

The Churches Rural Group (CRG) is a co-ordinating Group of Churches Together in England, bringing together representatives of Christian denominations and other organisations concerned with rural life and ministry to discuss issues of common interest.



At the meeting in October 2019, we welcomed Ben Aldous who is the new link between CRG and CTE and had a minute's silence to remember Rev Roger Greene, a faithful servant of rural churches and member of CRG. We spent some time looking at a suggested new constitution for the Group, and shared news from our networks with one another.

**Brexit and rural churches.** There has been continued uncertainty about the UK's future since our last meeting! In particular, members of the CRG were aware that lack of clarity about how current subsidies will be replaced is making planning difficult for farmers, leading to reports of additional pressure on farming helplines. The Farming Community Network is encouraging positive actions that will help to build personal and business resilience. A new website has just been launched as a free to use, easily accessible resource hub that provides information and links to sources of support on a wide range of topics. Do have a look at this on <https://farmwell.org.uk/>



In a similar vein, Germinate: ARC has produced a toolkit for churches on rural isolation and loneliness and has been working with other partners such as the NFU.

#### 'Germinate' news.



- The new Germinate leadership course has just started, with a full group of enthusiastic participants. This is a good way for churches to engage with their wider rural communities
- A new toolkit for rural churches has just been completed, to sit alongside 'Open Welcome' and 'Rural Isolation' and in the same format. 'Worshipping Together' is designed to help lay leaders to create good acts of worship in places where there is a shortage of ordained ministers. It includes conversation starters, ideas and links to additional resources, as well as guidance from different denominations.
- Rural Mission Sunday went well, with over 200 churches registering this year. Stories about their experiences can be found in the current edition of 'Country Way.' Could your church take part next year on Sunday 19 July 2020?

#### Book the date:

- 14 November 2019. 'Christian Hope and Farming Practice. ACF Conference at the Methodist Church, Market Harborough. Details and booking <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/acf-conference-2019-tickets-75159414833>
- 8-10 June 2020: IRCA-Europe conference at Sibiu, Romania on how churches can contribute to a flourishing village community. More details to follow, but book the date now!

**And finally:** It is encouraging to hear about projects and initiatives that are making a difference in rural communities in the UK and around the world. Despite limited resources, our village churches are providing safe places to bring people together, walking alongside those with anxieties about the future and bringing hope.

*Present: Representatives from Church of England, Churches Together in England, Roman Catholic Church, Salvation Army, Agricultural Chaplains Association, Agricultural Christian Fellowship, Farming Community Network, Germinate: ARC, International Rural Churches Association.*