

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

11 August 2010: Jean Dowdeswell, Chair PACT and a member of St Mary Magdalen, Sheet PACT (Petersfield Area Churches Together)

When I became chair of PACT (Petersfield Area Churches Together) in January this year I set myself three tasks:

- Firstly, I wanted to raise the profile of PACT within the churches.
- Secondly I wanted to make contact with the different groups that are either in 'Partnership' with or 'Linked' to PACT
- Thirdly to worship at least once in all of the eleven PACT churches. Seven months on and yes I am well on the way to meeting these tasks.

Why did I set these tasks?

So often when something is familiar we think we know all there is to know about it. For many that is true with PACT – 'Oh, it's the churches – isn't it?' 'It's the Carols in the Square at Christmas and the Good Friday Walk and Service!', 'Oh and don't forget Holiday Club!!'

Yes, PACT is the churches, it is the Christmas and Good Friday Services, it is Holiday Club but PACT is more than just these high profile events. Here are just a few more:

- Unity Christian Bookshop in Folly Lane stocks a wide range of adult and children's books as well as CDs and cards for all occasions and is staffed by volunteers from local churches.
- Messy Church meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, during term time, at the Methodist Church. Children and their parents enjoy a variety of Bible based craft activities before joining together for a time of worship followed by a meal together.
- Volunteers from local churches also provide a hot Christmas Day lunch, at The United Reformed Church, (followed by entertainment) for those who would otherwise be alone.
- The Voluntary Care Group, based at Winton House, provides a volunteer driver and car service taking people to hospital and doctor's appointments as well as on shopping trips.

I would like to say a big thank you to all of those willing volunteers who give so much of their time to serve our community in Petersfield.