

REACT



Captain Gordon Banks CA from the Diocese of Lichfield thinks that it is important for the local church to put in place a strategic plan as part of its thinking about and response to the opportunities new housing can have. He suggests the following framework for reflection...

Rural Housing Developments – a time to REACT

React

Rural

What type of rural are you? What is your context and history?

Research

Does your civic parish have a housing development plan? Some developers are targeting areas with weak or even non-existent plans and use the resulting confusion to push through developments.

Research jargon and acronyms linked to housing development and build up a portfolio of knowledge.

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Engage

Become involved as much as possible at all levels. Be prepared to act as a neutral broker whilst speaking out prophetically where necessary.

Evangelism

Moving house is a significant life event. We know that life events can be moments of fresh encounters with God. People moving into your locality bring an opportunity for you to share Jesus in a sensitive and culturally appropriate way.

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Action

Prepare a Welcome Pack for those moving in, checking that your provision complements rather than overlaps with information provided by the developer. Include information about local amenities – schools, organisations, transport links etc. – as well as information about church services and programmes.

Ensure your faith community is welcoming: consider running an Everybody Welcome course (chpublishing.co.uk/features/everybody-welcome).

Invite people to engage with your faith community: try using some National Weekend of Invitation resources (weekendofinvitation.com).

Invite newcomers to a community BBQ or similar event.

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Conversation

Try to steer conversations in a positive way and as the People of God do not engage in gossip. Offer a clear, concise story of the community, its history, development and future. Have conversations with 'gatekeepers' and 'permission givers.'

Care

Care for everyone.

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Theology

The Bible is our foundation and there is much to draw on, discuss and wrestle with as we seek to follow God's command to 'See that justice is done, let mercy be your first concern, and humbly obey your God.' (Micah 6:8)

This article first appeared in Country Way 80: Building Community, February 2019. Go to germinate.net/country-way for more information about how to subscribe.