

Committee for Social Responsibility Annual Report 2018

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. *Isa 58 : 9-10*

CSR – A picture in numbers!

The Committee for Social Responsibility initiated another busy and diverse year. As well as day to day parish support there were a whole raft of meetings. As well as the four committee meetings departmental staff attended 5 meetings relating to estates and urban issues, including a retreat for urban clergy and 5 meetings relating to rural life and ministry.

12 “Let’s Talk About” sessions were held in partnership with Foxhill covering a very eclectic range of social responsibility and wellbeing topics. 9 meetings were attended relating to criminal justice and 8 meetings addressing anti-modern slavery initiatives.

4 “Reaching Out” sessions were held at various locations throughout the diocese sharing ideas and opportunities for working across parishes and with the social responsibility team.

Partnership work was significant with 10 Ecumenical partnership meetings supporting the dementia conference, parish nursing and access to funding.

CSR was represented at 10 meetings of the Cheshire West and Cheshire Poverty Truth Commission, six local authority and voluntary sector gatherings and 5 meetings of the national Social Responsibility Network as a member of the enabling and planning group. Two trustee meetings of the St. Bridget’s Trust were attended by the Director as a trustee and other topics such as loneliness and isolation, fairer finance, financial literacy, engaging with outdoor spaces and older people in parish life were addressed through meetings set up by the social responsibility team.

Environment was a headline activity for CSR with over 60 people attending a launch conference at the end of April in Foxhill leading on to 5 meetings of the newly formed forum and with partners to embed environmental issues into diocesan life.

The counselling service has once again provided unique and highly valued support for our whole diocesan community. There are currently 13 counsellors each typically seeing an average of two clients on a pro bono basis. In 2018, 61 referrals were received, 802 sessions of counselling were offered with over half of all referrals seen within 12 sessions. This service is provided substantively through a volunteering team who give their time and skills for free and if costed at an individual rate this giving would equate to a cost of £36 000! Presenting issues ranged from stress, anxiety,

depression, health worries, relationship problems, trauma, and sexuality. There are also 2 clergy peer groups meeting bi monthly with 5 clergy members each. The Mental Health Forum worked in partnership with the Committees for Ministry and Mission to offer a training day focusing on Mental Health and Young People. They were also present in the Cathedral for World Mental Health Day to offer a listening and educative space to visitors.

The Criminal Justice Group supported the curating of an exhibition of over 40 pieces of artwork by prisoners of both HMP Styal and Thorn Cross displayed initially in the Cathedral – highlighting the lived experience of the criminal justice system and the incredible work of the prison Chaplains. Over 60 VIP's attended the evening launch and Chester Male Voice Choir sang a welcome at the reception. 40+ churches and schools will have hosted the exhibition all the way through to December 2019 with 2000 people viewing the work in the first three months.

Transforming Lives Together successfully promoted the Filling the Gap initiative to a churches delivering food and activities during holidays, enabling over 400 children and their families to eat and play together. In the 2018 summer holidays a staggering 2,456 meals were provided by just 5 churches! TLT are also working on Places of Welcome - a network of 23 churches and organisations, opening doors every week across the Diocese, to welcome people and provide free refreshments.

Engagement and Inclusion work launched the Pink Box appeal, in partnership with the Mothers Union, schools and school nurses. So far 9 schools including one college have responded to the offer of help with ending period poverty making sanitary products accessible to girls on low income, thus enabling them to stay in school and access a full education. Launch events have taken place and sanitary products are now being provided to these establishments with the help of donations and pink boxes being provided and replenished by the Mothers Union on request. It is hoped that new projects will start in the forthcoming months.

Comprehensive disability awareness training has been delivered and audits have started to help churches become 'disability friendly'. The first Enabling Church Course was delivered in May 2018 with 16 Participants for 8 session in 2 blocks of 4 weeks.

Participants benefitted from the course but an evaluation is now underway looking at an abridged version of the comprehensive content to make it more accessible to a wider range of parishes to roll out across the Diocese.

The Disability Forum had a presence at Disability Awareness day on the 15th July 2018. Where they gathered information and offered time for prayer and discussion in an informal way to help find out what the Church does well and what the Church could do better to include people with different abilities. Some of this discernment helped to shape the ground-braking service on the 9th March 2019 in Celebration of Different

Abilities attended by over 120 people which will undoubtedly help to shape worship and parish life in the future.

The Department for social responsibility also attended two national conferences – on Disability and Environmental issues - in partnership with Caroline Hilton from DAC. This resulted in the decision to work more closely with each other to ensure our buildings are more accessible and environmentally friendly in design and use.

The Inclusion and Engagement Officer also represents the diocese at the Adoption Matters panel.

Safeguarding advice and expertise continued to be vital element of support offered to parishes and the Cathedral. This year the Diocese formally adopted all Safeguarding National Policy and Practice Guidance. Training has continued to be delivered to clergy, parish safeguarding officers and volunteers, and specialist national modules are now being facilitated. For the F2F training 6 events were held, totalling 176 people across clergy, parish safeguarding officers and volunteers, all trained to C3 level.

Online training has also increased access to training in 2018, with 356 people accessing the C0 module and 85 people working through C1. Plans for **2019** include running 23 F2F courses commencing the C3 licensed reader and pw training, C5 refresher clergy training, S1 Safer Recruitment and S3 Responding Well to Domestic Abuse. To date there are 488 people who are either booked onto or have already attended these events.

The DSA has been assisting the government's IICSA Inquiry, further Practice Guidance has been introduced by the House of Bishops, and a Parish Handbook is now available for all parishes to assist implementation.

To mark the centenary of women's partial emancipation Bishop Libby, in partnership with CSR, highlighted a symbolic Vote100 message. Journeying from Boggart Hole Clough to Chester city and Cathedral, fellow marchers drew attention to 100 years of life changing legislation for women and invited ongoing responses to the big #FreeTo conversation. Events highlighting Dementia, Rural life and Urban ministry have also taken place throughout the year as well as CSR's continuing involvement in the Cheshire Show.