6 months ago, I wrote about the move from college into the Derby A2C community project. Sometimes that feels like yesterday, other times it feels like we have been here for years. Having done lots of research about the area and getting to know people both in church and community, we are just starting to decide how the project will end up serving the community. There are lots of ideas and so, along with my steering group, we must decide on the priorities. So, my next reflection will hopefully be full of new ventures!

Many people ask me what I do, and that’s not easy to answer. As previous reflections have stated, each CRCW is different and each project offers different ways to reach out to our local communities. And there is no such thing as an average day.

Yesterday, was not an average day, but it made me reflect on the variety of work we can do. And I thought it may be good to share.

The day started with checking e-mails (my inbox has never been so busy!) and writing a short reflection for my local Rotary club.

I then went to CAMEO (come and meet each other) a kind of coffee morning at Ashbourne Road Church, with an activity each week to motivate those who come. This morning was a ‘knit and natter’ day, knitting squares to be made into blankets for the homeless. They decided it was time for me to get involved. I haven’t knitted for over 20 years, but they taught me to cast on and the square is a few inches long already!

I then headed into the city centre and en route bumped into ‘Josh’. Josh is homeless. We sat on the pavement and shared tea and cigarettes and had a chat about how hard things have got for him. Josh doesn’t drink or do drugs but he is stuck in a cycle of no address, no benefits, and nowhere to go. After 10 months of being on the streets, Josh is starting to lose hope.

I headed off to a local pub with a heavy heart. The pub and other local business are soon to be affected by the building of an eight-storey student accommodation block, including a small working garage on the site, which will be demolished. The local businesses have petitioned the City Council with no response. We looked at how we could widen the campaign and involve local residents as well.

Finally, I made it to the city centre, which is less than a mile but it had taken 2 hours, and I met Paul, the City Council Regeneration Manager. The area around Central URC is about to be developed and in one way or another this will have an impact on the Church. I was updated on the project (no new information currently) and talked about other ways the regeneration will affect local people and businesses. Paul is very knowledgeable and a useful link into other council departments and so I left him with a list of contacts I’d like to be introduced to and some thoughts about a local forum for those who will be affected by the regeneration project.
There’s no such thing as an average day, and sometimes the day ends up completely different from the plans we made. That’s the great thing about this ministry, you never know who or what you may meet on the streets. But we *can* be Jesus in our streets, meeting people where they are, offering hope and love and support, in many different ways.