and 'in-kind' support – can the venue be provided free of charge? Will local people or a local company provide donations of refreshments or food?
- 'Self-funded' activities – activity attendees pay a 'sub' each week to cover any costs incurred, such as refreshments or booking a singer.
- Fundraising activities: these can be organised locally and could include raffles, dance nights, community meals for special occasions, a book/plant sale etc.
- Parish funding – the parish may decide through the parish priest and parish committee to fund the activity directly .
- Grants: you could seek grants from local grant-giving organisations and charitable trusts, applying either through the diocese or a local parish as a constituted group with its own bank accounts. If you need help writing an application, Caritas Leeds can support, and parishioners may have experience to share.



# Advice for when an activity is not a 'success'

Preparation is an important part of setting up a successful community/parish activity. Find out what is happening already in your area. Talk with others in your parish and neighbouring parishes to find out about local needs.

If you discover that there is not an interest or attraction to your activity you may want to carry out more research on other ideas, including the options of starting small and/or teaming up with other parishes rather than having no activities at all.

If you have done your planning and checked there is not a core show of interest or base number of participants, then you may decide to either change or discontinue the activity.

It is wise to consult regularly with your volunteers and those accessing your activities, to understand evolving expectations, and discuss plans. If people attend an initial event, but numbers reduce in future sessions, then go back and ask people why and what they would engage with.

Check again that there is a need for what you are doing and that it is something people want to take part in.

**Remember that things can  
take time to establish**





# Exploring whether activities are making a difference

Seeking to understand whether activities are helpful, in a way that respects the dignity of those involved, is another way of caring for people's welfare. If you find out about how an activity is progressing and what people think of it, you are also likely to be better informed about any adjustments that may be helpful.

As a starting point you could use a simple survey, asking for example, *'What does the group mean to me?'* and *'What does joining in with [name of activity] mean to me?'*

You could develop a story board with the whole group, including photographs and quotes from attendees (with their explicit consent).

This can be participant led, and from a group perspective: the group chooses the picture and the quotes and what event or activity they want to highlight.





*“What matters in life is not great deeds, but great love.”*

**St Thérèse of Lisieux**



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# Section 5: Younger and older people learning together – intergenerational activities

## Introduction

A common trend is that due to life pressures such as family breakdown and parents moving for work, grandchildren are seeing their grandparents less, leading to a disconnection between generations. Where younger and older people have opportunities to work together, they can form mutual support, a joint sense of purpose and better understanding between generations.

One way that older people continue to have meaningful, productive activity is through engagement in intergenerational projects.

### Top tips to help younger and older people to learn together

- Take a long-term view. This will nurture growing relationships between individuals but also relationships between organisations that support the young and old.
- Acknowledge the mutual benefits that everyone will gain when talking to schools, retirement villages and care homes.
- Devise sessions in which activities are not strenuous or do not require too much concentration. Allow enough time to enable people to participate as fully as they can.
- Consider group activities that can be held in safe spaces, to promote safeguarding of young and older people.
- Schools may welcome ideas and materials combining CST (Catholic Social Teaching) and community activities, which can continue towards evidence for diocesan education inspections.



# Top tips to get schools and parishes working together

Schools are often keen to get involved with parish activities. Bear in mind that schools have tight term-time schedules. Planning needs to be organised many months ahead to fit in.

School fetes are often good places to engage with the wider parish community. Many parishes already have joint fetes. Think about having a stall to raise awareness of parish development and collect ideas around a shared parish vision.

Make links with your local church schools. They may be able to arrange for you to meet with Mini Vinnies, the pupil/student council, pupils preparing for Confirmation, Health and Social Care classes, and Vocations Days.

Think about ways that parish activities can link in with the school curriculum. One useful area is the Religious Education syllabus on topics of charity, care for others, volunteering, respect and tolerance of diversity.





# Section 6: So you want to find out some more?

## Introduction

This section highlights some key points that organisers need to address in parish activities and where to find more information. We recommend that in the first instance you contact your Caritas Coordinator to find out what support is available for establishing community activities.

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding and protecting everyone, including people at risk of harm, is everyone's responsibility. Ensure you are aware of the safeguarding procedures in the diocese and any organisation you are working with. Every diocese has a safeguarding policy and lead officer. Many parishes have also designated a safeguarding representative.

The Caritas Coordinator can support you with this and arrange for safeguarding training. Please involve them in planning and reviewing your activities.

The Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) is responsible for improving safeguarding practice throughout the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Its primary role is one of coordination, advice and support in respect of safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk across the Church.

The CSAS website ([www.csas.uk.net](http://www.csas.uk.net)) provides:

- Safeguarding resources, such as information sheets on what constitutes abuse in adults and safer recruitment of volunteers
- Forms such as volunteer registration forms
- A policy and procedure writing handbook
- CSAS also offers an enquiry line – 0207 901 1920



## **Safety**

Whether you are organising a community event or putting on a lunch club session, it is vital you ensure that you, your group or your organisation are not putting anyone at undue risk. Before any activity, it is important that a risk assessment is completed to identify any risks, and action can be taken in advance to minimise these risks. The risk assessment process will ensure that you are considering the health and safety of everyone involved in your activities. The Caritas Coordinator can support you with this. A risk assessment template is provided at Appendix 9.

## **Insurance**

Whether your activities have paid workers or volunteers, make sure that you have insurance to cover public liabilities and employment. The Caritas Coordinator can support you with this.

## **Data Protection**

It is also important that you are responsible about the data you hold on participants as well as what you do with photos and media content on them. Under GDPR (the General Data Protection Regulation), people must actively consent to their personal information being kept by you and you must ensure that you are not collecting any more information than you need.

In line with GDPR, it is also important that participants are given the opportunity to actively consent to photos or videos of them being used by you or your organisation. The Caritas Coordinator can support you with this.

## **Volunteers**

Speak to the Caritas Coordinator regarding the recruitment and support of volunteers. They will provide and process registration forms and support you with other procedures including obtaining references and undertaking DBS checks if required.

Volunteers should be recruited in a fair way, inducted into their role and supported on an ongoing basis.

For each volunteering role it is good practice to have a role description. You should request references, and you may choose to insist on the candidate going through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process if they will be working with children or adults at risk of harm.



# Helper or volunteer?

A common question you may hear as you start to establish your group is *'When am I a helper and when do I need to be a registered volunteer?'*

Good practice is that people spending their time helping an organised activity should be registered as a volunteer. You can speak to the Caritas Coordinator if this is proving problematic.

Some individuals may have been 'helpers' for many years and not want to change this. Some people may feel put off by any paperwork to become a volunteer, whilst others welcome and feel more comfortable with structure, checks and formalities.

However, being registered as a volunteer can be a very simple process.

There are various examples in parishes and in the community when someone does not need to be a formal volunteer, when they are being 'neighbourly' and helping those in their community as an individual, but not as part of an activity organised by a parish.

Examples include:

- checking on parishioners or neighbours they know to ask if they are okay
- giving friends lifts
- helping friends with shopping and;
- having refreshments with people they know who may be lonely





# Appendices



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# Appendix 1

## Checklist to achieve Caritas Leeds Accreditation

This checklist can be used at any point while you are planning and delivering activities. You may find it particularly useful for reflection after reading any of the sections in the guidance.

- Have you contacted Caritas Leeds who can support your parish?
- Has your parish prayed together over the work?
- Do one or more people say they would benefit from the proposed new activity?
- Is the activity being provided by anyone else locally?
- Is there a venue to meet up at? Does it have accessible toilets, chairs, tables, kitchen facilities, crockery/cutlery?
- Can people reach the venue by timely, accessible public transport, and/or with help from volunteers?
- Is a telephone available to allow people to arrange transport (in case someone does not have a phone)?
- Is the venue and activity 'dementia friendly'?
- Are you familiar with the fire safety and evacuation procedures?
- Do you have a plan for how you are going to go about setting up the activity?
- Do you have a way of promoting your activities locally?
- If your plan is to have volunteers, who are they and how will you recruit them? Do you have a plan on how you will support them effectively in their roles?
- Can the parish, activity group or new fundraising cover the potential costs you may incur:
  - Volunteer DBS administration costs
  - Venue hire
  - Publicity
  - Travel and subsistence expenses for volunteers
  - Insurance
- How are you going to check if what you are doing is effective?

# Appendix 2

## What activities can you initiate?

Once you have listened to each other in your parish and to the wider community, the ideas for activities will just start to flow. Here are just a few examples:

Type of activity	Frequency	Location	Number of people participating	Number of volunteers participating
Breakfast Club	Weekly	Local pub	10	3
Coffee mornings	One off led to monthly	Church hall	32	8
Lunch Club	Weekly	Local pub	8	1
Friendship Group	Monthly for 1 ½ hours	Church hall	35 on average per session	2 with 8 helpers
Friendship Group	Fortnightly for 2 hours	Care home	17	4
Friendship Group	Monthly for 2 hours	Coffee shop	9	2
Friendship Group	Monthly for 2 hours	Church meeting room	25	9
Singing Group	Monthly for 2 hours	Church hall	9	22
Treasure hunt	Fortnightly for six months	Churches, community hall	14	24
Pen Pal Scheme	Fortnightly	Retirement villages, care homes, schools	60	23
Knit and natter	Weekly for 3 hours	Church hall	15	8
Intergenerational film project	Mainly achieved in four half-day monthly sessions	Church halls, out and about	38	6



Other activities you might wish to consider include:

**Reminiscence  
café**

**Bereavement  
support group**

**Walking Group**

**Gardening  
group**

**Craft activities**

**Intergenerational  
project**

**Trips to places  
of interest**

**Activities to give  
people new skills  
and/or education**

**Activities for  
women only or  
men only**

**Activities for  
people with  
disabilities**

**Spiritual and  
religious  
activities**



# Appendix 3

## Intergenerational Group: Friendship and skills exchange

Edith came along on the first evening of the newly formed friendship group in the local parish. She has been widowed for some years and felt very lonely and isolated. Edith's confidence grew over the weeks as the group increased in numbers. It emerged that she was a skilled seamstress in her earlier years. Edith endeared herself to the group generously sharing her skills in knitting and sewing.

Through the encouragement from Edith over time the group began to share other activities in the parish setting. She realised that she could make a positive contribution to the group.

With others, she helped to bring about interaction with young mums in the parish who felt uninvolved and isolated themselves. Deep friendships have been formed with the younger people, learning from the wisdom and skills of the older members.

This has since widened to the whole parish, drawing in people from the three churches which have been amalgamated to form one parish. The parish community is delighted with the outcome.

The group averaging 15 people per session, is now a listening ear for others, a resource group and a skills group. Through the mutual trust, respect and care for each other which initially Edith experienced and was in turn willing to share with others, the group has nurtured new friendships.



# Appendix 5

## The Big Breakfast Club

Building relationships was particularly important when creating a pub-based friendship group. The group was set up to be inclusive and is based in a community location. This is particularly important here as the church had no available facilities.

Firstly, the call to action came from a few words after weekend masses to set up an older men's group. A church presentation drew initial interest, followed by a call out through the local Churches Together and local older peoples' groups.

A venue was then chosen to suit everyone including men from any or no religion. The pub idea had been used by another local group, mainly because it needs very little resource to organise. Club members pay for their own breakfasts at a pre-arranged discounted rate.

From a core group of local church attendees, the group then grew to include people with dementia and their carers. On some occasions one man brought his wife who was living with dementia, whilst on other occasions his daughter accompanied him.

As a result of the group being inclusive, the group then started to be active in supporting local dementia awareness raising events. They organised an inter-school football tournament to raise funds for The Alzheimer's Society and to raise awareness in schools.

Participants also attend a Sporting Memories group which meets at the local NHS surgery.

As they say, variety is the spice of life. It all makes for an interesting life in which Big Breakfast Clubbers feel more part of their community and more active in local older people's issues.

### One of the members said:

*'The project has been a life-saver for me. It's made me feel included and has given me a voice. Because I've got dementia, that means such a lot to me, I feel supported as part of the local community again.'*



# Appendix 6

## Parish Treasure Hunt

Three local parishes organised a Parish Treasure Hunt event to bring people together and learn more about the community. The event enabled links to be built among individuals and groups. It was an opportunity to celebrate what was already happening in the community and talk about what could happen in the future.

Parishioners attended a series of 'organising meetings', which were promoted through talking at Mass, the parish newsletter and word of mouth. We have found planning an event of this kind is best begun at least 8 weeks in advance.

The group identified the 'treasures' of the community including the churches, schools, libraries, parks and local charitable organisations.

We used Google Maps to create a map and route. Activities included an obstacle course, archery, a quiz and famous landmark spotting.

24 people volunteered on the day with over 100 people participating. A multi-cultural parish picnic followed the treasure hunt, where people had the chance to meet new people and share their experiences.

Participants completed an evaluation form to inform learning for future activities.

The event was a real success in bringing many people together and starting some new conversations about how parishioners could reach out to older people. As a result of the event, a monthly walking group and a parish vegetable garden project have been set up.



# Steps to organise street level parish activities

Bring together those in the parish who want to lead and get involved – create a planning group.

Research and meet with local partners to discuss collaboration, what you share in mission and shared resources.

Planning group to decide on the dates of the event.

Arrange promotion including talks at Masses, the parish newsletter, flyers, social media and posters.

Think about health and safety and safeguarding – see the previous sections in this guide for further information.

Talk to the council if you are using the local street or local communal areas.

Evaluate event, and plan for next year!



# Appendix 7

## “Talk to me”

There may be local community initiatives which your parish can link into and get involved with. One example of this is ‘Talk to Me’. The initiative is aimed at encouraging residents to talk to their street neighbours more and to reach out.

The campaign promoted street level events to enhance friendship and social support. It was centred on a competition for the most innovative and inclusive street event.

Parishioners were encouraged to celebrate their neighbour relationships and to foster new connections with people in their streets.



Some of the great ideas included having a cuppa and cake on the driveway, games afternoons, a Neighbourhood Cinema, making a play area for children and Toy and Game Swaps.

Parishioners found it was a great opportunity to meet up with neighbours they rarely see in their busy lives. Those living in new build homes felt particularly pleased that they got to know people better and are looking forward to the next event.



# Appendix 8

## Intergenerational Project: Conversation Evening

Margaret came to the attention of her neighbours through her overgrown garden. She had remained inside the house for over three years with the curtains closed to avoid seeing the garden herself.

A conversation evening was held at the local parish hall and at this meeting, participants identified the strengths of, and hopes for, the local area. Some of the people present from the parish talked about times when they felt lonely and isolated. Some young people who said they could be bored on Saturday offered to help.

Immediately Margaret was approached to see if she would like help with her garden. She was overjoyed.

A group of about six young people worked on the garden over a weekend clearing all the overgrown grass and weeds. They cleaned the paving, and it looked so much better.

As a result of this encounter, Margaret has made new friends, some of whom visit her regularly now. One of the young people has gone into full time employment with a local gardener.

This demonstrates the value of matching local resources with local need. This approach also built a vibrant community of mutual help for the future.



# Appendix 9

## “Lunch at the Lion”



You may not have all the skills or time to hold a luncheon group in your parish hall, but the same outcomes can be achieved by hosting a lunch in your local pub.

When this group started out, they found out that there was not an older men’s group in the town.

They consulted with their wider community, and all agreed that the men's group would meet for lunch in the local pub.

The group grew slowly and in time included carers and other family members.

For some reason the group attracted an unusually high number of wheelchair users. The group worked with the pub owner who was willing to make his pub wheelchair accessible.

The group also developed into visiting residents at the local care home after lunch on a monthly basis.



# Appendix 10

## “Afternoon Tea Dance”

Here is an example of 3 parishes amalgamating.

There was a lot of unease; parishioners from each church were faced with the challenge of congregating with each other for the smooth running of the new Parish. In this context a new monthly lunch club was born to bring people together.

It started with just 3 volunteers who put on a lunch with music, dancing, games and time to chat. The rest is history.



The Friendship Group has become such a success that other parishes have asked if they could experience the same enrichment.

It is wonderful to see the real sense of community now between the three different groups of parishioners as a result of a simple activity of gathering for lunch within the Parish.





*“I know God won’t give me anything I can’t handle.  
I just wish he didn’t trust me so much.”*

## **St Teresa of Calcutta**



**Catholic Care**  
Caritas Leeds

# Appendix 11

## The Making Memories Intergenerational Project

This project started with a senior school leader setting the scene for an intergenerational project with the school: *'I wanted the project to speak to our students so I could see the healing power of words: the way that God's love as expressed through our Year 9 students' work could bring happiness and peace to our elderly generation.'*

Student participation was encouraged by support and time to gain an understanding of older people and the issues they face. This includes engaging in dementia friendly sessions and for a monthly get together. The young people took footage on their phones of those sessions and the idea of creating a full film was born.

The older parishioners were already members of a parish membership group. The young people met the older people at the friendship group where they had prepared and served an afternoon tea. Over a cuppa and a cake, the two groups talked, and friendships were formed.

The young people invited the older people to school, for some it was the first time in 60 years they had entered the school building! The two groups met up several times over the 12-month period, sharing stories of the first Holy Communion Day, first day at work and so on.

At the end of the year a film was shown to the wider parish and enjoyed by all.

*"The project was a great opportunity to see what can be achieved with a little determination"*  
**A volunteer**





# Appendix 12

## Pen pals project

Primary schools play a key role in the local community and are a great resource for parish development. For this project we brought together schools and older people in the community, retirement villages and care homes. Pen pal projects benefit children and older people by creating lasting connections, fostering writing skills and supporting the school curriculum. Pupils were linked as pen pals to an older person to write to once a month.

In some cases, older people needed help writing the letters due to shaky handwriting and this is where volunteers were so valued. People were encouraged to use first names in line with good practice on safeguarding and Data Protection. The schools dropped off and picked up the letters at the day centres, care homes and retirement villages.

Edna, a Pen Pal, said:

*'I have been involved with the pen pal scheme, and I have enjoyed getting to know the younger generation, as I have no grandchildren myself. I would like to write to my pen pal as long as he wants.'*

Seeing the world through younger eyes has helped the older people to become invigorated and improved their wellbeing.

Pupils found it easier to write their letters when they were linked to school curriculum topics. When studying World War 2, pupils learnt a great deal from older peoples' experiences of this period.

Some schools arranged for the children and the older people to meet as a group and are now looking at other activities and ways to bring generations together e.g. pupils singing at a care home in the afternoon.

**Contact:** Caritas Leeds

**Telephone** 0113 388 5400

**Email** [info@catholic-care.org.uk](mailto:info@catholic-care.org.uk)



Catholic Care  
Caritas Leeds



# Steps for organising a Pen Pal scheme

Meet with local primary school head teachers to see whether they are keen. Be aware that often schools organise these activities 6 months in advance so plan for this.

Do you know local parishioners who would benefit from a pen pal scheme? Meet with older people and housebound charities, retirement village wardens, care home managers to check interest and ability to get involved.

Arrange meetings between participating head teachers and care home managers and wardens to discuss start dates, frequency of letters and dates for young people meeting older people.

Obtain a list of older participants from referring organisations and give this to schools. The children write the letters and organise how these will be delivered to the older people.

Liaise with ages care organisations around letter writing. Organise a referral if people need help writing letters because of health conditions.

A meeting of pen pals can encourage bonding: we have found a meeting within the first month works well.

Evaluate regularly with head teachers and organisations you are working with, and address issues.



# Appendix 13

## Friendship Groups

Why not consider setting up a friendship group?

After a consultation meeting, the parishioners supported the idea to start up a friendship group once a month.

They organised activities and speakers to come to the church hall with tea and cakes.

With the support of the local Caritas lead, the two lead coordinator volunteers had DBS checks, first aid and safeguarding training and certificates. This is very important in any community work today.

They kept registers and oversaw cash and other administration. Having clear responsibilities is just as important.

There were 8 other people who were designated 'helpers' as they didn't want to become formal volunteers.

**[See section 6 for more information].**

Finding ways of utilising all offers of help but at the same time ensuring good safeguarding is one of the challenges of this work today.



A volunteer said:

*'Both my husband and I got made redundant at the same time. It was devastating, supporting this project has been our saviour.'*

The group formed a 'working party' to meet quarterly to talk over issues and progress. The group agreed Terms of Reference for itself and held interactive feedback sessions.

The Friendship group is now self-sustaining, able to grow and develop into the future.

# Steps to organise a friendship group or lunch club

## Steps to organise a friendship group or lunch club

- 1) Identify a parish leader or bring together a group of leaders' keen to set up a Friendship Group. Ask the priest for any names or approach existing local groups.
- 2) Choose your venue – if you are thinking big, is a church hall or community centre available? Think about access for people with mobility issues.
- 3) Invite everyone – we lead busy lives, but even if someone can't make it, it's great to be included. To get the word out, consider speaking at Mass, the parish newsletter, posters, email, text messages, card invitations or a combination.
- 4) Finances – making parish friendship groups free or low cost is a good way to make sure that no one is excluded due to financial issues.
- 5) Involve parishioners – make a list of the jobs that need to be done. Ask for help with hosting, transport, baking, serving refreshments, answering the door and welcoming. These are much easier and more fun with a team.
- 6) Focus on activities that people want. Involve those who attend in any programme of activities – if it is led by those involved, they are more likely to want it and engage.
- 7) Get ahead – on the day have everything ready well before the start. This way you will feel calm and be able to greet your guests.
- 8) Arrange with the group the next meeting, taking into account when most people are free and the venue availability. We have found monthly groups the most sustainable.
- 9) Say thank you – last but not least, thank everyone: your guests for coming, bakers, helpers, washer uppers, coffee pourers, door openers, transporters etc.



# Appendix 14

## Examples of volunteer role descriptions



### Role Description

<b>Post</b>	<b>Example 1 – Community Group Volunteer</b>
<b>Line Manager</b>	<b>Group Leader</b>
<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Job Purpose:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Name of activity] aims to provide a safe, caring and enjoyable place that supports those of all faiths and none, to grow in confidence and to make friends and break social isolation.</li> <li>• Working with other volunteers, you will help to create an atmosphere of fun and friendship for everyone involved in the activity, undertaking practical tasks as detailed below.</li> </ul>	
<b>Main tasks and responsibilities:</b>	
	<p>A volunteer we may ask you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help set up the venue e.g. erecting and positioning tables and chairs setting the tables with cloths, cutlery and serviettes etc</li> <li>• Mark the register and take monies for subscriptions</li> <li>• Chat to and interact with the older people attending the group, be a friendly face</li> <li>• Organise the raffle</li> <li>• Help/join in with activities e.g. exercise or games</li> <li>• Help to prepare/cook lunch</li> <li>• Help to serve lunch/refreshments</li> <li>• Clear away after lunch/refreshments</li> <li>• Wash and dry crockery, cutlery etc; load/unload the dishwasher</li> <li>• Ensure the venue is left clean and tidy</li> <li>• Escort people on community transport or in taxis if necessary</li> <li>• Shop for supplies for the group</li> <li>• Organise fundraising activities</li> <li>• Keep the storeroom organised/stocked</li> <li>• Organise group excursions</li> </ul>



# Examples of volunteer role descriptions continued

## Role Description

<b>Post</b>	<b>Example 2 – Volunteer Befriender</b>
<b>Line Manager</b>	<b>Community Manager</b>
<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Job Purpose:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important for older people to feel part of the local community and the wider world, but not everyone has family or friends who can visit them regularly. Volunteer befrienders will support people in a care home, either to share a specific activity, spend time chatting, or share a skill or hobby with a small group of residents, or an individual.</li> <li>Volunteers should be willing to befriend a vulnerable person, assist them to access their local community, and willing to offer support and guidance where appropriate.</li> </ul>	
<b>Main tasks and responsibilities:</b>	
	<p>A volunteer befriender will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be fully registered with [name of parish]</li> <li>Undergo a DBS check</li> <li>Be understanding and respectful to people they are befriending</li> <li>Adhere to confidentiality, Health and Safety and other relevant policies</li> <li>Respect and value their friends knowledge, experiences, and opinions</li> <li>Report any concerns to [amend as appropriate] e.g. their supervisor/the parish priest as soon as possible</li> <li>Ensure attendance at trainings, meetings and events when possible</li> <li>Ensure the claiming of expenses is carried out on a regular basis</li> <li>If using their car, the volunteer should ensure it is adequately insured</li> </ul> <p>A volunteer befriender will not be asked to meet any personal care needs.</p> <p><b>What attributes/skills do I need?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friendly and approachable</li> <li>Flexible</li> <li>Good communication skills</li> <li>Be committed to the role for at least six months</li> <li>Understanding of and empathy with the needs of vulnerable people</li> <li>Reliability, patience and sensitivity</li> </ul> <p><b>What benefits can I expect?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet new people and work in a friendly, supportive environment</li> <li>The appropriate induction and training</li> <li>Support from managers and staff</li> <li>Valuable experience of volunteering that you can add to your CV</li> <li>Work references if required</li> </ul>

# Examples of volunteer role descriptions continued

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The satisfaction of knowing that you are helping a vulnerable person in your community</li><li>• You can claim previously agreed out of pocket travel expenses</li><li>• A chance to make a real difference to someone's life</li><li>• Invite to volunteer events and widened circle of friends</li></ul> <p><b>Time commitment</b></p> <p>Flexible, based on volunteer's availability and mutually agreed time.</p> <p><b>How much time do I need to commit?</b></p> <p>2-3 hours, once or twice a month for a minimum of six months.</p> <p><b>What support will I be given?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial induction and training</li><li>• Continuous on-going advice, guidance and support in your role</li><li>• Regular supervision</li><li>• Invitation to Volunteer Network Meetings to meet other volunteers, share experience and contribute to development of our volunteering experience</li><li>• Invitation to staff team meetings</li><li>• Additional personal/professional development training when possible</li></ul>
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# Appendix 15

## Setting up a Bank Account

Setting up a new bank account for an organisation, rather than an individual, can be a challenge, due to banks' requirements to understand their clients and be seen to avoid money laundering.

Your Caritas coordinator can put you in touch with the finance team at Catholic Care, who will be able to explain options and help you set up a charity bank account as part of Catholic Care Caritas (with the funds completely owned by your group).

They can also assist with options to take small payments by card, as many people these days no longer use cash.



# Appendix 16

## Gift Aid

If you are in receipt of donations for your group or activity, and you have set up a bank account, you might be able to claim gift aid relief, whereby HMRC will top up each £1 of donation by 25p.

Your Caritas coordinator can put you in touch with the finance team at Catholic Care, who will be able to further advise.

Any gift aid reclaimed will require filling in a of a gift aid declaration. An example is provided here.

### Charity Gift Aid Declaration – single donation

#### Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ to:

Name of Charity \_\_\_\_\_

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

#### My Details

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name or initial(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Full Home address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Please notify the charity if you:

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.



# Appendix 17

## Safer Recruitment

### Example – Safer recruitment guidance

Guidance to safer recruitment and selection

- Provide full and fair consideration of applications for volunteer roles
- Have a standard role description
- Maintain records of applicants for identifying and addressing areas of inequality for a period of 6 months
- Provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates
- Make reasonable adjustments to reduce barriers to volunteering and encourage recruitment
- Be ready to deal promptly with any complaints from candidates about their treatment during the selection process
- Provide access to training for all volunteers
- Obtain character references
- Have a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability for the post
- Verify the successful candidate's identity
- Take a disclosure and barring check via the DBS if required



# Appendix 17

## Safer Recruitment continued

### **Scope of the interview**

The interview panel should explore:

- The candidates' attitude to voluntary work
- The candidates' values
- Concerns of discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate
- Ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS check
- Ask the candidate for proof of identification

### **Expectations of volunteers**

We expect all volunteers to treat colleagues and service users the way they want to be treated, to create an attitude of respect and dignity for all, and to remember that working as a team depends on trust which has to be built through open and honest communication



# Appendix 18

## Volunteer Application Form

### Template

1/4

Volunteer information/  
Application form

Catholic Care 

#### 1. Personal information

Surname:		Forename:	
Address (for correspondence):	-----		
	-----		
	-----		
Telephone:		Email:	

#### 2. Why are you interested in volunteering with Catholic Care?

#### 3. Is there a particular type of activity or area that you would like to do?

Registered in England and Wales Company No. 1633737  
Registered Charity No. 513063



Diocese of Leeds



# References Template

## 8. References

Please give the names and addresses of 2 people we may approach for a reference, who can comment on your suitability for this position. Please give name address and contact details of 2 referees and state in what capacity they know you.

First referee			
Name:		Job title:	
Address:	.....		
	.....		
Postcode:		Telephone:	
Email:			
Capacity known:			
Second referee			
Name:		Job title:	
Address:	.....		
	.....		
Postcode:		Telephone:	
Email:			
Capacity known:			

### Confidentiality and Data Protection

[Name of organisation] complies with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its related principles.

The above information will not be shared with any third party for marketing or other purposes.



# Appendix 19

## Risk Assessment Template



### RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

<b>Date completed</b>	
<b>Name of assessor</b>	
<b>Location/activity covered</b>	
<b>Date for review</b>	

*If high or medium risk rating, then complete below:*

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What are we already doing?	Risk rating (L, M, H)	Action taken to control risk?	Who will action and by when?	Reassess: Has risk been lowered?	Date completed





# Appendix 20

## Event register



**[COMMUNITY EVENT NAME]**  
**[DATE] [MONTH] [YEAR] at [TIME]**

Name	Contact Details	Organisation	Please tick if you would like to receive notice of news and events

**We will retain your details so we can keep you up to date with any events and news only if you have indicated you are happy for us to do so.**  
**You can opt out of receiving any further communications by contacting us directly at [info@catholic-care.org.uk](mailto:info@catholic-care.org.uk)**

# Appendix 21

## Example of publicity material for activities

### Parish Group for Older People

#### Why are we here?

For a growing number of older people loneliness defines and devastates their lives. The need for action is increasingly understood, but its less clear how we can most effectively respond to such a personal problem.

#### How can we help?

- Reducing the loneliness and social isolation of older people.
- Increasing the capacity of parishes to take positive action in response to the needs of older, isolated and vulnerable people in our communities.

#### Together we will

Recognise we have strong communities.

Support existing parish and community groups and activities.

Spend time understanding the nature of an individual's loneliness and create activities that are meaningful and offer valuable conversations.

Support lonely individuals to belong again and be part of their community.

Call me, [name] – in [name of parish]

“Would love to hear from anyone for any reason”

“Just want to chat”

“How can I help”

“I have a good idea to support our parish”

“Please can you....”

[telephone number / email address]





**Catholic Care**  
Caritas Leeds



**0113 388 5400**



**[www.catholic-care.org.uk](http://www.catholic-care.org.uk)**

