

**DIOCESE OF CHESTER
CSR REPORT**

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

The DBF aims to resource and support parishes in mission, particularly their social action and outreach. The Committee for Social Responsibility endeavors to shape and support this aspect of diocesan work.

The associated Joint Venture with the Church Urban Fund – Transforming Lives Together (through an asset based community development approach) recognises the issues of poverty and social challenge faced by many in our communities. TLT took positive action with parishes through Places of Welcome, Know Your Church Know Your Neighbourhood and Filling the Gap.

The greatly valued Family Life Officer, Ruth Mock, moved into an exciting Curacy role leaving a tremendous legacy. Work in this year culminated in events highlighting food poverty and the diverse responses made by people at a parish and local authority level.

The Counselling service provides therapeutic counselling and ongoing pastoral support to clergy, their families and lay members at an individual and group level. During the year 70 referrals were taken and over 520 counselling sessions offered by the team. The Mediation service continued to offer a valuable service providing an independent forum to manage conflict where this has arisen with parishes.

The Mental Health Forum held its annual service for World Mental Health Day at St Peter's Church, Minshull Vernon in October. Working jointly with the Committee for Ministry over 80 people attended a successful follow on Mental Health training day for clergy and laity.

Safeguarding support has continued to be vital element of support offered to parishes. Recommendations started to be implemented of the full independent safeguarding audit carried out by SCIE - published in May 2017. Training has continued to be delivered to clergy and office holders, parish safeguarding officers and volunteers. A training strategy is being developed in response to the national Learning and Development Framework requirements to enable delivery of standard and specialist safeguarding modules.

The Criminal Justice group continued to support and raise awareness of the work of Prison Chaplaincies in the Diocese and a partnership service was held at Styal Prison.

A Disability Forum was initiated and the post of Inclusion and Engagement Officer established, with development work undertaken to offer training and awareness raising approaches for the future.

A Loneliness and Isolation seminar hosted by CSR, shared the work and ideas of over 20 partner organisations. Parish level activity to engage with communities through outdoor spaces was a high profile presence at the Cheshire Show "Church at the Show" tent which formed part of the partnership work of the Rural Steering Group. The Urban Mission and Ministry committee undertook significant review work with a view to supporting future practical action within parishes in an urban setting.

A planning group was established to explore the formation of an Environment Forum and the committee and staff team participated in a full away day which was the culmination of a full year of consultation and evaluation with a view to re-launch and rebranding of Diocesan social action and outreach.

Planned Activity 2018

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (James 2:15-17)

This has been a particularly busy period with the whole extended team engaged in a wide variety of partnerships, approaches and initiatives. There are a number of things that the committee and staff team are focusing upon and starting to plan for the next few years.

Meetings to kick start the work of the Faithful Neighbours Forum (to address interfaith issues, minority ethnic concerns, anti-modern slavery, refugees and asylum seekers) and the Loneliness and Isolation network are in the organizing / planning phase. The seminar focusing upon loneliness held at the end of November was very well attended and there is definitely an appetite to work together across agencies, explore joint campaigns and the offer of network facilitation from the diocese has been well received.

The Criminal Justice Group has a very high profile exhibition planned for Prisons Week in partnership with the Cathedral.

The Urban Mission and Ministry Committee has been following its regular pattern of meetings but it is recognized that the time is ripe for review of this sub-committee although this has not halted work on planning a 24 hour away day at Foxhill for urban clergy with the working title "Life in Abundance: helping people to feel fully alive".

Higher level discussion needs to take place as to the purpose and direction of this sub-committee so that all parties concerned find a home and gain greatest traction for their work which also relates to the Mission and Ministry Departments.

Discussions have been held with voluntary sector and diocesan partners in Liverpool and Manchester to look at the possibility of holding a Funding Fair on a regional footprint. Individually we have all been struggling to get national funders to come to our events but together we may stand some chance of having a good representation from the various trusts and agencies.

An Older Peoples Forum has been established and although in the very early stages a launch and celebration event is being discussed for the Autumn time.

An Environment Day has been booked for the 30th April at Foxhill which initially will launch a forum with sign up on the day. Speakers from A Rocha, Green Journey and Leeds Diocese are already signed up with other partners to be confirmed in the next few weeks and publicity will be shared imminently.

The Rural Steering Group will be supporting the Environment Day and has re-named itself the Rural Life and Ministry Group to better capture the current remit with events in the pipeline to look at the impact of Brexit upon our rural communities and the realities of rural poverty.

World Mental Health Day will be significant and high level for us once again. The MH Forum is taking a lead with this activity in partnership with the ministry team holding a training and awareness day focusing upon young people and their MH as well as activity at the Cathedral and parish level. The committee is now the accountable line of communication with the Agricultural Chaplaincy.

We have signed up to be part of a national network addressing anti-modern slavery including train the trainer days so that a programme can be shared with Deaneries and Parishes raising awareness and possible actions to be taken. This will be rolled out over the next year.

A small piece of focused work is being undertaken in the Northwich area to review the efficacy of collaborative Parish level activity using SR as a starting point. Discussions have taken place to instigate the “Give 5 Minutes” videos starting with one to raise the profile of social responsibility work through a generic video (to be screened at the diocesan synod) highlighting the work of the full committee and staff team.

Other videos are in the pipeline to highlight areas of work such as Transforming Lives Together, the Disability Forum, the Mothers Union and Anti-Modern Slavery.

Committee members are connected to a number of very vibrant and effective partner organisations including Parish Nursing, Besom and The Mothers Union.

The newly formed Disability Forum has a number of high level initiatives planned including:

- Deanery Accessibility Champions
- On- Line Resources
- Disability Awareness day 15th July 2018
- Training Resource Pack for Parishes
- Diocesan year event.

An annual programme of listening events are being held in partnership with Foxhill to offer an opportunity for people to discuss issues that they may face relating to a series of thematic areas.

Bi-monthly deanery “Reaching Out” events are also being held to give parishes the chance to meet with the CSR staff team and other colleagues as well as network and share ideas about their approach to connecting with God’s wider world.

A substantial body of work has been undertaken to identify the values base of the committee and start to develop a relaunch / rebranding approach which has been a central element of recent activity for the team. All this work will hopefully spearhead the request made by diocesan synod - twelve months ago – to significantly raise the profile of social responsibility work within the diocese. This will form a major element of the work-plan going forward.