

BCAN:

Working Together (Outline)

This outline summarises the points made in the full document, but the more detailed points are themselves only brief summaries. There has been a great deal of simplification to get this material into this compact form, and much of what is said should ideally be ‘balanced’ by other details.

The objective is that everything here is helpful, and everything is either true, or is as true as possible within the constraints of this document. If you read something that seems untrue or misleading, please ask about it!

Social action is an essential aspect of church life.

Jesus identified two primary commands: love God with everything you have, and love your neighbour as yourself. Who is my neighbour? Anyone who has a need I can do something about. My neighbour is the person who needs me to be involved in social action.

Jesus prayed for our unity, and that unity is both expressed and discovered as we work together on social action projects.

Jesus exercised a holistic ministry, both healing and preaching. He calls us to follow Him, to carry on His ministry in all its aspects.

Social action is a useful part of church life.

Without an active engagement in social action, the prophetic, evangelistic and pastoral work of the church is seriously weakened.

Social action strengthens congregational life

When we engage in shared social action projects, our congregational life can retain a clear focus without alienating many members, and we don’t struggle with issue of ownership.

The best social action is undertaken when we work together

If we work together, we can address the problems of overlap and duplication; our projects can more easily reach the critical mass needed to be viable, we can begin to change the way decisions are made by the political and statutory authorities, we can address the complexities of staff and volunteers working together, and we have at least the possibility of accomplishing God’s purpose for us in Bristol.

Making social action projects work well

These are a few observations from our experience in Crisis Centre Ministries, and the ways in which BCAN and the BCAN Homeless Forum help us to do our work. Some of the examples given touch on the sharing of expertise and practical wisdom, and the need to work in partnership with other groups, both charitable and statutory.