

Putting faith to work



signposts to engaging with the world

Churches for Work
and Social Justice
www.ccisr.org.uk

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“Putting faith to work” is at the heart of what ISR is about, as we work to make a difference in the community, in the workplace and in the church.

We are here to raise issues of social responsibility and social justice, and to support churches in their mission and ministry, so we hope you will find this information useful and an encouragement to get involved. There is much more information on our website www.ccisr.org.uk and we would love to hear from you.

Please note: all web links in this publication are 'active'. If you read this online, hovering over the links will enable you to visit the web site.

Welcoming the stranger

It's very easy to fear the unknown, and often our attitude to strangers is built on ignorance and fear rather than love and nurture. At a time when there seems to be a climate of fear and uncertainty bubbling just beneath the surface of our streets, with the extremism and hatred being forced upon us all through all kinds of violence and counter violence, the ignorance in our society is a dangerous thing.

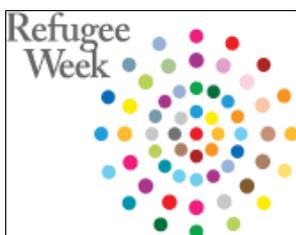
It is therefore all the more vital that we learn to understand and walk alongside those who we do not know. Turning away from people who have arrived in our country can never build safe and loving society. It can only lead to greater fear and increased isolation for us all.

Bristol is a City of Sanctuary, and consequently is a beacon of hope for how we as a nation welcome those who are in need of asylum. We should turn towards those in need: this is a basic Christian imperative. But so often we turn away because of fear and misunderstanding. The ignorance is poorly placed, of course. Those seeking asylum in the UK are a very small proportion of the overall immigration figures (maybe as little as 5% of the total). But even if they were

larger, it would be utterly wrong to turn anyone away who seeks the safety of our hospitality through a fear for their own lives.

The media, who tell the collective stories of our nation, cannot easily work with complicated ideas, preferring to polarise into extremes. As people who seek to care for all, we need to avoid extremist thinking and to question just who is 'my neighbour'. The Christian response is to encourage the care for those seeking asylum and who are refugees from oppression.

The work of b.friend is a wonderful sample of how this needs to happen: face to face, person to person. It is a small, but growing and increasingly significant way to challenge ignorance through a direct encounter with one another.



b.friend

Isolation is a hard thing to face in today's society. In addition being unable to work, living in poor standard accommodation and surviving on less than the level of welfare benefits, you could well be describing one of the asylum seekers referred to b.friend.

Since the start of the project, b.friend has arranged befriending support for a former politician, travel agent, hair dresser, hotelier, musician, car mechanic, computer specialist and university professor amongst others. By virtue of their professions these people have enjoyed a degree of status in their home countries. By fleeing in search of safety they have left this and everything else resembling home behind.

As an asylum seeker you are not permitted to work and once you have refugee status finding work can be very difficult. You are also likely to encounter prejudice and a lack of understanding and empathy as you seek to establish some semblance of normal life for yourself.

b.friend enables volunteers from across the church community in Bristol to befriend isolated asylum seekers and refugees. Fifteen volunteers are currently partnered with a 'befriended' meeting up on a regular basis to provide support and companionship. Many of the meetings take place in local cafes or whilst exploring many of the free activities that Bristol offers.

As project manager I am privileged to meet many people seeking sanctuary who have been referred to the project and who are benefitting from having a befriender. What's fascinating is watching the relationships develop and both parties change as a result.



Befriending an asylum seeker or refugee is not just a benevolent act. It can have a profound impact on the befriender who finds their prejudices and beliefs challenged through relationship.

Patricia from France has been befriending Maggie from Burundi for the past twelve months. The relationship that these two women have built has been very moving to watch. Maggie in her seventies is a true survivor. A qualified social worker in her country of origin, she spent time working in refugee camps and in development work.

As Patricia has her own experience of development work in France, it's not unusual to find both women sitting in a café animatedly discussing human rights for women. Patricia says of Maggie, "She is precious, courageous and is not a fragile little thing. I never had that feeling of being the supporter. It was a relationship in the true sense of

the word."

David, one of the newest trained recruits is yet to be matched with a befriender but is eager to start. He says that his views on asylum seekers and refugees have been transformed by the b.friend training he's received. He's discovered that the person he will befriend is just like him. He may come with different experiences but essentially he's just like you and me.

The next training course for new b.friend volunteer befrienders takes place on 21st & 26th Sept & 3rd October. For more details please contact Sam Sayer at sam@b-friend.org.uk

How do you care?

ISR recently invited members of the churches in Brislington and St Anne's who have a responsibility for pastoral care in their community to come together to learn from each other. Together we identified that there is a growing need for care in the communities that churches are playing an increasing role in trying to fill. The purpose of the event was to bring teams together to learn from each other's experiences, to look at how their differing models offered new ways to engage, how the role of their Parish Nurse could assist in their work and what additional support they needed. ...continued...



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Dr Caroline Yandell, a local GP and an Anglican Curate with St Peter's Henleaze gave a presentation on depression:

- What is depression?
- How much do we know about it?
- Treatment
- Medication
- 'extras' for depressed Christians
- What the Christian community should not say (but often does)
- What the Christian community should do (but often doesn't)

During the morning it became clear that:

- the pastoral care given tends to be for those already in church
- there is very little training, support or supervision given to people carrying the burdens of others
- team members are not only being asked to care for an individual but increasingly for the whole family
- there is an increase in certain illness such as mental health, cancer and dementia which requires greater understanding
- we need to come together with others offering pastoral care so we learn together

With the changes in the NHS and benefits, families being dispersed and money tight, what role does the church have in

caring for people?

Is this model of a training session something your church would like to be involved in?

ISR have delivered training on bereavement, the death of a child and are offering training on mental health issues and drugs.

What are the issues you are dealing with, what would help?

Please do get in touch
admin@ccisr.org.uk
0117 9557430



(Parish Nurse Beauty Magara)

Serving others and meeting needs.....

Mental Health Awareness Training (9.30am – 12.30pm)

Most of us have some experience of mental health issues and it is vital that people who are working in communities and churches have a good awareness of issues and helpful ways to support and respond. Many people worry about what the right thing to say or do is and how to be helpful. This half day course is designed to give you an introduction into wellbeing, some of the conditions and how you can help support someone irrespective of your experience or qualifications.

The half day course will leave you with more confidence and some simple ways to help people you come across who are struggling with mental health issues. We will look at areas such as, "What is mental health, illness and distress, and a look at depression and suicide".

Drug and Alcohol Awareness Training (1.30pm – 4.30pm)

Do you know or work with someone who has an alcohol or substance use problem? If you are interested in finding out more about what you can do to help, then this course is for you.

This half day course will leave you feeling more knowledgeable and confident in helping someone who has issues with alcohol or substance use.

The course will cover the effects of specific types of drugs and alcohol, the dangers, risks and harms as well as how to understand and support people.

When: Thursday July 11th
9.30am – 12.30pm

Where: ISR Office, 162 Pennywell Rd BS5 OTX.

Who for: Church based staff, clergy, volunteers and those engaged in pastoral care and support.

Why: To build confidence and skills in supporting people.

Cost: £25 per session (Payable on the day. Some **FREE** places are available please enquire a.s.a.p)

How to book your place: Please contact Alison Paginton at ISR 0117 955 7430

alison@ccisr.org.uk

Book now – limited places available! Some **FREE places are available thanks to a grant from the Church Urban Fund.**

Warm, Affordable and Green

A free conference on heating churches in the South West

This conference takes place on July 2nd at 10.00-2.00pm, St Stephen's Church, High Street, Exeter. Speakers include Matt Fulford (Sustain), Ruth Knight (Archbishop's Council), Kate Symonds (Archbishop's Council) and John Westerham (Ardenham Energy).

The aim of the day is to inform local churches in the region on the current opportunities for heating their buildings using a variety of efficient and sustainable technologies and fuels. This event is organised by the South West Dioceses 'Shrinking the Footprint' Group. For bookings please contact Joan Harris (01392-294940) joanie@exeter.anglican.org



Shrinking the Footprint Energy Audit

Protecting the world for future generations – caring for God's creation

Sign up here to the FREE Energy Audit Online Software; for those participating in the Shrinking the Footprint Energy Audit.

- Understand your buildings' energy use.
- Access information for energy savings.
- Jointly track progress on reducing carbon emissions.

Energy audit scheme user guide

When 20 buildings are signed-up to the software in your Diocese a Diocese Peer Group will be created to track your footprint results

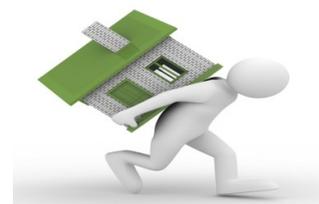
- Your energy saving stories
- Energy saving advice
- Shrinking the Footprint website

Has your church thought about signing up to the free energy audit which the national Church of England has set up in partnership with sMeasure. It provides a simple way of understanding your church's energy use and helps you to plan energy savings. It would be great to see every church in the diocese signed up to the scheme. So go to www.shrinkingthefootprint.smeasure.com and find out more.



Healthy Conversations: homelessness

On May 22nd a "healthy conversation" was held at Rodbourne Methodist Church which explored how local churches might support work with homeless people within the local community. The lead homelessness officer at Swindon Borough Council spoke to the group and explained the process by which a homeless person is judged eligible to receive council support and what support they would receive. He felt that there may be a role for churches in providing mentors for homeless people as a way of helping to break the cycle of homelessness. A full report of the meeting will be available soon on the ISR website.



Goodbye and hello at ISR!

On 13th June we are saying a fond farewell to **Simon Bale** who is leaving ISR after many years of serving and working in Bristol. Simon is one of our Social Responsibility Officers and has played a vital role in Bristol working on issues of social justice with churches, promoting multi faith working and playing an active part in community and voluntary sector life in the city on behalf of churches. Simon leaves us to become a curate in the Church of England and we wish him well in his new role.



We are pleased to welcome **Gordon Hindmarch** to the staff team at ISR who has joined us in June. Gordon will be working across a number of areas in the team but will have a lead for work around environmental issues

and social responsibility and supporting our chaplaincy and faith in the workplace projects. Gordon brings much experience and he can be contacted at gordon@ccisr.org.uk if you would to get in touch about any of these issues. Look out for a piece by Gordon in the next edition on progress on environmental justice!

Pentecost Sunday

Pentecost Sunday saw around 5,000 Christians from across the Bristol area gather in Castle Park for Party in the Park to celebrate and share in the work that is done to make an impact on our city. This unique gathering was part of an ecumenical initiative "Together for Bristol" which is taking place in 2013. The weather was sunny, the buzz was exciting and the sense of spirit and sharing in something new was very real. "Together for Bristol" is bringing together Christians from many traditions who want to discover more about how we can work together and to equip churches



"I thought the Party in the Park was excellent. Praise God for the weather! I had some great conversations and thank you for your effort. I had a great time. Thanks again for your inspiration and perspiration." Bishop Mike Hill

to engage with the life of the city and to help address need.

The second event will be "Going Deeper – Festival of Life" which is going to be at the Colston Hall on **Saturday 31st August from 12 noon with a Celebration of Life at 6.00pm.** There will be stalls from many different organisations sharing and promoting what they do and seminars and activities that help equip, encour-



age and deepen churches and individuals engagement with this initiative. Tickets are only £5 available from Colston Hall and up to date information is on

www.togetherforbristol.org Please advertise this widely! If you would like a stall for your church or organisation please contact vena@ccsr.org.uk.



Book Now!

Making a difference, building capacity, energising the church!

ISR Conference

When: Saturday 14th September
10.30am to 3.30pm

Where: Hassle Drive Salvation Army Citadel

Cost: Free
(£5 donation for lunch)

To book your place call on 0117 955 7430 or admin@ccsr.org.uk

Book Now!

"More than food – expressing compassion, expecting justice!"

South West Churches event (with the Bishop of Salisbury)

When: Tuesday 22nd Oct 2013
1.00pm to 5.00pm

Where: St Michaels Stoke Gifford, Bristol.

To book your place contact ISR on 0117 955 7430 or admin@ccsr.org.uk

News from Swindon Churches Social and Economic Group (SCSEG)

SCSEG seeks to engage Swindon churches in the promotion of social, political, economic and environmental justice. Here are some of the issues that the group is currently working on:

Housing SCSEG is monitoring the impact of the "bedroom tax" on vulnerable households in Swindon and, if there is evidence that the impact is damaging, the group will prepare wording for a potential Swindon Churches Together statement on the issue.

Financial Transaction Tax SCSEG is urging the Swindon churches to support the Robin Hood Tax campaign and sign their online petition www.robinhoodtax.org.uk

Drones SCSEG will be encouraging the Swindon churches to engage in the October Week of Action against the use of drones www.dronecampaignnetwork.wordpress.com/

Human trafficking – the film "Unchosen" will be shown in Swindon at the beginning of One World Week this year www.unchosen.org.uk

Flame Grilled – SCSEG are beginning to plan a "Question Time" style debate, involving local Swindon politicians and civic leaders, for next year's church run Flame FM community radio station.

For more information about future meetings contact Barbara Aftelak barbaraafte-lak@ntlworld.com



Training opportunities

Volunteer Chaplaincy

At ISR we are passionate about the ministry of chaplaincy and a long history of having chaplains in a wide range of settings.

If you are interested in hearing more about the work of ISR chaplaincy in the community, or in becoming a volunteer chaplain with us, come along to our **Chaplaincy Taster Evening on Wednesday 26th June 7.30pm to 9pm at 162 Pennywell Road, Easton, Bristol. BS5 0TX.**

Chaplaincy Training Course

For those who would like to be considered for becoming a chaplain the next training dates are as follow:

Tuesday 27 August 2013
7pm - 9.30pm

Saturday 7th September
10am—12.30pm

Tuesday 17th September
7pm—9.30pm

b.friend training (refugees & asylum seekers)

Saturday 21st September
1.30pm to 4.45pm

Thursday 26th September
7.30pm to 9.15pm

Thursday 3rd October
7.30pm – 9.15pm

BaCC Taster (ex prisoners)

Saturday 5th October
10am to 12 noon

Please contact our office via email at admin@ccisr.org.uk, call 0117 955 7430 or visit www.ccisr.org.uk for further details.



Major Emergencies – Please help us to be prepared

When a major or critical incident occurs, the statutory services respond swiftly, following well-rehearsed and tested plans. However, the victims of major emergencies often need the sort of pastoral support these services are not equipped to provide. Faith communities can play an important part but only if we are ready to respond in an effective, coordinated and appropriate way. To this end a faith communities' major emergency plan (MEP) was set up in the 1980s and now provides support for the entire Avon and Somerset Constabulary area.

Participation in the plan is open to leaders of faith communities and their nominated representatives. Although we regularly recruit new volunteers, each year some of our team members retire or move away. Right now more volunteers are needed if we are to provide adequate cover on a rota basis, bearing in mind that in the event of a major emergency a proportion of our team may not be available for a variety of reasons.

If you are not already a volunteer please consider joining us. It would be helpful if you could publicise this opportunity among trusted and respected

members of your congregation who may currently be involved in a pastoral role or who would be willing to provide unconditional help and support to all victims of major emergencies – those of any faith or none.

The next familiarisation days for potential volunteers will take place on Thursday 4th & Thursday 25th July at the Avon & Somerset Police HQ, Portishead.

If you or any of your colleagues or members are interested, please contact me for more details, by email at andy@ccisr.org.uk or by phone on 0117 9557430.

A registration form can be downloaded [here](#)



Andy Paget
MEP Co-ordinator



Myths about Poverty

Myth 2

'They' are addicted to drink and drugs

Churchgoers and the wider public cite addiction as the second most common cause of child poverty. While addiction is devastating for the families and communities touched by it, fewer than 4% of benefit claimants report any form of addiction.

How did we come to believe this is such a big factor in the lives of the 13 million people who live in poverty in the UK today?