

# Wellfield Church, Leyland



**A proposal to South Ribble Borough Council  
for the purchase and use of Northbrook Barn**





# About us



## History

In October 2007 the Parish Church of St Andrew, Leyland, started the 'Wellfield' congregation in the nearby Wellfield High School. St Andrew's has played a major part in the town's life for many generations. In recent years it has been a fast-growing church; yet it had long recognised that for the vast majority of the town's residents, 'church' is of no relevance or apparent use. 'Wellfield' was an attempt to create a less-intimidating, informal-feeling opportunity for those who simply 'don't do church'.

Five years on, though still small, we now consist of a wide range of people, including families, working men, mums on benefits and mental ill-health sufferers. St Andrew's have recently completed a rigorous five-year review, and are wholeheartedly supporting Wellfield's continuation and increasing independence.

## Aims

As a church, our primary aim is to make known the good news of Jesus Christ. We are unashamed about that: our experience - and our country's history - have shown us that nothing benefits society as effectively, because nothing changes people at such a fundamental level.

### D's story

"I've been in the mental health system for over 20 years. I thought I'd never get out of it. I feel I'm free from most of that now, and really it's because of Wellfield Church and St Andrew's, and all that they've done for me. I haven't had a family for all that time. Now I've got one."



### L's story

A heroin-addict single mum, 'L' was introduced to Wellfield Church through her son. Having gone through rehab, she has now not touched drugs or alcohol for over two years. She now works part time, even though it brings less income than benefits.



## Affiliations

Wellfield Church is part of the Church of England, and exists with the support of the Bishops of Blackburn Diocese, under the authority of St Andrew's, Leyland. It enjoys close relations with Wellfield BEC, the North West Partnership, St John's Church and The Leyland Project, of which Rev. Mark Simpson, the minister, is a trustee.

## Viability

Though small, Wellfield Church is committed to its cause, financing most of its own needs. In addition, there is a large support base nationwide. We feel that now is the time for us to find our own premises; having 'found our feet' we want to establish ourselves at the heart of the community, for the long term.



## Northbrook Barn

### Our Ambitions

From our point of view, Northbrook Barn is ideally situated in the heart of Broadfield Estate - a community that has sadly gained a certain notoriety within Leyland. We desire to support the Council, Progress Housing and The Leyland Project in their aims to improve life in this location and beyond.

We know that change is slow. We are also limited by size and resources. But we believe that communities change 'one life at a time'. We have learnt not to expect quick-fix results, but steady, lasting change. But we have found we are now quite limited without a premises to use throughout the week. Northbrook Barn would open up many opportunities for us to serve the community. Fairly immediately, we would be able to:

- Offer a **debt counselling** service. With other churches in Leyland, we have already begun the process of establishing a debt counselling centre through the well-respected Bradford-based organisation 'Christians Against Poverty'.



- Run a **toddler group** for the community - moving our current one from the 'Base', on Bannister Drive, to a more user-friendly venue.
- Establish a group for **men** to redress their priorities in life. This is something we have been doing on a small scale in homes for five years.
- Offer advice on **parenting**. A critical need today, a few have appreciated a course we have run in the past on Wade Hall.
- Start a **youth** group. Rather than an 'open' youth group, such as The Leyland Project and Fusion UK (in both of which we are already involved), our resources would only allow us to start small with existing contacts. An in-depth work with a few is what makes the greatest difference long term.
- We would open up the building, as much as possible, for **community use**, having already been in discussion with the Broadfield Community Association. It is our intention to build good relations with local groups by making a well-loved building available.

## Our Offer

After significant email correspondence, Roger Handscombe from SRBC invited us to make an offer for the building of **£170,000**. We appreciate that may be well below the market value for the property - but this is the offer we were invited to make! So committed are we that, though we're a small group with no big earners, our members have *personally* pledged over £50,000 towards it - confident of outside support for the rest. We hope SRBC will recognise such a sale as an investment.

## Our Appeal

We understand some of the pressures on the Council for meeting targets for house building and the like. We would urge you to resist investing in short term solutions to long term problems. Of course more housing is needed - but much is already being built locally. Would it not be far better, where possible, to encourage the tackling of social issues at grass-roots level - the very thing we are undertaking, in our own small way? We are not subversive, nor sensational, nor an obscure group, but seek to support authorities by undertaking our work steadily, ambitiously and with a seriousness of intent.

It will no doubt be clear to you already that many of the local residents do not wish for more house building, but rather that a well-loved building might be put to good use for the good of the community. That is what we are proposing.

## Contact details

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