



Sandy Harris reports on BACC Webinar on shorter weekends

Two-day Cursillo will now be an option

Whenever we serve on team we are reminded, "It is not OUR Cursillo- it's for the participants; it's their Cursillo!" Also... "Every Cursillo weekend is different - differently wonderful, differently special for each new Cursillista to be." Of course, that's undoubtedly true but are you a bit like me? Mine, (*Blackburn's #25*) was probably 30+ years ago, filled me with such treasured memories, as have all the times I've served on team since. I love Cursillo, mainly because it has taught me how much God loves even me, causing a giant leap in my understanding of the responsibilities of having a faith. And it has made me passionate about sharing that amazing gift.

I don't like change at the best of times in any sphere, so my natural inclination is to say, "Don't mess with the tried and tested weekend formula which has made Cursillo such an effective tool to be used by the church." All we need to do is ensure church leaders know about it and in parallel, persuade more people in pews to participate. That worked in the past, but, honestly, is it working as well nowadays?

As BACC Rep (for Blackburn) I'd heard in recent times about the advantages of reassessing, refocusing things, so I was keen to arrange for others to join me in the February webinar which BACC organised to explain the concise weekend that had been trialled in various dioceses. Big congratulations to BACC! The webinar was organised with excellent skill, so informative and perfectly explained OPTIONS without any 'OUGHTS'.

First some basic info:-

- **No one is telling dioceses what to do.** We all now have the OPTION to offer something shorter BUT we could alternate between the two, the shorter and the longer versions. We can continue as usual, or change completely. It's up to each diocese, but I now know that it *is* a good idea to be a bit more open-minded, to explore and discuss options thoroughly.

It's not a change but a 'development' and even I am now up for that! We're now given this opportunity because all dioceses were consulted and overwhelmingly wanted it as an option on the Cursillo menu.

- **What to call it?** At first, 'Concise Weekend' sounded good, 'Shorter Weekend' would 'do what it says on the tin', but the language used carries underlying messages to be avoided ... so we should all call them 'CURSILLOS' *. Why? a) They might be held mid-week. b) We mustn't let anything hint at something shorter being a lesser experience because it definitely isn't. The Cursillo would start on the first evening when participants arrive keen to get started, so no longer is there any hint of 'marking time until 'Day1'. Arrival, probably after work, is Day 1 followed by two full days until their departure, then the Fourth Day of their normal life.
- **Advantages:** If held at a weekend, no Friday off work would be needed, partners could provide normal childcare when they're home from work and the whole Cursillo would cost less for participants and team alike which aids recruitment. Booking venues can be easier too. The important 'Flow of the Weekend' is the same, as of course is prayer.

CONTENT – How do we manage to present a complete Cursillo in a shorter time? Again, no-one is telling anyone what to do! The suggestions BACC offers are the result of several trials which were affected by ongoing feedback from participants. So, based on solid experience, BACC can now make available really helpful information to guide our decision making, including a sample timetable that worked elsewhere, but you can change it. All the talks, discussions, the worship, singing, some creativity opportunities and important free time, are still there with suggested time-efficient options about how to do them. Cursillo must never feel rushed and it doesn't. There has to be space in which the Holy Spirit can work - and there is – it's all just a bit more focused and the sense of building a Cursillo Community is certainly retained. Palanca still happens but there is some thinning down of extras.

It is hoped talk and meditation guidelines will be updated, but Covid19 has hindered that. Cursillo Leaders Weekends will be incorporating information as to how all these new options will enable us to continue what we've always done but in fresh ways. Some suggested tactics include reducing the length of talks; combining talks **; and maybe one discussion after 2 talks.

So, having been asked to give my feedback about experiencing this BACC webinar, I mainly want say "Congratulations" - the whole thing couldn't have been better. The presentations were really clear; the break out rooms for discussion helpful, as were the feedback sessions and question sessions. It was followed by dissemination of useful materials into inboxes.

This 'stick-in-the-mud' traditional Cursillista is now keen to share everything with our Secretariat and discover their opinions. Above all, I guess I've learned to be more open-minded and I would recommend everyone to look at what BACC is now offering us.

Addenda by Beth Roberts:

** Please note that BACC are still open to considering the title of the Cursillo.*

*** Whilst combining talks was done on at least one pilot Cursillo this is not recommended nor yet authorised by BACC.*

Letter from our National President Beth Roberts

These are exciting times!

*Let us be ready for new
opportunities as
Lockdown eases*



I start to write this as I have returned from receiving my first Covid vaccination. I don't feel invincible, but I do feel hopeful. It is also lovely to see the snowdrops giving way to the daffodils and now the camellia and other plants in my small garden are coming into bloom. That and the riot of bird song in the early mornings all show signs of new life and so hope.

I have however been conscious in recent days, since plans for the easing of Lockdown in all UK areas have been announced, of the dilemma of planning more face-to-face gatherings and balancing the physical and mental health, safety and economic surety of those around. In some ways I feel it would be easier to stay in my hermit existence, but I also remember all the contacts and enjoyment of shared experiences that I have been missing, so I need to start planning, with hope, to meet again in the fellowship of "Our Father", not mine nor yours but Our Father.

I have recently read an article which quoted Christopher J H Wright, an Anglican clergyman and Old Testament scholar. The quotation which caught my attention was "It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission". This set me thinking of the place that Cursillo has in that mission. We are part of the British Anglican Church and should ensure that that is where we play our role, there are other Cursillo groups that are part of other denominations, sometimes under a different title, so we all have our own field in which to work and act.

So what are we each doing within our church and diocese? Not every Cursillo has a close working partnership with their diocese, even though all are under the authority of their own bishop. As we come out of Lockdown there are going to be lots of new opportunities and pitfalls around for developing our Cursillo action, whether in our own way of life to reflect our faith, as a group or as a diocese. We need to be alert and ready to offer support. What are the needs of your diocese that you can pray for and support?

I pray that I, and all of us, are open to the opportunities that God puts our way. Let us ensure that we are proactive. As I wrote earlier, I am not invincible but with prayer and the support of Cursillistas through Group Reunion we all have a strong framework on which to build and to put our faith into action. New opportunities and exciting times! Ultreya!



ULTREYA GB - SEPTEMBER 4th 2021

NORWICH CATHEDRAL

“Dew you all keep a troshin’?”

We ARE going to have a National Ultreya, we WILL be able to meet in Norwich Cathedral on September 4th 2021 and, given the hospitals keep seeing their figures drop, and we all have our second injection, we will be able to sing as well.

The booking forms will be available on the website from the end of March. Sadly we will be unable to offer accommodation at the University as it needs all its spaces for students catching up on lost education.

If you are arriving on Friday, then you will be able to go into the Cathedral and see Dippy the Dinosaur, and we are investigating holding some form of evening entertainment in the Cathedral with a buffet. We will provide a list of hotels within walking distance of the Cathedral and, for those traveling and needing to use a car on the day, we hope to have access to a private car park. If anyone is organising a coach and needs parking, then please be in touch as soon as possible.

Please bring your banners, for although we have deemed it safer to keep out of the city, we are holding a walk of witness in the Cathedral grounds where, because of Dippy, there should be plenty of spectators. If it rains, there's always the cloisters to shelter in.

Lunch on the day will not be catered for as we thought you might like to venture out and see the sights, or if travelling on the day, bring a packed lunch and walk to Pulls Ferry and sit and eat or, weather permitting, use the large, grassed area inside the cloisters. Maps will be made available showing places of interest including where to eat.

We start at 9.30am with registration and complete the day at 4pm. You will then be able to travel home safely ready to serve your own church on the Sunday.

One of the ideas we have for evening entertainment is a Norfolk quiz so you might like to do some homework on famous people, splendid homes in the area, the history of the Cathedral, dialect and food and drink.

The Norwich Anglican Cursillo team look forward to welcoming you all to our beautiful city for a joyous fellowship through our Christ led National Ultreya.

Barbara Harrold LD

The times, they are a-changing!

*But prayer and love must underpin our choices
says our Spiritual Director, Rev Stephen Bowring*



The fact that the lyrics of this Bob Dylan song from nearly 60 years ago are just as relevant today as then goes to show that “*the times, they are always 'a-changing'!*” Every generation discovers the world around it and is convinced that its parents know nothing, just as this year's flowers in the garden would be convinced if they could that last year's blooms were not half as lively as they themselves are. Our instinctive attitude to change in our everyday lives betrays a deep-rooted dichotomy: on the one hand we cling to tradition and the certainty of regularity and the familiar; and on the other we crave novelty, freshness and spontaneity.

Are both of these true to the image of the divine we are made in, I wonder? Does God get bored, or sigh at fashions? I don't suppose we will ever know on this side of glory, but which of these two aspects of our humanity should we foster in our pursuit of holiness? I'm tempted to say – with my tongue just slightly in my cheek – that perhaps *faith* is about facing the unexpected with trust in God, while *religion* is about hanging on to what we know with the support of friends.

We had a wonderful morning webinar recently on making some potentially dramatic changes in the way we deliver the Cursillo experience. This is something we've been talking about for some time now, and some of us have had a good length of time to mull over our own and others' experience of compressing Cursillo into a shorter time-frame. For most of our wider Cursillo community however this is a new and possibly worrying departure from what we have always known. So it was a great delight to those of us charged with preparing the session to be received with so much openness and positivity by the 70 or so participants. Of course there were questions and concerns about whether this would lead to the wonderful experience we want to offer to others being 'watered down' or pruned unmercifully – questions that all of us who love Cursillo have been quite rightly asking all along.

The good thing about addressing those concerns is that it pushes us right back to fundamentals. What goes into a Cursillo to make it a Cursillo? Fifteen talks and five meditations, we chorus in answer; but we all know that there is more here than just that. Allowing, for example, 10 minutes for a talk, followed by 20 minutes for discussion, and adding in five 15-minute meditations, we could actually

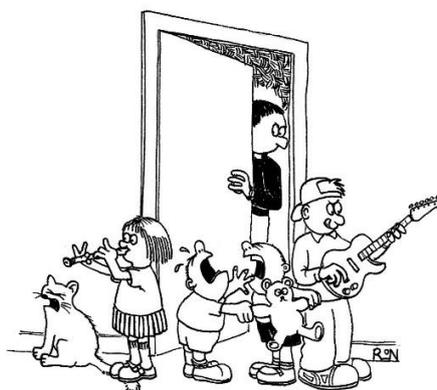
start at 8 am one Saturday morning and finish the whole thing by 5pm *on the same day*, even allowing a 15 minute comfort break after eating sandwiches during a meditation. Not that I'm suggesting we try that!

So the real questions centre around what *else* “makes” a Cursillo. I made my Cursillo nearly 30 years ago, and at that time it seemed as if every minute of the time just had to be packed in with disparate if very well-intentioned activities. It happened that my birthday fell on the Saturday of the weekend, and I had to attend two more weekends before I realised that the Saturday night festivities were not some elaborate personal birthday party that had been put on just for me, complete with 'Happy birthday, Stephen' cake and crackers! As to Sunday morning – we'll draw a veil over that (which is more than we as participants had time to do.) I also remember trying to make sense of one of the many pieces of paper we were given headed “the flow of the weekend” - “*flow??*”

Over the succeeding years I have been privileged to staff on Cursillos in 10 different dioceses/provinces, from Canterbury to Scotland, and to lead DDUs and such like in several others. I've been a Diocesan Spiritual Director in two dioceses, staffed on a *Tres Dias* ecumenical weekend, and helped with *Kairos* in a prison. What often makes me smile is that on training days there are things that each diocese is completely convinced is, shall we say, *standard practice*, when it's probably just the bright idea of the Lay Rector four years ago. The way we operate a rolling programme from Cursillo to Cursillo lends itself to the accumulation of 'baggage.' Not that there's anything intrinsically wrong with any of these extras; but you can't eat every cake in the cake shop at one meal. We make choices, and that means excluding some things, not just including others. The result is that our diocesan Cursillos have had very different styles and emphases, yet one over-riding factor is universal to all in my experience: the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the Cursillo. It is the under-pinning of prayer, and the modelling of unconditional love that transcend the delivery mechanism.

Secretariats throughout the land will be looking now at whether they feel able to and want to provide a mixed-economy of shorter and longer weekends. So much depends on local circumstances, expectations of participants, and other factors. There is no more need to jump on a bandwagon than to cling to the outmoded, but decisions do need to be made with that under-pinning of prayer and modelling of unconditional love as our principle guide and motivator. So let's all pray, wherever we are and whatever we feel about these new developments, that right decisions and good choices will be made, so that we may help not hinder the Holy Spirit in this beautiful, powerful, and multi-faceted thing we call Cursillo.

Ultreya!



Kevin took himself off to his study to pray for peace



Our loving God meets us where we are

*Rev Michelle Houldershaw
shares her spiritual journey*

As Christians we do not have full control of the paths we take and that is part of the fun of “Letting go and letting God take control of our lives”.

I have always been a Christian, but became a mature Christian after a car accident in 2000 that resulted in life changing injuries. A seven-week stay in hospital and an out of body experience led to me joining the Diocese of Lincoln Foundation course and discernment process for ordination.

Sadly, 2008 saw the demise of our property development company when Lehman Brothers, our financiers, went into liquidation., our properties repossessed, leaving us with just our home. Then Lincoln County Court issued a Notice of Eviction for 29th October 2010 at noon. On the 25th I received the Mortgage Statement and discovered a fraud. The eviction was off. God’s timing is impeccable!

Three days later I attended Lincoln Cursillo #27. What a blessing that was! It was the start of my Cursillo journey with a new family. Thank you, Rev Jacqui Morton for sharing Cursillo with me.

When Lincoln hosted Cursillo #29 in August 2012 I was invited to be a Table Leader and also give the Laity talk. Only a month earlier I had been ordained as a deacon. Another highlight came in 2014 when Lincoln’s promotional video was made at my home church. It was an honour to be included.

In May 2017 I was invited to be Spiritual Adviser at Lincoln Cursillo #33, an amazing privilege to see pilgrims’ lives transformed. Again this was God’s timing as I was preparing for my stipendiary ministry which started later that year. The following year our home eventually sold for negative equity.

The global pandemic of Covid-19 has, been an amazing opportunity for Christians. In Lockdown God has opened the hearts and minds of people who now have time to listen to God. People are searching for something they probably did not know they needed.

Sadly, the negative impact has meant job losses and rising unemployment. I have been unemployed since September and reinstated my business with an online store that sells apparel with butterfly designs among others. Again, the Cursillo message comes through my designs and Christ provides us all with hope.

Reflecting on my life, Cursillo has brought many blessings and a wonderful sense of community. Prayer, study, and action are so important in the Christian faith for helping us gain confidence in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ and the benefits of Cursillo. My prayers continue to ask God for new pilgrims and thank God for my faith journey.



How to Zoom

tricks and tips for participants



Icons: Some of the icons mentioned are not always visible and only show when you either move your mouse or touch the screen. Their location may also vary depending on the device you are on and will be activated according to how you click on the button, by mouse or touch. Be assured that trying or testing most of these will not cause a problem on your device. The only button to take care *not* to use unintentionally is the Leave button as that will eject you from the meeting!

Renaming: It is considered polite to name yourself rather than any default setting which may include another person's name if you share the device, "ipad" or even just a set of numbers. To do this there are several options. In all cases delete the previous entry and type your name according to the protocol of the meeting, whether first, first and surname and/or your title or role. Generally, your first and surname are sufficient.

When logging in you may be given the option to name yourself as mentioned above, alternatively once in the session you can either:

- Click on the three dots in the top right-hand corner of your named box. You then have a menu including the option to rename.
- Click on the participants' list button, usually on the bottom of your screen. This will bring up a list of everyone on the meeting, and there next to your own name the renaming option is under the "More" button.

Mute: Do mute yourself if you are likely to have background noise, dogs barking, telephone or doorbell or even a coughing fit. Your microphone is sensitive and can even pick up whispered comments which may be distracting for everyone else in the meeting. You will still be able to hear the content of the meeting. Your meeting host may mute everyone but you need to know how to unmute yourself in order to make a comment or ask a question.

Clicking on the icon activates/deactivates the facility. Your mute button is a small microphone icon in two locations on your screen. If shown with a line through it you are muted. Alternative locations of the microphone icons are:

- The bottom left of your named box.
- Towards the left on the bottom of your screen.

A simpler, temporary way to unmute yourself is to press and hold down the space bar on your keyboard. As soon as you release the space bar you will again be muted.

Video: If you have no camera on your device you will not be seen by the other participants, or, you may choose to not be seen either temporarily or throughout the meeting. To turn on or off your video there is an icon of a camera, probably along the bottom of your screen. If your Wi-Fi is weak it may assist to turn off your video. You will still be able to view the meeting.

Screen view: You can vary the number of participants you can see on your screen by clicking on the view button, usually located in the top right-hand corner of your screen. The options are generally:

- **Speaker View** to see only the person speaking (or making the most noise).
- **Gallery View** to see all the participants.

To see any additional participants beyond those your screen can accommodate, you can then either touch the arrow on the right or left of your screen or swipe your screen if viewing on a tablet.

Chat: This button on the bottom of the screen enables participants to write messages during the meeting. These will usually be visible by all participants but, by using the drop-down menu within the new screen that appears, they can be directed to any other one participant. The chat box can be closed or opened again by clicking on the chat button.

Reactions: Depending on the meeting being hosted there will be the option to put up a reaction emoji in your named box. These include applauding hands, thumbs up, celebration and a heart and are only temporary and will disappear automatically after 5 seconds.

On some meetings there is an additional reaction option to "Raise hand" which alerts the host to you should you wish to make a comment or raise a question. This button needs to be used again to "lower hand".

Participants: There is generally a list of participants available, this too can be activated by a button on the bottom of your screen. By accessing that list and finding your own name you can find an alternative place where you can activate mute/video and renaming options.

Backgrounds: There is an option to provide a different or virtual background to your own video screen. However, please be aware that these may cause some distortion to your video and be distracting for the other participants, so should be used with caution.

Leave: If you wish to leave the meeting temporarily then use the video and mute buttons, but if leaving permanently then use the red button on the bottom left of the screen.





A movement of the Church encouraging people to know, love and follow Jesus ...

Psalm 84:5 (NIV)

Zoom is a great way to keep in touch

Back in March 2020 I was told the course I was on would have to be on Zoom if the government put us into Lockdown. "ZOOM? I said, what is that?" John went on to explain its basic principles.....I was not to know then just how much a part of my everyday life Zoom was to become! The course did transfer to Zoom and I was immediately impressed with it and signed up for the free version which gives 40- minute sessions.

My first session as a "facilitator" was a Group Reunion. I asked the members in my group to put the Zoom app on to their devices (a very easy and straightforward process) and we gave it a go! It worked really well and by now my church was also taking up the challenge of Zoom, so I was learning from them as well. I decided to pay for the basic package, as I became aware that secretariat meetings would also have to be on Zoom and 40 minutes wasn't going to be long enough! These also work well on Zoom - indeed take less time - and as our members are spread out across the diocese, not having to drive anywhere was a real bonus!

Some people are confident with new technology, some are scared and others just don't want to know. For those willing but anxious, I have held one to one sessions. One wonderful bonus for me is that I am now grouping again with two very dear Cursillistas, with whom I had grouped since making my weekend, until they moved out of the diocese a few years ago.

Around Christmas time we asked all our Area Reps to tell us how things were and if GRs were occurring. It came to our attention that some areas were not grouping at all, for various reasons including "techy phobia".

We are now in the process of collating information on the GRs which are happening, so we can let everyone know their details. This gives those who would like to take part in a GR the opportunity to do so, while they are unable to join their usual group.

Following the AGM and Ultreya back in November 2020, it was clear that Zoom gatherings were going to be vital to keep us connected, especially during the long winter months, and so we have held a couple of "Zoom parties"! These have been really appreciated. They have given us a chance to be together, to worship and sing together (with us all on mute!) to chat and laugh together. Vital ingredients at this time!

President Beth, National Spiritual Director Rev Stephen Bowring and BACC Area Representative Billy Hollis have all attended some of these events and it has been a real joy to have them with us. The beauty of Zoom is that distance is not a barrier!

Judy Short, LD





What is BACC currently doing?

Alongside planning Cursillo Leaders' Workshops here are examples of the things with which BACC is currently engaged or supporting:

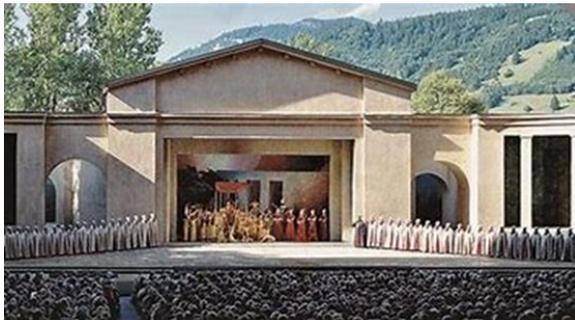
- Following the online seminar on a shorter format for the Cursillo which was held earlier this year and attended by representatives of the majority of dioceses, BACC is now going to work on updating the Talk and Meditation guidelines. It has long been planned to update the guidance but this is now a higher priority. But it will still take time.
- The new BACC website is still being progressed but the current website needs being kept up to date as each diocese starts planning future events, so please provide the details to Steven Ridley at website@anglicancursillo.org.uk
- The plans for a Cursillo Pilgrimage to Oberammergau in 2022 are being developed but are dependent on sufficient interest, so please see the article elsewhere in BACC Pages.
- The first national Cursillo get together in over a year is planned to be the Ultreya GB on 4th September, see the separate article about Norwich's plans and booking requirements for that.
- In answer to requests from the dioceses, the Resource Manual will shortly be revised to include guidance regarding safeguarding, bearing in mind that each diocese should comply with their own diocesan safeguarding requirements.
- Administration matters continue with such work as a review of the accounts.
- Planning for the Cursillo AGM which will necessarily meet on Zoom in May.

As plans for face-to-face meetings are re-established please remember to keep the BACC webmaster informed so that they can be advertised and attract prayer from other dioceses.



Are you feeling any more confident about travel in 2022?

As first published in the Autumn BACC Pages it is proposed that a group of Cursillistas may be interested in travelling together to see the Passion Play in Oberammergau in 2022. This would be a week's pilgrimage staying for five days in Austria and then having two nights in Oberammergau to see the play.



Some Cursillistas have already expressed their interest, without any commitment, but time is running out to establish whether such a booking is viable. If you are interested in learning more then please register your interest as soon as possible, to ensure that you receive further information as it becomes available. **Contact Beth:**
president@anglicancursillo.org.uk

Oberammergau 2022, further information:

Over 400 years ago when the bubonic plague raged in many parts of Europe it did not spare Oberammergau. After some deaths in the village they pledged to perform, every tenth year, the story of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. The villager's prayer was answered with no further deaths and in 1634 the first Passion Play took place. Whilst the 2020 the Passion Play had to be postponed due to the corona-pandemic, the 42nd Oberammergau Passion Play will now take place from 14 May to 2 October 2022.

The production involves over 2,000 performers, musicians and stage technicians, all residents of the village and includes spectacular Old Testament tableaux as well as drama and choral pieces.

The trip would likely be arranged through McCabe travel and the cost would be in the order of £1,750, excluding single room supplement but including all travel with flights to and from Munich.

Please pray for:

Those in our Cursillo and family communities who have recently died, for their families and friends who will miss them. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.



- Also remember those who are ill, but who give so much to Cursillo in our own Dioceses and in National roles in Cursillo.
- The BACC Standing Committee as they work and meet remotely.
- The Cursillo AGM which will necessarily meet on Zoom in May.
- The Norwich Cursillo team preparing for the Ultreya GB in September.



DATES

Cursillo Leaders' Workshops

15 October 2021 to 17 October 2021

at Shepherd's Dene, Riding Mill, Northumberland, NE44 6AF

18 March 2022 to 20 March 2022

at Wistaston Hall, Crewe, CW2 8JS

7 October 2022 to 9 October 2022

at Shallowford House, Stone, Nr. Stafford, ST15 0NZ

For all other information regarding Cursillo Leaders' Workshops, please contact the CLW Convenor - Rev Judy Craig-Peck email: clw@anglicancursillo.org.uk

Or to book please contact the CLW Administrator - Mr Paul Thacker email: clwadmin@anglicancursillo.org.uk

BACC Pages is the bi-annual magazine of the British Anglican Cursillo® Council.

Editor: Beth Roberts

Compiler: Vivien Leeming

Thank you to all our contributors for this issue.

Deadline for our Autumn issue: Sept 20th 2021.

If there is anything you would like to contribute to the next issue, any thoughts, prayers, study recommendations or action tips that you would like to share please send them (preferably by email) to Beth:

Email: president@anglicancursillo.co.uk

Post: 11, Maisterson Court, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5TZ

Phone: 07703 126163

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Contacts

National President:	Beth Roberts president@anglicancursillo.co.uk Tel: 07703 126163
National Spiritual Director:	Rev Stephen Bowring nsd@anglicancursillo.co.uk
BACC Secretary:	Richard Tabberer secretary@anglicancursillo.co.uk
BACC Treasurer:	Cheryl Goddard finance@anglicancursillo.co.uk
CLW Convenor:	Rev Judy Craig Peck clw@anglicancursillo.co.uk
Resources Officer:	Rev Canon Tony Tucker resources@anglicancursillo.co.uk