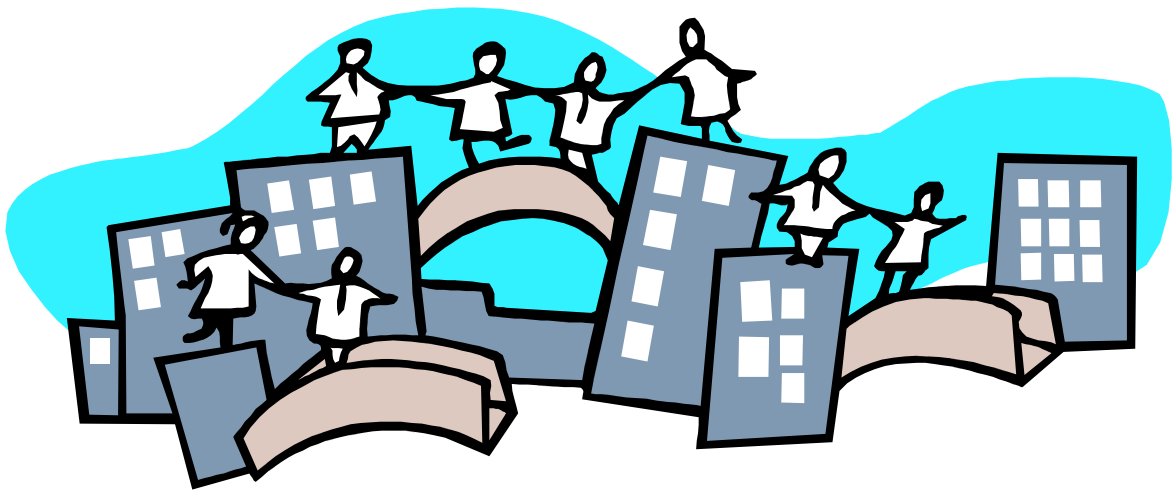


Listening



Building Bridges in the Community



Acorn Christian Healing Foundation
Listening, Healing & Reconciliation

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Introduction

There is a lot of talk these days about ‘building bridges’ between church and community. But why do we need a bridge? At its simplest, a bridge connects two points that are separate. It provides a safe place to travel, usually crossing over something that would otherwise be impossible or inhospitable to cross over. There are many different types of bridge: suspension bridges, motorway flyovers, old stone bridges, rope bridges, ordinary road or rail bridges, foot bridges, to name but a few.

*“Bridges express a determined refusal to be stopped by what blocks our way.
Bridges cross rivers and chasms in the physical landscape.
They reconnect what is divided. “*

Margaret Silf, from ‘Sacred Spaces’

As we consider our own church and local community, there are many examples of that kind of separation. People outside in the community often feel the church is irrelevant and has no understanding of their real lives and their needs. People inside the church may feel unsure about the prospect of reaching out to their community, preferring to stick with the familiar and comfortable.

Our aim:

The aim of this resource pack is to offer some ideas about how to bridge that gap: how to listen to God, to the needs around us, and to ourselves, so that we can begin bringing the love of Jesus Christ to our broken world in tangible ways. It details some of the Listening courses and resources available from Acorn Christian Foundation; it describes typical processes through which a vision for a Listening initiative in the local community is birthed and realised and also gives practical guidance on how this can be established and developed. Various other organisations and resources are mentioned throughout; there is also a list of contact information in Appendix 3.

Listening as a Bridge:

Jesus Christ was the greatest bridge-builder who ever lived - demonstrating to those he met through his words and actions that they mattered, and had worth. As his followers, we too can make a difference to those around us.

We need to remember that very often people cannot hear the good news of Jesus Christ that we have to share until they have had chance to tell their own sometimes painful stories.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book ‘Life Together’ wrote

*‘We need to learn to listen with the ears of God
before we speak the word of God’.*

When we recognise how vital good listening is and we take time to listen, we can come alongside people in our community, make relationships and build bridges. The listening ethos should be a fundamental part of our Christian mission and ministry. In doing so we will be able to see hope being restored and individual lives and communities being healed.

Steps to take

The following flowchart and accompanying notes will help you to consider how to build or strengthen your bridge into the local community.

Be inspired by reading 'A Heart To Listen' by Michael Mitton (previous Deputy Director of Acorn Christian Foundation and Director of Christian Listeners) available from ACF at Whitehill Chase.

'Dream' or 'Listen to God'

Be open to God, allow yourself to dream some dreams. It is important to follow God's agenda for your community and church, rather than that of any individual. It might be helpful to put aside some time as a group or a church to pray and listen to God, and to involve as many people as possible in this process.

Some churches are currently establishing "clusters", which are about people gathering around a particular passion or interest (e.g. the arts, the workplace, music, gardening, walking etc.) with a view to reaching out to their local community. A "listening cluster" could prayer walk and listen to God for ways of building bridges in the community.

"In our inner worlds, such crossing-places may offer ways across chasms of fear, solid ground through seas of doubt and uncertainty, and openings into new stages of becoming who we really are.. Whatever else a bridge may be, it is always a symbol of the refusal to take 'No' for an answer. It comes to the brink of the uncrossable - and then crosses it! It can give us a deep assurance that there is always a way, though we may have to search hard to find it, or even build it ourselves..."

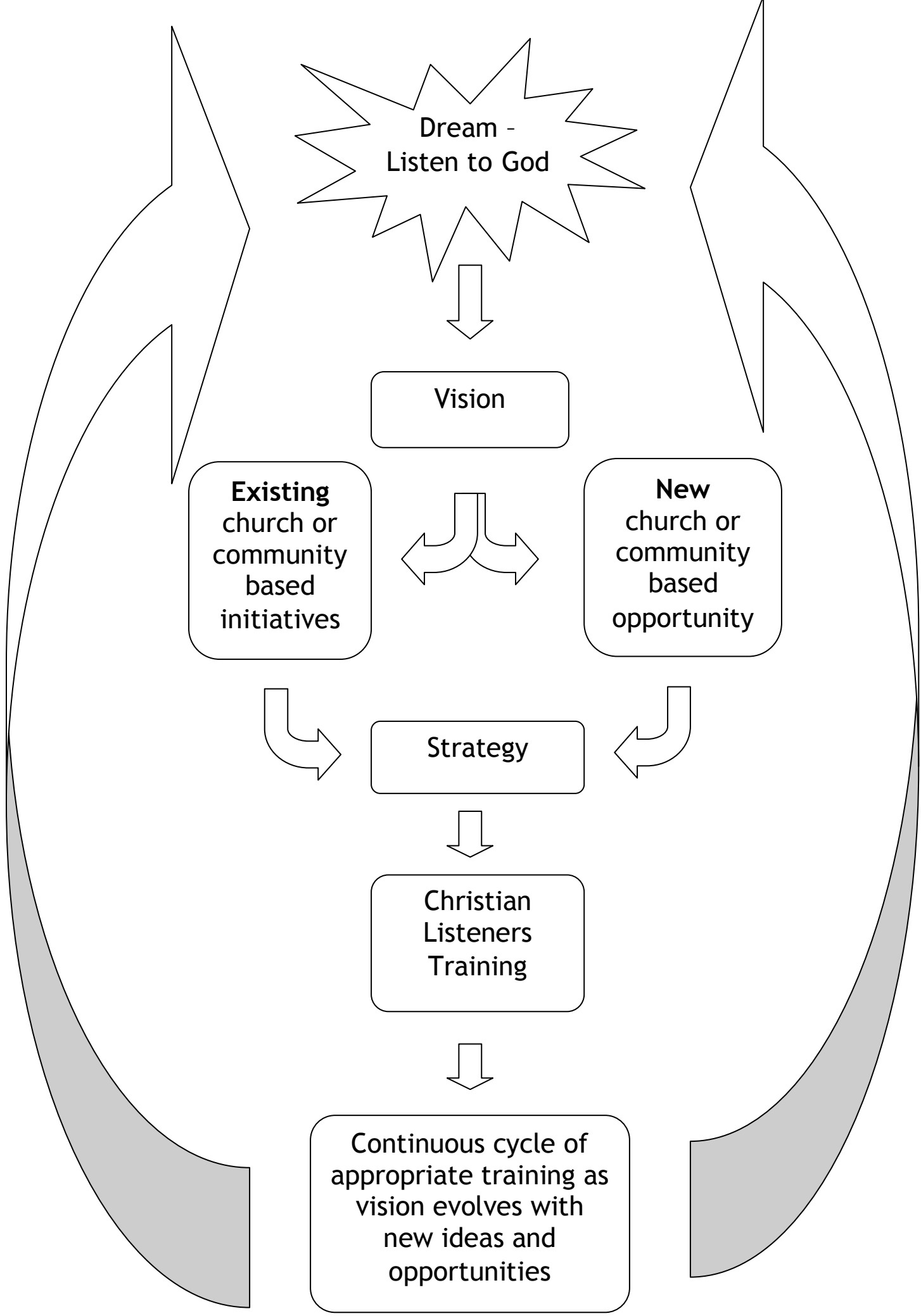
Margaret Silf, from 'Sacred Spaces'

Ask God to show you those who are most in need Is it the unheard, the marginalized Who are they? Where are they? What are their needs?

Allow God to stir your hearts and minds Listen to Him, pray that you may become an individual, church or ecumenical group with a heart for reaching out into the local community.

"Go not only to those who need you, but to those who need you most"
John Wesley

(See Appendix 1: Jesus - the bridge and 2: Listening to God)



Vision

Bearing in mind what you have heard and seen around you, what do you believe God wants you to do at this time?

There are different directional ways of looking at this:

1. CHURCH TO COMMUNITY

- **Is the focus to be on an existing church based initiative that meets a need in the local community?**

An audit of the current church programmes will highlight existing contacts with some people who would not necessarily consider themselves as belonging to the church, such as those who attend activities that take place on the church premises.

Maybe these opportunities could be developed in order to build stronger links with the people e.g. could the volunteers who help with the toddler group or club for the elderly benefit from listening training in order to equip them to be more effective in their role?

2. COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY

- **Is the focus to be an existing community-based organisation, which you think would benefit from Christian Listeners training?**

You may already be involved with a community-based organisation, which you think would benefit from the Acorn Christian Listeners (CL) training. Promotional leaflets about Acorn Christian Foundation and Christian Listeners are available from Whitehill Hill Chase. A regional or local area co-ordinator may also be able to help you to introduce the work of Acorn and explain how Christian Listeners training could enhance the existing work of the organisation.

The ACF training resource 'Just Listen!' can also be helpful when making initial contact with other organisations; it includes film clips that show some different ways of using listening skills in the community.

3. SOMETHING BRAND NEW!

- **Is the focus to be a new church or community based opportunity?**

It is important to take time to consider the real needs of the people in your local community. To help you research your community, the Faithworks Movement offers excellent advice and training to churches and organisations interested in developing community initiatives including a Community Audit Pack. CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society) also produce resources to help churches find out about local needs. *(See appendix 3)*

It is also important to recognise the personal resources available, the gifts, talents and abilities of people interested in becoming involved in a new initiative.

Strategy

Having **recognised need** in the community, it is important to **raise awareness** of the vision in order to enthuse and inspire others.

Raising awareness:

You may find it useful to ask yourself some of the following questions:

- Is the church leadership committed to this vision? It is really important that the leadership positively support and encourage the vision.
- Is the whole church / group committed to this vision, or are there divided views about this? To what extent have they been part of the process so far?
- Has it been an open process, or one led by a small majority? It is really important for the vision to be 'owned' by the majority and seen as the right direction for the church to be taking.
- What can you do to help this process? Sometimes talks from the front of church, themed services, encouraging small groups/house groups to pray and discuss it can help. It is very important to listen to the different views, however uncomfortable this may be, and to involve people in this process. It is vital that as many people as possible pray into this new direction too.

Planning your strategy:

Once you have raised awareness and people have adequately owned the vision, you are ready to plan your strategy and move ahead.

The key question here is 'HOW?' i.e. How are you going to begin to implement the vision?

Some questions you might ask yourselves are:

- What do you need in order to implement the vision?
- Can you break the process into manageable steps, with a realistic time frame?
- Who do you need to talk to?
- What resources do you need, practical, human, spiritual, financial ...?
- What do you need to do first?

What are your training needs?

- What skills do you need to develop in order to implement the vision, and what kind of training do you need?
- How can you raise an awareness of the need for good listening attitudes and skills?

Acorn Christian Listener courses provide different levels of listening training which enable you to listen effectively in a variety of situations ranging from 'informal' encounters e.g. in a coffee bar or toddler group to a more structured 'formal' listening on a one-to-one basis.

Contact information for the UK CL regional staff members is available from Whitehill Chase or on the web site. They will be very glad to respond to your enquiry about Christian Listener courses.

Acorn also offers a variety of training resources in the areas of **Healing and Reconciliation** including:

Growing a Healing Ministry - a five-session course written by Acorn staff designed for small groups in the local church. The course gives biblical and practical guidance on how to grow and develop a healing ministry in your church.

In Search of Wholeness - a Christian theology of healing and practical training for both church and medical settings, this resource can be used both in the context for training members of healing teams and in the hospital context for training chaplaincy visitors.

Healing Wounded History - A thorough biblical exploration of the effects history has on groups, and how such groups can find healing when their history has been wounded. This book with its accompanying workbook is helpful to those wanting to find healing for their families, churches, local community and nation.

What next?

Recruit a team

It is important to consider whether the team for the initiative will develop from one church or an ecumenical group.

Sharing the vision with others in the locality and praying for guidance will result in a team of people coming together to take the vision forward. Look for a variety of gifts and styles of working and resist the temptation to gather a cosy group who are similar to you! The project will work much better with a robust mix of team members who can tackle a wide variety of tasks - as long as the team can work constructively, creatively and caringly together.

Although you may have an end goal in sight, it is important to remain flexible and open to other possibilities that may develop as the vision is being pursued!

The regional or local area co-ordinator will be able to introduce the work of the Acorn Christian Foundation to those who were previously unaware of its ministry and help you to promote your ideas in the locality.

Showing clips from the '**Just Listen!**' video may help to raise an awareness of the value of CL training.

Training

The ACF training resource '**Just Listen!**' could be used as the first step in the training process. This DVD / video course which is available from Whitehill Chase can be led by anyone accustomed to facilitating a small group; guidance for the group leader is provided in the notes in the accompanying workbook.

Courses that follow from '**Just Listen**' are taught by Christian Listener Tutors. '**Learning to Listen**' is a course designed to promote effective listening in every day situations. Skills can be further developed in '**Time to Listen**', which applies listening skills to specific pastoral situations.

Following these courses a number of people are invited to attend '**Called to Listen**' which teaches listening skills using the mirroring method as a foundation. Those who successfully complete this course are recognised as Christian Listeners and are then available to listen within their church and community with appropriate supervision.

Ongoing training will be necessary, as the initiative develops, in order to ensure that new members of the team receive appropriate listening training, and that opportunity is given to maintain the listening skills of the team. It can be helpful to consider the possibility of some members of the team undertaking further training in order to become tutors.

Discussion with the regional staff member or CL tutors will be helpful to see how the training can be developed in order to meet the specific needs of the project. Additional training units related to Listening to Difference, Anger, Conflict etc. can also be provided.

Training costs may be met by course members, subsidised by local churches or obtained by applying for local funding.

In areas of urban and rural social deprivation within the UK, it is possible to apply to the Acorn PAL (Priority Area Listening) Fund for a subsidy to help with training costs.

Any of these courses can be arranged by contacting a regional staff member whose contact information can be found on the Acorn website. *(See appendix 3)*

Funding

Funding will be needed to establish and maintain the listening project. It may be obtained through fund raising initiatives, by approaching local churches or by applying to grant making bodies. *(See appendix 3 and 4)*

A group constitution and bank account is usually required when applying for funding from grant making bodies. *(See appendix 5 for an example of a constitution for a group of listeners)*

Initial funding is not too difficult to obtain, however most funding bodies do not provide for maintenance of projects, unless new initiatives are being developed.

Your local association of voluntary organisations may be able to offer specific ideas about sources of funding.

Budget Yourself is a software program that helps voluntary organisations and community groups write an effective budget. It runs on Windows 95 or above and is a free download from www.funderfinder.org.uk/budgetyou.php

Venue

You may intend to use the listening training in existing initiatives within the church and already have access to suitable church premises for a one to one session to take place if required.

On the other hand you may intend to establish a new community based initiative in which case you may need to consider where the listening is to be offered and ensure that it is reasonably easy for people to access the project by considering whether there are good public transport links and being aware of current Disability Discrimination Act (1995) regulations. *(See appendix 3)*

When considering the funding requirements of the project it will be important to be aware of any costs the group will incur regarding rent or other costs for the use of the premises.

If the initiative involves listening to the housebound it is important that the insurance cover is appropriate and risk assessments are carried out as necessary.

Publicity

The most effective way of promoting your service is through a satisfied client! However, you have to begin somewhere.

It is important that you raise awareness of the service being offered by making presentations to groups of people who will then know exactly what is and more

importantly what is not being offered. This could include local clergy and church congregations. Experience has shown that a “live” demonstration of a listening session can be very helpful.

It can be useful to raise awareness of what you are offering by making contact with GP practices, Health Visitors, Community Psychiatric Nurses, Social Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Funeral Directors, the local Registrar and through local voluntary organisations.

You could also put an article in church magazines, the local newspaper or even arrange to be interviewed on the local radio (in connection with community services) The TV Community Channel offers free space to not for profit organisations on an ad hoc basis in order to raise the profile of the group. (See *appendix 3*)

You don't have to spend vast amounts of money on publicity but the information you provide needs to be clear and concise. Leaflets and posters should be displayed in public places. It can be helpful to have small business cards giving basic contact information.

You could also set up a display in the local library or Health Centre.

It may be appropriate to display a “sandwich board” outside the premises.

As use of the Internet is increasing, the service could be promoted on a website. The BT Community Website Builder allows registered UK charities, non-profit making organisations and volunteer led groups or organisations to build and maintain their own website free of charge. (See *appendix 3*)

If your group has its own telephone line the number could be listed in the Yellow pages, BT telephone or Thompson directories.

Telephone

If your project is working through a local church, it may be possible to use the church telephone number to take enquiries about the listening service being offered.

It is possible to obtain an additional number for the phone with a separate ring tone for a minimal monthly charge. This would enable the person answering the call to know that the call is connected with the listening project. (See *appendix 3*)

If the project is to have its own phone line, money will be needed to purchase a phone with an answer phone facility, pay for the connection fee as well as the monthly line rental; call costs are likely to be quite small.

Rather than have a business line, it is cheaper to have the phone number registered as residential with a named person and then pay a small charge to be listed in the business section of the phone book.

You can have a free line entry in Yellow Pages and it is also possible to have a free listing in the Thompson directory under the heading ‘Counselling services and Advice services’

Some groups are not in a position to have their own phone line and use a mobile phone that is used solely by the project and manned by one of the team.

Referrals

Referrals may come to the listening project in a number of ways, many of which have been already mentioned under **publicity**.

However, referrals have been known to come from the tourist information office, through the hairdresser, dentist, women's refuge, single parents' groups, other Christian organisations, the police and by posters displayed in local buses.

Links

At times, it may be necessary to refer someone to other agencies and organisations available in the local area or nationally.

It is important that this contact information is accurate and kept up to date.

Insurance

If you are offering listening through the church, you may be covered by the church insurance. This may also apply when offering listening through another organisation e.g. hospital, etc.

If you are establishing an independent group you will need to obtain professional liability insurance - to include professional indemnity and public liability for the listeners.

Advice about insurance requirements can be obtained through Stewardship Services, a Christian Charity specialising in church related insurance. (*See appendix 3*)

Criminal Records Bureau

It may be appropriate to carry out CRB checks if the regular duties of the volunteers include 'working with, caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults'. (*See appendix 3*)

Building a team

Consideration needs to be given to developing and maintaining the team of listeners.

The roles and responsibilities of the co-ordinator need to be agreed and a suitable person appointed to take this responsibility.

Depending on the organisation of the project, it may be necessary to develop an equal opportunities policy, volunteer policy, group constitution and code of practice. (*See appendix 3*)

The time commitment expected of the team members' needs to be realistic and consideration given as to whether any out of pocket expenses could be met.

The leaflet '**Guidelines for good practice in Christian Listening**' - available from Acorn Christian Foundation offers helpful advice on relevant issues including confidentiality, supervision, boundaries, referral, safety and the legal situation regarding confidentiality.

It is important that ongoing training is regularly provided for the team and that training to recruit new listeners is organised.

Members of the team should be encouraged to attend Acorn regional events and to become '**Friends of Acorn**' in order to be aware of the wider ministry of ACF. (See appendix 8)

It is important that the team take the opportunity to practise their listening skills with each other and receive constructive comment from other members of the team.

Keeping the original vision in mind, praying together and being open to future developments are essential to maintaining good relationships in the team.

Monitoring

Unlike counselling, records of the listening sessions do not need to be kept. The only information that should be held is basic contact information for each client, in the event that an appointment needs to be re-arranged.

If any other information is obtained, such as how the client was referred to the service or their comments about the service they have received, it should be recorded in such a way that individual clients cannot be identified.

It is important to consider the purpose of any information being held and how long it will be kept (Data Protection principles - see appendix 3)

It can be helpful to use a **SWOT Analysis** (Understanding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to review the on-going position of the project. SWOT Analysis is a very effective way of identifying your Strengths and Weaknesses, and of examining the Opportunities and Threats you face. Carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework helps you to focus your activities into areas where you are strong and where the greatest opportunities lie. (See appendix 3)

Charitable status

Most listening projects will not need to apply for charitable status as they operate on a small budget in premises owned by a church or other organisation.

However, as some groups have developed they have chosen to apply for charitable status in order to more easily secure funding from public, grant-making trusts and local government. (See appendix 3)

By registering as a charity it is also possible to claim repayment of tax on donations made under the Gift Aid scheme.

Reflection: Jesus - the bridge

Appendix 1

The following is a reflection on Jesus as the bridge. You could reflect on it on your own, or use it with a group, as you begin exploring ways of reaching out in your own community.

If you do this with a group, you will need to make sure people are relaxed and that they realise this will take 10-15 minutes. Sometimes playing some quiet instrumental music can be a good way to quieten people down, so they are receptive to this type of prayer. You will need to speak very clearly, and read the reflection slowly, pausing for 15-20 seconds wherever you see this sign:/

(If you want to use a visual image for this, for people to look at, take a look at the picture of Christ the Bridge - by Elizabeth Wan, available as a poster from www.stpauls.org.uk)

Now we are going to spend some time in quiet reflection and prayer as we consider Jesus as the bridge.

Please make yourselves comfortable, put away papers or books, and relax Relax your breathing, and let us focus our thoughts on Jesus /

We are thinking about reaching out to our community, building bridges.. Let us now consider Jesus... Where is he in all this? ... He is both inside and outside the church. /

Think of His ministry... **Jesus met people where they were.** He didn't sit in a closed room in Jerusalem with 'Son of God' written on the door, and a secretary for appointments. He got out there.... among the people.

He Himself WAS the bridge... or the WAY, the GATE/DOOR.... He crossed chasms and created a bridge to God for so many. /

He made connections with people others wouldn't bother to talk to.... prostitutes, lepers, widows, children... rich rulers...tax collectors` /

And his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well began with HIS need for a drink...

He LISTENED to people - gave them value, worth and acceptance. He gave focussed attention and space.

He was unafraid to offend authorities. He turned their cosy religion upside down. He cared; He had compassion. He got involved in broken and messy lives... /

He didn't find or build a bridge to cross over.... He stepped right in there... **He himself was the bridge.....** /

Listen to this quote by the Dutch priest Henri Nouwen:

“... Jesus cared. He fed the hungry, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the crippled walk and the dead live. ... But we forget that Jesus did not give food to the many without having received some loaves and fishes from a stranger in the crowd; that he did not return the boy of Nain to his widowed mother without having felt her sorrow, that he did not raise Lazarus from the grave without tears and a sigh of distress that came straight from the heart. What we see, and like to see, is cure and change. But what we do not see and do not want to see is care, the participation in the pain, the solidarity in suffering, the sharing in the experience of brokenness. And yet, cure without care is as dehumanising as a gift given with a cold heart.” /

(Henri Nouwen, from ‘Out of Solitude’)

What about us now? How do we respond?

Are we prepared to join Him, to stand in the gapto be a bridge for people to experience God’s love - in whatever way he leads...

Are we prepared to be changed by Jesus, so that we can be that Bridge too?

Let us reflect on our response to his challenge... /

Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew and remake us. What we have been is past, what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on. Take us with you. Amen.

These notes could be copied to give some guidance to those who want to listen to God, especially if they are unfamiliar with how to go about it.

“Speak, Lord, your servant is listening” 1 Sam 3:10

It is important that we follow God’s agenda for our church and community. We need to discover what God’s purpose is for us - we need to take time to listen to Him.



“How can I listen to God?”

Here are some practical steps you may find helpful.

Stage 1: Time and place

The first thing to do is to put aside some time, ideally around half an hour or so, to spend on your own with God. That may sound like an eternity if you’re not used to it! But don’t panic, this is not about trying to become ‘super-holy’, simply that this way of praying needs a little longer in order for you to relax and become quiet enough to be able to hear God’s voice.

Try and choose a place and time when you won’t be interrupted - and don’t let yourself be sidetracked. There will *always* be something else demanding to be done! Be disciplined. Offer the time to Jesus, and ask Him to guide and speak to you.

Stage 2: Come close to God

You can’t hear someone when you are miles away from them! Think of a time when you felt close to God: what helped you get there? It could be music, silence, walking in nature, Bible study, lighting a candle, etc. Spend some time coming close to God, focusing on Jesus. Offer up words of praise and thanksgiving. Read and savour some words of Jesus, e.g. John Chapter 15. We are called to remain in Him, to experience His love, to be fruitful. Try and resist the temptation to embark on long lists of prayer requests at this stage - you can pray for those needs later. This is different.

Stage 3: Put aside your own agenda

We all have particular issues we feel strongly about, or hopes, dreams, fears that can affect our ability to hear God clearly. They can cloud our listening. Try and become aware of what these are for you... and then offer them to God. Say sorry for any things you have done wrong too, and experience God's forgiveness afresh.

Stage 4: Wait...

Now stop doing all the talking! Simply rest in God's loving presence. Actively open yourself to God, like a flower bud opens up in the warm sunshine. Ask Him to speak to you in *whatever way He wants*, not just about the church or community. He may want to speak to you about something relating to you personally. Simply give Him space to say whatever He wants to you. He may speak in any of the ways listed under the section 'How might I hear God', or you may not hear anything particular - that's fine. Just offer yourself to Him.

Stage 5: Listen for our church and community

Now ask Him to speak to you about our situation. You might want to use prayer-questions like these:

'Lord, is there anything you want to say to me about building bridges into our community? Show me those who are most in need, the people you want us to reach out to Please show me, help me to hear you...'

Then wait, listen, and be open to what might come... Write it down. You may like to ask Him to 'confirm' what He has said to you later. Sometimes He does this by saying it again to you in a different way/context, so you are more sure it is from Him, and that it is for the whole church, not just for you personally.

Remember, God speaks in order to build *up* His church. Whilst we must be open to His challenging us, let us beware too of anything that seems very negative or destructive - that is much less likely to be from God.

Finally, thank Him for speaking to you. Pray for the church and community. Pray that others will hear Him too.

"How might I hear God?"

As you pray, you may find yourself thinking of a particular verse of Scripture, or a picture/visual impression may come to mind. It may be a thought, or a feeling, or a sense of intuition. God may speak to you through your senses: for example you might see or hear something which seems significant - it could be something beautiful in creation, or something very ordinary and everyday, perhaps in a newspaper or on TV. He may speak to you through a Spiritual Gift (as in 1 Cor. ch 12) e.g. a word of knowledge or prophecy. You might hear him through music, or through something that someone says.

It might make sense to you, or not! Don't be too quick to dismiss something as your imagination - it could be from *you*, but it *could* also be from *God*. So, have a go. Even if what you hear doesn't make much sense to you, this kind of process is like a jigsaw - and your piece may be the one that is missing - but we won't know that until we see all the pieces. Give it a try.

Take the risk of listening, write down what comes to you, and pass it on, even if you're not absolutely sure whether it is from God or not. The worst that can happen is that you make a mistake - and that's no crime! We are all human! Not everything *will* turn out to be from God, and that is part of the sifting process, which will happen following this period of listening.

“How does God speak?”

The Bible contains many instances of people hearing from God. Jesus often withdrew by himself to pray and listen to His Father for the next stage in His mission. Christians down the ages have sought God's guidance for the direction of their lives and work, so we are in good company! God speaks in many different ways, and each of us may hear Him in a way that is unique to our personality/temperament. (E.g. a visual person may be more likely to hear Him through something they *see*). Some people feel quite comfortable with this type of thing, whereas for others it is more difficult. So let's encourage and support each other.

“What do I do now?”

Start this time of listening prayer as soon as possible - today! You could do this either on your own at home, with someone else or in a small group. You could do it once, or several times.

Everything emerging from this time of listening will be included in the next stage of the process, as we try and discern what God is saying to us about how we should build bridges in the community.

Useful contacts

Appendix 3

Acorn Christian Foundation	www.acornchristian.org
Charity Commission	www.charity-commission.gov.uk
Church Pastoral Aid Society	www.cpas.org.uk
Criminal records bureau	www.crb.gov.uk www.disclosure.gov.uk
Data protection	www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk
Disability	www.disability.gov.uk www.throughtheroof.org
Faithworks Movement	www.faithworks.info
Funding	www.community-fund.org.uk www.volunteering.org.uk www.cibfunding.org.uk www.faithworks.info/funding www.fundraising.co.uk
Insurance	www.smg-professional-risks.co.uk www.ansvar.co.uk www.stewardship.org.uk
Publicity	www.communitychannel.org.uk
SWOT Analysis	www.mindtools.com
Telephone	www.bt.com www.thomweb.co.uk
Volunteer policies	www.volunteering.org.uk
Website Builder	www.communitykit.ik.com

Acorn Christian Foundation is not responsible for the content of external websites. The inclusion of a link to a third party website from Building Bridges should not be understood as an endorsement.

Further possible sources of funding

Appendix 4

Each community initiative will have its own distinct funding needs, however the following trusts and grant-making foundations could be potential sources of funding:

The **Anchor Foundation** supports Christian charities concerned with social inclusion, particularly those involved in ministries of healing and the arts.

www.theanchorfoundation.org.uk

The **Chase Charity** will provide funding for churches running projects for the benefit of the community, especially in areas such as learning disabilities, mental health, children and families, the arts and those working in rural parishes.

www.chase-charity.org.uk

The **Charles Hayward Foundation** makes grants of up to £20,000 to charities that are working with young people at risk, those with physical and learning disabilities, young offenders, the elderly and improving the local environment.

www.charleshaywardfoundation.org.uk

The **Lankelly Foundation** funds smaller charities throughout the UK, particularly those working with black and ethnic minority groups, asylum seekers, offenders and those working in rural parishes.

www.lankelly-foundation.org.uk

Lloyds TSB Foundation provides grants to organisations that are working to improve the lives of people in local communities, especially those who are disadvantaged or disabled.

www.lloydstsbfoundation.org.uk

The **Rayne Foundation** supports organisations that are helping the most vulnerable or disadvantaged people in society, especially children, young people and the elderly.

www.raynefoundation.org.uk

Volunteering England are distributing small grants funded by the Home Office, in order to enable and encourage more people to carry out projects that address the needs of their communities. They are particularly interested in funding charities that are organising projects or activities that get people volunteering in their communities.

www.volunteeringengland.org.uk

The **Local Network Fund for Children and Young People** provides grants to small, local community groups in England who support vulnerable children and young people. The Fund aims to counter child poverty and youth disadvantage by providing opportunities for children and young people to achieve their potential. For an application form, call 08451 130161

A new range of grants and awards is available through the **Big Lottery Fund** for charitable causes.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Group Constitution

Appendix 5

(This constitution was drawn up for an independent listening group in the UK)

Name

The name of the group shall be the Group

Objectives

The objectives of theGroup are to - provide a listening ear to anyone in the community regardless of race, religion or sex. The kind of reflective listening offered is to enable them to clarify and express feelings, identify the heart of a problem and work out what to do, find their own strengths and work out if other help is needed.

Powers

To perform any such lawful acts as necessary to the pursuit of the above objectives.

Membership

This will consist of all persons who have completed the Acorn Christian Foundation course 'Called to Listen' and have been assessed as proficient listeners by Acorn.

Officers

.....Group will have the following officers - Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Activities and events will be organised by the committee.

Committee

The committee will comprise members (including officers). The quorum necessary to transact business shall be at least committee members present. A statement of income and expenditure will be prepared annually and presented at the AGM.

A bank account shall be opened and will be operated by the officers of the group and shall require two signatures to draw on the funds within the account.

Annual General Meeting

An AGM will be held once every calendar year. The committee will give at least three weeks notice stating the time, the place and the business to be transacted. Such notice will be given in writing to individual committee members. The Chair, (in his / her absence, the Secretary) shall conduct the AGM. The quorum necessary to transact business shall not be less than members present.

Elections

Voting at the AGM will fill the positions of the committee members. Vacancies will be declared in the notice of the AGM and nominations of candidates may be given verbally at the AGM. Each member present shall have one vote, and issues arising at the general meetings shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast. The Chair's declaration as to the final result of the voting and his / her decision in procedure shall be final.

Alteration of the Constitution

Alteration of the Constitution can only be agreed at the AGM, or an Extraordinary General Meeting, which may be convened at the written request of a minimum of three members.

Dissolution

On dissolution of the Group, any assets remaining after all debts and liabilities have been discharged shall not be distributed among the members but shall be handed to a voluntary organisation with similar objectives, to be administered in a manner which is exclusively charitable at law.

This constitution was adopted as the constitution of
Group at a public meeting on

Signed:

Position:

Types of initiatives where CL training is used

Appendix 6

Advice Centres
Asylum Seekers
Bereavement support
Bookshop
Carers
Cathedrals
Churches & church based outreach
Christian Healing Centres
Coffee shop
Crisis Centre - pregnancy / abortion
Depression support group
Elderly - lunch clubs, residential homes
Ethnic groups
Homeless
Housebound
Lunch clubs
Medical: GP practice
 Health Centre
 Hospital / Chaplaincy team
 Hospice
 Caring Agencies
 Support for those with Mental Health issues
Multi-support: Listening & Counselling Service; Post Trauma Project
Parent/ carer & Toddler groups
Pastoral care in community
Prison Links
Refugees
Rural communities
Schools (listening to students by YP & adults; also to staff)
Shopping Malls - commercial world
Single Parents
Soup Kitchens
Telephone (CHA - Christian Helplines Association)
Unemployed
Victim Support
Women's groups

(N.B. CL training is not necessarily the only source of training)

Many people who have completed the Called to Listen course are using their listening skills in different situations within their local communities. Some operate in church buildings, in medical centres or use their listening skills effectively in community projects. Here are a few examples:

35 Ock Street - listeners available in this busy meeting place and coffee shop in the heart of Abingdon

Aberystwyth Listeners - operate informally in the coffee bar of St Paul's Methodist Church and by appointment

Amery School Listening, Alton - listening to students referred by teaching staff and school nurse

Batley Self-help Depression Group - listening to members who want to share their problems

Bryn Cross Surgery, Wigan - listener attached to a GP surgery

Carisbrooke Priory, Isle of Wight - Centre for Christian Healing and Wholeness offering listening for those suffering with mental and / or emotional distress

Christian Community Action, Caversham - drop-in offering listening, support and access to other agencies

Christian Fellowship of Healing, Edinburgh - listening and offering healing prayer to people of all faiths or none

Crossline Telephone Helpline, Hull - listeners available at the end of the phone for anyone who needs to talk

Derby Cathedral - listeners based in cathedral centre coffee shop in heart of city

Halton Integrated Bereavement Service - listeners offer 1 to 1 appointments and are involved in group meetings for bereaved families

Hear to Listen, Garston - listeners are available at the Bridge Chapel Centre (a renovated old school) in Liverpool, which offers a wide range of support to the local community

High Street, Witney - an ecumenical team of listeners operate in a busy coffee shop in High Street Methodist Church. Trained listeners are available to offer informal listening over a cup of coffee, and formal listening in a private room

Lampeter Listeners - available at St Thomas' Methodist Church each week

Listening Ear, Merseyside - Listeners operate alongside counsellors in partnership with other agencies across the local health and social care system

Listening Matters, Belfast - listeners based in Orangefield Presbyterian Church available for anyone in the local community

Mothers Hope Crisis Centre, Belfast - listening to wide range of issues affecting the community living in the Crumlin Road area

New Door - church based listeners in Solihull, offering listening care for those who have been bereaved

Noah's Ark Community Cafe, Halifax - listening available at drop-in centre

Queens Road Baptist Church, Coventry - listeners available in coffee shop

Royal United Hospital, Bath - trained listeners as part of chaplaincy team offer bedside listening, also available in clinic and chapel

Stockport Christian Counselling - in partnership listeners are available at their 'Hear and Now' drop-in centre

Stoney Stratford - working with chaplaincy team in Milton Keynes Hospital

The Bield at Blackruthven, Perth - retreat and healing centre offering listening ministry as core activity

The King's House - listening available at healing and resource centre in Washington, Tyne and Wear

The Listening Place, Salisbury - team ready to listen to everyday matters and more critical issues

The Well Asian Information & Advice Centre, Glasgow - listeners have been trained to offer listening care as part of the support given through the centre

Time for You, Scotswood - informal listening is offered through the café and by appointment

Tipton Listeners - listeners operate in Neptune Health Park offering listening by appointment. The service allows for self-referral or referral by health personnel

Wellspring Listeners - listeners operate within the coffee bar and as part of a bereavement support group

Westend Listeners, Crewe - available at a drop-in for single parents

Wrexham Listeners - operate in the café of Wrexham Maelor Hospital and alongside the chaplaincy team

This is by no means an exhaustive list of ways in which CL training is used throughout the UK. If you would like to know more about any of these groups, please contact the CL National Coordinator whose contact information is available from Whitehill Chase or on the web site.

More about Acorn

Appendix 8

Acorn Needs Friends like You

Our ministry is supported substantially, both financially and prayerfully, by a faithful group of supporters known as *Friends of Acorn*. Without them we simply could not continue or develop our work.

If you would like more information about Acorn's national and international work then please complete **Form 1** and send it to the address at the bottom of this page.

Or you may care to look us up on our website: www.acornchristian.org

Friends of Acorn membership is for one year with an invitation to renew your donation. We will send you our quarterly Newsletter and Prayer Diary to keep you up to date on our activities and to give you some focus for your prayers.

We suggest an annual donation of £30 but we fully realise that this may be difficult for some so encourage you to give what you think is right. Others may want to support us with more.

If you wish to support and encourage this ministry then please complete **Form 2** and return it to us at Acorn Christian Healing Foundation, Whitehill Chase, High Street, Bordon, Hants. GU35 0AP

Thank you in advance for your support.

Russ Parker

Acorn Christian Healing Foundation

Registered Charity No. 1080011

FORM 1 INFORMATION

Please send me information about Acorn's ministry

NAME Today's Date

ADDRESS

.....

POST CODE

TELEPHONE

EMAIL

COURSE ATTENDED

FORM 2 FRIENDS OF ACORN

NAME Today's Date

ADDRESS

.....

POST CODE

TELEPHONE

EMAIL

COURSE ATTENDED

I would like to become a *Friend of Acorn* and enclose a cheque for:

£..... Cheque enclosed

(Cheques to 'A.C.F.')

Or to pay by Banker's Order please tick box

(The necessary forms will be sent direct to you)

I would like Acorn Christian Foundation to reclaim tax on all donations I have made since

6 April 2000 and all donations I may make hereafter.

Signed Date

Registered Name: Acorn Christian Foundation (A Company Limited by Guarantee)
Registered Charity No. 1080011