Christians believe in strong communities. Jesus's teaching constantly stresses the importance of neighbourliness and care for the people around us – even the strangers and incomers.

In England today, all kinds of pressures tend to weaken the bonds of community and to make us a "society of strangers". But churches, by their very nature, bring people together to act together and support each other and their neighbours. And, across the church, local church people are coming together to run projects and initiatives that help bind communities together across their differences.

In rural areas, churches are often finding ways to enable people to overcome the loss of services like Post Offices, shops and even pubs, in order to ensure that every community has public spaces where people can come together. To do this we partner with Germinate: Arthur Rank Centre We have a commitment to the flourishing of the mission and growth of rural churches.

In many urban communities and outer estates, churches run drop-in centres and other ventures which make space for people to meet informally. Sometimes, as in the Near Neighbours programme, the focus is about helping people with different religious heritage to understand each other better and work together for the Common Good.

And the Church of England, through its contacts with Parliament, seeks to shape policies that strengthen, rather than undermine, communities and which build up people's capacity to be good neighbours to one another.

Prior to the 2015 General Election, the House of Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter to the People and Parishes of the Church of England, entitled *Who is my Neighbour?*, which set out a vision for the nation's political life which went deeper than the presenting issues of the day. Use the link below to read it.

Links

- Near Neighbours

- Germinate

- Bishops' 2015 Pastoral Letter

- "The Enemy Isolation" - House of Bishops' paper on Welfare

- Estates Evangelism Project (Renewal & Reform)