

## **Notes on Inter-Church Links in Malvern (particularly C of E)**

### **Dorothy Knights**

I belong to Malvern Priory in the diocese of Worcester. Our partner parish is Wolmirstedt near Magdeburg. One other church in Malvern is linked to a group near Wolmirstedt. Other Malvern churches are linked, and have exchange visits, with Baptist Church in Volgograd, Russia and a Roma community in the Ukraine. Churches Together support an annual holiday of Belarusian children organised by Chernobyl Children Life Line. Churches in Malvern are also seen to support charities working in Romania, Albania and other parts of Eastern Europe.

The Worcester /Magdeburg-Halberstadt partnership originated in the early 90's. In fact Bishop Tony Dumper, and his German born wife Sybille, visited Magdeburg before the wall came down. Their friendship with Prasis Urmoneit and his wife led to the initial discussions about our churches being linked in some way. For Worcester Diocese this was not a new idea as there was already an arrangement, organised by Industrial Chaplains, in the 1970s for exchange visits with a college? in Berlin.

I have found it interesting to read the statement, aim, objectives, and strategy for our partnership written ten years ago (see opposite). Yes the twelve objectives are practised. Last year there was not only a new pastor inducted in Wolmirstedt but also a new Superintendent (responsible for 80 parishes!). Both have been in touch alongside more regular communication from an English teacher (very few of the older generation speak English). In my experience links can continue when those who were there at the beginning move on but a dedicated enthusiasm with language skills is needed, at least to bridge the change. Representatives from parishes with links meet occasionally. At our last meeting we had a talk about theological education in Germany. Each of our approx fourteen Worcester links has a different approach in relating to Partners in Germany.