

Background, the House Group period (early 1960s)

The old Church was more than a building: it was a body of people, who had worshipped, prayed and played together for the past 60 years. It was a family of friends whose lives centered on God and each other. They felt God still had a purpose for them.

Faced with the possibility of having no building, the Church was compelled to ask many questions concerning the nature and purpose of the church. House Fellowships made their very special contribution.

– Rev. Cyril Summers, 1960s

Under Cyril's guidance they discovered how the first Christians, a thriving, Spirit-led community, met for prayer in one another's homes. Several members were asked to do this and the seeds of House Groups were sown. At the same time the nature of Maindee was changing,

With the exception of Pillgwenlly, more old people and immigrants lived here than anywhere else in town, and Maindee Primary, the local school had an ever increasing number of immigrant children...The whole area lacked adequate play opportunities and green and open spaces... There was no provision for a community centre or youth club, while the many clubs and pubs in the area flourished, making their own ambivalent impact on the community.

For the first time women in long silk trousers and sandals were seen on Maindee streets, walking slowly in convoy. They gave every appearance of reluctant strangers in a strange land resolutely but sadly and unconvincingly, striving to come to terms with an alien culture thrust on them by their menfolk, who in many cases were quickly disillusioned by the lack of opportunities and the widespread racial discrimination.

– Cyril Summers

Should the changing nature of the area be considered in any plans?