

Review of the year's activities October 2016-September 2017.

These are some of the activities in which Churches Together was involved over the past year:

In September the Gateway Church partnered with Christians Against Poverty (CAP) to run a CAP Job Club in Kings Lynn. The CAP Job Club is a friendly place for job seekers to come along and receive practical help to enter into employment. The Job Club takes place at our office, 99c High Street, Kings Lynn, on Tuesdays from 10am (except school holidays). Please call 01553 774881 or 0800 3280006 to book into the Job Club or for more information. Alternatively you can email Mike at mikeikwuagwu@thegatewaychurch.info.

In October Nell Steele spoke to the committee as a Trustee of KLARS (King's Lynn Area Resettlement Support) which is now called ACCESS and was founded with Churches Together. ACCESS is a charity which is supported by the lottery and managed by Emma Humphrey. ACCESS supports ethnic minority groups in the area of King's Lynn, delivering free multi-lingual information, advice and guidance. The contact details for ACCESS are: Sarah Parker, Operations Administrator, ACCESS –Supporting Migrants in East Anglia: 41 Old Hospital Mews, Hospital Walk, King's Lynn, PE30 5RU, (01553) 773905 info@accessmigrantsupport.org.uk

In early November the 'Eat well; spend less' course was started at Fairstead by Foodbank which also subsequently ran the 'Food in School Holidays' (FISH) events.

Andrew Frere-Smith joined the executive committee as an observer in November. Andrew is the development worker for 'Imagine Norfolk Together' a joint venture between the Diocese of Norwich and the Church Urban Fund. There are currently 18 such development workers throughout the UK. With money from the 'Board of Dreams and Visions,' Andrew is able to financially support local churches who wish to start new social projects. For example, Fr Peter Rolling at the Catholic Church, in November, started a soup kitchen for the homeless on Saturdays 12.30-3pm. Andrew's long term vision is to provide a night shelter.

On Sunday 22nd January the London Road Methodist Church was full for a service led by Revd Catherine Dixon as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Preacher was Rt. Revd Alan S Hopes B.D. A.K.C. RC Bishop of East Anglia. Hannah Cooper and Jacquie Wrout from the charity 'One to One', (www.onetoneproject.com 01553 770770), spoke about 'Mental Health: What can I do?' on Wednesday 1st February. The One to One charity has been helping adults in this area who have mental health problems for 33 years.

St John's Church has just celebrated their first birthday at Welcome Inn, their open church each Tuesday morning with free tea, coffee and cakes. It has been wonderful to see a very regular group of people come along for friendship and chat. A wide range of people come, many of whom are vulnerable and many who have no other connections with church. It is a highlight of the week for us!

In March a talk was given by Maurice Wren, the CEO of the Refugee Council (020 7346 6700) who highlighted the difficulties for migrants and what could be done to help them. The previous week and exhibition including a Lampedusa Cross had been displayed in the Minster by Revd. Laura Baker.

In April Lucy Faulkner arranged for Margaret Goodyear and Alan Camina from the Norwich Credit Union to talk at a meeting to investigate whether an NCU service point should be set up in King's Lynn.

In May Revd Heather Berry co-ordinated volunteers who collected for Christian Aid Week. On 3rd June hundreds of people enjoyed the free second annual Celebrate King's Lynn event on the Walks when local churches have the opportunity to show the public what they do.

On 28th June, Andrew Frere-Smith organised for 4 speakers to address a public meeting on homelessness and as a result a sub-committee was formed to plan for the opening of a winter night shelter at the Purfleet Trust in October. The sub-committee members are: Kelly Bowen (the parish administrator from the Minster), Ken Hubbard (treasurer of CAP), Pastor Kevan Crane (Chairman), Revd Rebecca Rogers (St Johns) and Paula Hall the CEO of the Purfleet Trust. The project will need about 60 volunteers.

In July Bill Vyse kindly took over the role of treasurer of Churches Together to sort out the finances following the sad illness and death of Mike Brown earlier in the year. As well as being a lovely person, Mike was treasurer of Churches Together for many years and we all owe him a great debt of thanks for the work he did.

The report to the July meeting of the executive committee about the CAP Debt Centre was very encouraging. The Centre was started last year and is run by Emily Hart. Emily now has 5 people who were in debt but are now totally debt free, and 4 clients have become regular church attenders. Emily would like to recruit some more female volunteers who could act as client befrienders. There would be no paperwork involved for volunteers as this is all handled by Emily or CAP head office. There is a café for clients at St Johns Church on different dates. October 15th is the official CAP Sunday. Emily is happy to talk at churches if invited. There was recently a CAP fundraising sponsored walk at Sandringham.

There is currently no resolution to the problem of finding new premises for Foodbank since the Red Cross announced that they are selling the current Austin Fields site. The Council has offered a shop in New Conduit St. King's Lynn, at a reduced rent but it is too small. Foodbank could do with a van for transportation of food.

Our thanks to Andy Moyle, (Gateway Church), who continues to maintain the website and co-ordinate the 'Thought for the Week' in the Lynn News. The Gateway Church is 10 years old on Sat 2nd Sept. Started in 2007 with a dozen people, it's now gathering 120 from over 20 nations most Sundays! Just before the June General Election a hustings meeting was organised by Andy Moyle and Revd Catherine Dixon in conjunction with the Lynn News.

Future meetings which are being organised by Churches Together include:

Kings Lynn Together (Access for Migrants) are organising a 'Round the World in 80 dishes' event on Sunday 24th September 2017 at 12 noon in Tuesday Market Place.

Peter Stanford will talk about his new book on Martin Luther on Friday 10th November 2017 at 7.30pm in the London Rd Methodist Church. This date would be Martin Luther's birthday.

On Wednesday 7th February 2018, Julian Bryant will talk about 'Eco-Church' at 7.30pm at the London Rd Methodist Church.

We are hoping to organise a talk on Universal Credit at the end of April 2018. Universal Credit will take over from current benefits in October and will affect all the less well-off people in the area.

Congratulations to all the church workers and volunteers and parishioners who made the churches and these projects run during the year.

Peter Coates 03/08/17