

## Greetings from Westwood from Colin and Carole

Dear Friends,

We can hardly believe that by the time you read this we shall have been here about nine months with our first Westwood Christmas nearly upon us. We have a family staying for the whole Christmas week so although on duty, probably not too busy.

These first months have certainly been a time for adjusting and settling in. Carole found the change easier, being a more 'go with the flow' sort of person. I especially missed the buzz and interaction at 35 Ock Street as well as all the contacts and roles in the community. Being the extrovert, having so much time on my own heightened the sense of loss. Still it was no doubt an important phase to go through in order to move on.

Much of the first few months were spent getting to know the ropes-bookings, administration, cleaning and gardening, etc. (We still leave the DIY to David!!). It was also crucial for us to spend time getting to know David and Glenys, seeing how we fit together as community.

With only the occasional tension early on, we have really come to appreciate one another and they are always very encouraging. Living in such close proximity, we have to bring grievances into the open quickly! They are certainly open to new things and we have started doing the Ministry Matters course together.



Our regular rhythm of prayer is helping to cement our sense of community. Sometimes guests join us too and this can present us with the opportunity to share and pray for them. We have had an amazing assortment of guests. Not only church groups and Christians on retreat but community groups as well, including the National Trust, City of Sanctuary (working with asylum seekers and refugees) and a Women's Diversity Group from Bradford who were great fun (especially as they cooked us meals both nights they were here!!). One group in particular has caught our

attention, the Community Builders, who run workshops based on M. Scott Peck's writing in a book called 'A Different Drum.' I went to one of their workshops which was an interesting and challenging experience.

We have also come across a number of people embarking on pioneering projects including Keith and Anna Nichols who were previously in ministry at Didcot Baptist and took a huge step of faith buying a derelict farmhouse on the Seacroft Estate in Leeds. They have done an amazing renovation project and it is now a delightful place of hospitality. We are inviting a number of these pioneers together in March to share, encourage, inspire and learn from one another. It really does seem that the Spirit is moving in unusual ways in this area and we look forward to what comes out of our time together.

Our role in taking Westwood out has been evolving. We have made connections with most of the local churches, sharing in a number of services and giving several talks. There does seem to be an opportunity to support those in ministry around here. We have also reconnected with a number of those we knew before moving to Abingdon so it has been good to see some familiar faces.

Carole has been developing new creative skills working with wood which I think is called pyrography (I call her a pyromaniac!). She has also done a little wood carving, having been given a lovely set of tools from a guy at one of the churches here. Now that we are more settled, she hopes to spend a bit more time with her artwork and has enrolled on a drawing skills course. Carole has also taken part in training for Godly Play.

In terms of family news, we have seen more of Gareth and Adam which has been great, although tends to be when they want feeding! Gareth has a new girlfriend and has changed jobs, now working with the Royal Bank of Scotland in the same building as Adam. Adam has applied to do a PGCE so please pray that the right place opens up for him. Carole's sister Elaine and her husband are nearby in Leeds so we get to see them too although she will be taking up a new appointment in September. Sadly, Carole's brother in London has been diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia and is off work having treatment. My cousin Lesley was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia the same week, and has been in hospital for six weeks and will be there at least another five. Again prayers for them both would be appreciated.



We have made three visits to Sussex to see mum who is doing well at 86, but still appreciates visits and being taken out. The long journeys south are a bit tedious so we try to combine other visits on route.

It has been great to hear all the encouraging news from ABC and Abingdon through Contact, emails and visits from a number of you. We do hope there will be more in 2012! I recently spoke about my work in Abingdon at one of the local churches to get them to think what connections they could be making in their locality. Our years in Abingdon were certainly enriching times for us both, out of which we have a lot to share with others.

Well I had better sign off otherwise we shall need our own edition of Contact to write about all our news. All that remains is for us to wish you a very blessed Christmas at ABC and pray that 2012 will be fruitful in establishing God's Kingdom work in Abingdon.

Love and God Bless  
Colin and Carole

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