

# LINK

supporting the workplace, caring for people

Welcome to the May edition of 'LINK'. As I write, the sun is shining in the grounds of Church House, the trees are looking resplendent and there are rumours of 23 degrees later in the week: Spring seems finally to have sprung! This edition of LINK is slightly different in that it is almost entirely dedicated to our AGM which took place on 16th May. Those of you who were unable to attend the AGM can read almost 'stop press' reports of the proceedings!

## The business meeting

Birmingham Airport had 50+ extra visitors on May 16<sup>th</sup> as people gathered for the CIGB AGM. Our guests included Archbishop Bernard Longley, and Councillor Ian Courts Deputy Mayor of Solihull.

In welcoming us to Solihull, Councillor Courts praised the new format of our annual report which gives a clear picture of the range and depth of the work of chaplains and on key economic issues, the variety of our work echoing the 'variety of gifts' in Romans 12.

Some phrases had struck him in particular: Our work "gives the lie to those who say that religion must be kept separate from everyday life" and "Each and every human being is a person of value and potential". Key words are – listen, respect, hope.

Joe Kelly, Deputy Chief Executive welcomed us to the airport. Journeying has both spiritual and practical significance so it was good to be at BHX. The potential of the runway extension to increase local employment opportunities through better global connections was particularly relevant to our later discussion on opportunities for young people.

The annual report and accounts were approved and Minutes from the meeting in 2011 were signed.



## The value of Industrial Chaplaincy

Barbara Hayes, CIGB Team Leader for almost 7 years, reflects on 20 years' ministry.

Industrial Mission includes practical pastoral work in workplaces as well as engagement with wider economic issues.

One value to the church is in being a place where Christian theology meets human experience, so we can explore the relevance and meaning of faith for people in their economic life. What might 'love mercy' mean in the disciplinary processes of HR or in compulsory competitive tendering?

The value to business is the active engagement of a tradition of ethics and values, an understanding of the human, a shared experience of the struggle to be a community and safe spaces to talk things through.

The value to the individuals we meet is in our affirmation of their value and the value of their work. We offer a glimmer of the love of God through being alongside.

The value to us is the privilege of relationship, the opportunity to grow in understanding and share that with church and workplace.

We can only do all this with the consent of church and business so, like many beautiful and costly things, the work can be fragile and subtle.

It also makes a difference.

**QUOTABLE  
QUOTE**

'From a quantum physics perspective, if the chaplain is really positively charged then their energy frequencies can help extract any negative frequencies around due to stress or other issues. So the chaplain would be improving on the overall feel of the working environment, whether or not one has had direct contact.'

This was Barbara's last AGM as Team Leader as she is due to retire from this post at the end of May. However, Barbara will continue working on specific projects for one day a week for a number of months.



Cllr Ian Courts, Archbishop Bernard Longley and The Venerable Hayward Osborne present a bouquet to Barbara Hayes, CIGB Team Leader

**Creating Opportunities for Young Adults**

Stephen Willey, Methodist District Mission in the Economy Officer opened the second part of our meeting with a keynote speech, a precis of which follows:

Although youth unemployment is a long term issue, the current level of young adult unemployment and under-employment is happening in a particular context.

Our economy seems to concentrate on efficiency rather than effectiveness. This means that employers are more likely to employ people who have a particular skill now rather than taking the longer view about potential development of greater skills.

There is a question of who is work for: Henry Ford believed that employees and communities should benefit from work. The Dodge brothers thought shareholders should benefit.

Nationally and internationally debt levels create instability so it is harder to invest –we invest against a future which ultimately will be lived by future generations including today's young people.

Birmingham has some of the worst unemployment

levels in the country and in Solihull, overall figures mask areas of high unemployment. Unemployment affects every aspect of life, including mental health, and young people are more likely to suffer depression which leads to suicide than older groups. On a purely financial basis unemployment has long term financial costs to the exchequer and to the individual.

There is a sense of 'Fractured responsibility'. Employers, government, educators and people across generations need to act together - to have a more integrated sense of responsibility if things are to change.

The Church Urban Fund report 'I am 1 in a million' offers some practical responses that churches and others can engage with – running events; providing resources such as information, a job club or small funding; partnering with young people and being entrepreneurial.



Rev'd Stephen Willey  
Methodist District Mission in the  
Edomony Officer

*Locally, the West Midlands Property Restoration and Development Community Interest Company is just such an initiative.*

*Its development is being supported by a partnership of local organisations, including the Jericho Foundation, Colebridge Trust and the Methodist District. The company will restore properties to areas of multiple deprivation using environmentally friendly technologies to increase the supply of affordable housing and quality community spaces. Initial Directors with professional experience will appoint an executive board of skilled young adults currently un/under-employed. Experienced site managers will work with and train un/under employed young people. While the Initial Directors will be largely unpaid, other employees will have a realistic salary/wage and a potential share in the company's success. An asset lock means that any profits go back into the business, its staff and the community.*

To find out more contact

[stephen.willey@necgroup.co.uk](mailto:stephen.willey@necgroup.co.uk)

## SUPPORT US FINANCIALLY

To support of the work of CIGB text CIGB 11 and the sum you want to give to 70070 or send a cheque to CIGB, 175, Harborne Park Rd, Birmingham B17 0BH

### Over to the floor ...

A lively discussion followed Stephen's keynote speech. Here are some of the comments:



**Mentoring** – The Chartered Institute for Personnel & Development has piloted a mentoring scheme in the Coventry and Warwick area. Job

Centre Plus refers young people to the scheme and CIPD members mentor them on a voluntary basis. They have helped 67 young people into employment and the scheme is now being rolled out nationally. Mentoring is not always easy. Young people may come from backgrounds where there is little hope and so they may not be motivated to engage with their mentor. They may not believe that it can make a difference but where the young person can engage, mentoring can have real benefits.

*“Mentoring is about taking time and caring. It is being valued that makes a difference”*

**Advice and work readiness** – The advice that young people receive in schools is often poor and even university courses may not make people immediately employable. Small companies may not have the capacity to take on someone who is not 'work ready'. It may not be about a specific skill but more an attitude so *education and businesses need to work together.*

**Peer support** – In the past the Young Christian Workers movement trained young leaders who then went into schools and other settings to talk with other young people. As a result many young people developed confidence and skills which changed their lives. *The peer group is particularly important to young people so peer mentoring can be very effective.*

### Being entrepreneurial

The Boys Brigade textile recycling business is creating jobs for young people and aims to create 20 jobs in all. Churches, businesses and others are encouraged to recycle through the BB which will collect bags by arrangement. Contact the BB for more information.

Some churches are allowing appropriate small businesses to operate from their premises. For instance St Mary's, Bearwood hosts Andrew's

Plants and the Community Acupuncture Centre. *An information sheet on the Resources page of the CIGB website will help churches think through how this might work for them.*

New Heights at Kingstanding is an award winning church-based community project which includes work with young people and there is great potential for churches to get involved.

***Nationally 3% of churches are working with unemployed people. That's excellent but there's room for growth!***

### Chaplaincy training course



## Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy

***Why is work important?  
Pastoral issues in a work context.  
Talking ethics.  
How does chaplaincy work in practice?***

Our chaplaincy training course will take place in the Autumn on five consecutive Thursday afternoons at 15 Colmore Row B3 2BH. Sessions will run from 2pm until 4 pm starting on September 13th and ending on October 11th. The course is for anyone interested in workplace chaplaincy for themselves or as they develop the ministry of others.

**To book a place call 0121 426 0425 or email [cigbadmin@birmingham.anglican.org](mailto:cigbadmin@birmingham.anglican.org)**

Participants are invited to make a donation of £10 towards costs. Those booking a place but not attending will be invoiced for £10.

### DON'T FORGET ...

Send us your news, your stories, your pictures, your quotable quotes and your jokes and stay in touch:

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