

CHAPLAINS AT WORK



Summer 2021

supporting the workplace, caring for people

Welcome to our Summer newsletter. There is the usual variety of articles—some long, some shorter, news of future events and news of ongoing projects, so as it's Summer, perhaps a long cool drink while you read???

The biggest piece of news is that after more than 9 years with CIGB Peter Sellick has now left us to pursue another branch of Chaplaincy. We say thank you, goodbye—and God bless.

"Thanks and Prayer"

Peter Sellick writes about leaving CIGB and beginning a new ministry in Northampton.

"And now may you run with perseverance the (next leg of the) race that is set before you, fixing your eyes upon Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith".
Hebrews 12:1b

I am touched by the so many thoughtful and uplifting greetings that were included in my leaving card. Working with the team of CIGB Chaplains has been both a personal joy and a journey with Jesus. I am going to miss everyone...

... but I have also now already dived into my new job as Head of Chaplaincy at St Andrews. St Andrews Healthcare in Northampton has got my looking, listening and thinking focussed again. St Andrews is a large provider of inpatient support for people with varied mental health needs, and has a long established Chaplaincy that is a strong part of its identity: the charity is named after the dedication of the Chapel in its grounds. There is a team of seven Chaplains, and they also cover units in Birmingham and Essex.

I know that there is much of God in what happens within the wide ministries of CIGB Chaplains. God's strength will persevere.

We had a heartfelt and prayerful leaving gathering on 9th July: it was just a delight to see people face to face (or mask to mask at least) after the 18 months of separation. As I said, there are many relationships and pieces of work in Birmingham and Solihull that I would have liked to continue and develop; but there are times when a change can be a good opportunity for new directions and ambition. I know that there is much of God in what happens within the wide ministries of CIGB Chaplains: God's strength will persevere.

I have always been keenly aware that it is a huge privilege to be remunerated for, and allowed to focus

on, a ministry that for many people is given voluntarily and amongst other pressures. The Trustees, and the Church Leaders, who steer and support CIGB, have also thankfully heard God's call to this witness of faith in everyday life. I have been hugely supported by Val over the last 9 years, and most of the ideas have come from the wonderful Team Leaders.

Of course, I am already comparing and contrasting my experience at CIGB with my new role, and I can see that much of what I have been taught is going to be really useful. I see Chaplaincy as a ministry for the whole organisation and its people – for those who may appear strong, as well as those who seem weaker: God calls 24/7, 'in season and out of season'. I pray that CIGB continues to be a very rich blessing to the people of Birmingham and Solihull, to people of faith and people of no faith.



Lastly – thank you for your *extremely* generous leaving gifts. I was speechless when I saw the cheque from Val: I am putting it towards a new bike I can use for work. Pat, myself and the boys will continue to live in Oldbury for a while, until we find a good

place to move to, in order to be a bit closer to St Andrews.

Please do get in touch if you are coming past St Andrews or Northampton—I would love to be able to show you around. May God be with you in the meantime.

A prayer from Jan Richardson:

*Praise to the Word,
who causes
men to listen
women to rise
children to see visions
old ones to dream
stones to cry out
praise praise praise.*

QUOTABLE "New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings."

QUOTE

Laozi

Peter's 'leaving do' took place on 9th July. Trustee Robert Mountford and Chaplain Thelma Mitchell share their experience.

'Chaplains, friends of CIGB and members of CIGB's management team gathered at Carrs Lane Church on the afternoon of Friday 9 July to share in a short act of worship and prayer with Revd Peter Sellick and to wish him farewell after his nine years of service as CIGB's Development Director. Although ongoing Covid-19 restrictions meant that attendance at the farewell event was limited to 30 people, those present were united in their sense of gratefulness to Peter for his work - and in prayer for him as he embarks on the next season of life and ministry.

Following the short service, Peter was presented with cards, gifts and a financial donation in honour of his leadership of CIGB. Peter's departure comes at a time of huge change and challenge for CIGB, as for all industrial Chaplaincies. With thanks for all that has been, all associated with CIGB continue to pray, plan and work together so that the amazing work done by its Chaplains can continue and flourish. Never has Chaplaincy been more important or relevant than in this era of transition and uncertainty.



Thelma writes ...

Laughter, farewells and a few tears, as we said goodbye to CIGB director, Peter Sellick.

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that at any festive occasion held in Birmingham, the participants are in want of a good samosa. We were not disappointed! Peter had brought them to his farewell occasion fresh from Smethwick. CIGB chaplains are



samosa connoisseurs, we can be harsh judges. These were declared on a par with the best from Handsworth – high praise! We Chaplains also demand cake. Across the Midlands there's a church 'ministry of cake', a wonderful witness of agape. Cake was promised and cake there was!

A time of worship was led by Peter, a time I found very inspiring. He spoke on the anointing of stones, relating it to our ministry of Chaplaincy. He closed by

playing Gregory Porter's rendition of *His Eye is on the Sparrow*, both beautiful and moving. I found myself singing it all the way home! (No-one could tell behind the mask!)

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More cake and then 'presentations'. A largish gift bag was handed to him by Val. In it she had mischievously given him some items which he was notorious for going off with, then losing – a stapler, a hole-punch, a sticky tape dispenser! A bottle of something alcoholic and a card from the CIGB Chaplains. As he folded up the bag it

was pointed out that there was a yellow envelope lying at the bottom, which he had missed! In it was a cheque from all of us, a token of our love and esteem for him. For once, Peter was stunned and speechless! Let's just say that he has been saving up for a folding bike to take him from the station in Northampton to his new post and will now be able to buy it. Loud applause, followed—very un-British but such is our appreciation of all he has done.



Peter, I know I speak for all of us when I say how much you will be missed. You have always been a model of kindness and compassion, as well as a firm, wise, supportive director, steering CIGB smoothly, calmly and with dignity, humour and total commitment throughout your time as Director. Our loss is seriously Northampton's gain. We say goodbye, promising to hold you often in prayer, as I know you will us.

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you His peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you. (2 Thessalonians 3:16)



**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

“Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is your name in all the earth”

Psalm 8

10 CHAPLAINS and a spouse in a boat

CIGB organises meetings, training days and quiet days for Chaplains, but way back in 2019 we thought it would be good to have a purely social event. A trip down the canal and some lunch was suggested. Here’s Thelma’s account of our grand day out!

It was jolly boating weather when 10 chaplains and a spouse set out on the Stratford canal from the basin at Wooten Wawen. A glorious June day greeted us, after a year’s wait from the original date, cancelled in 2020 - I do not need to say why it was cancelled last year! We were spread out across 2 canal boats, *Charlie* and *Dolly*, because of you-know-what — so there was plenty of space. The unfolding close-up of nature in all its full glory brought to my mind the Fanny Crosby’s hymn; *All things Bright and Beautiful*, based on Psalm 104. The stately pace north towards Kingswood meant we could truly appreciate ‘each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings.’ The banks were abundantly overflowing with Giant Hogweed, stately and dangerous, yellow flag iris in profusion, iridescent cobalt-blue damsel flies, swaths of golden buttercups, and banks of pale pink and white dog roses, weeping willows and ash, ‘the tall trees in the greenwood, the meadows where we play’ – and yes, acres of ‘rushes by the water.’



Appreciating the beautifully constructed short tunnels from the inside, we noticed that many have splits mid-centre. Waterways Chaplain, Richard Alford, explained that on the Stratford canal the tow path runs over the side of the bridges, not under, so the splits were needed for the horse ropes to pass through. The leisurely pace gave us the opportunity to examine the intricate brickwork up close as we passed under them, almost touching the sides, so narrow are they.



It was also a time to reflect on the grimy, seven-days-a-week hard labour of the canal workers who contributed to the exploitative, thriving economy in Victorian times

We returned to The Navigation Inn for a very pleasant lunch, with attentive, friendly staff and lots of chatter and laughter. Then it was back to the boats but this time heading south towards Stratford. A great idea and a great day together. A huge thank you to Val for all her work in organising it, and to our wonderful helmsmen Peter and Richard. It was a reinforcement of our commitment and joy in Chaplaincy which engages with the world of work.



How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all ... I will sing praise to my God as long as I live ... Praise the Lord, my soul. Praise the Lord.
Psalm 104: 24; 33; 35b



**INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTARY
WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY
IN BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL**

7-Week Evening Course

Mondays 5-7pm

from 20 September– 8 November

Venue in central Birmingham

Course fee: £50



For more information contact
val.dalton@cigb.org.uk

**QUOTABLE-
QUOTE**

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

Barack Obama

Chaplaincy to the unemployed



Huge numbers of people are now unemployed as a result of Covid-19. CIGB launched a new charitable project “Hope for Jobz” to offer help to unemployed people. This project is funded by voluntary giving and grants.

Our Volunteers are trained by Jericho Ignition Social Enterprise experienced staff. They also bring empathy from their work-life experience and commitment from their faith backgrounds. They also bring experience of Workplace Chaplaincy. Having been within different sorts of businesses and industries for many years, they know intimately what day to day working life is really like in. Workplace Chaplains are on hand to offer help with job seeking, CVs and other practical advice, but also time to listen to people’s stories and support them in their hopes and fears and their ambitions.

There are currently two Job Club venues: the URC church in Solihull and The Church at Carrs Lane in central Birmingham. Churches in Hall Green hope to open a third Job Club in September.



Elaine Hutchinson helps lead the Job Club at Carrs Lane and tells the story of a client who had seen the publicity several time as she rode past on the bus. After some time she decided to cross the threshold and visit the Job Club. Elaine recounts how this lady looked very dejected as she entered, but after chatting to the Chaplains and receiving the help she needed, she left looking and feeling much more confident. We couldn’t offer her a job, but we could offer her some Hope. The Job Centre at Carrs Lane is open every Monday from 2pm until 3.30.

The Solihull Job Club, staffed by Beryl and team is open on Monday mornings from 10.30 until 12.30.



Hope for Jobz welcomes people of all faiths and no faiths, and does not proselytise.



For more information about Hope for Jobz, please visit the website:

hopeforjobz.org.uk

Chaplaincy to Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022



John Bradley, National Express Bus Chaplain, has been meeting with a group involving representatives from various organisations who together hope to offer Chaplaincy to the Commonwealth Games. John writes ...

Most of us know by now that the Commonwealth Games is coming to the West Midlands, between 28th July and 8th August – only a year away now. This will

not only bring athletes together from almost all the Commonwealth countries, but also thousands of volunteers and visitors.

Whilst Chaplaincy hasn’t been agreed by the games’ organisers, we are hopeful that the invitation will be given, based on experience of other international games. Sports Chaplaincy UK and an international sports Chaplaincy group will be meeting the athletes, but it is expected that there will be plenty of other opportunities to offer Chaplaincy to others involved in this event and to spectators.

Security is paramount at an international event like this and so anyone interested in offering Chaplaincy will be security-checked by the Police. This process is being coordinated by our colleagues in the West Midlands Police Multi-Faith Chaplaincy.



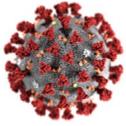
If you are interested in volunteering to be a Chaplain at this prestigious event please contact CIGB in the usual way:

val.dalton@cigb.org.uk

**QUOTABLE
QUOTE**

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

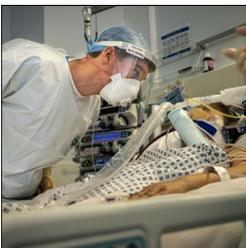


Covid-19 has affected all of us. Many of our Workplace Chaplains were unable to continue their work during the Lockdowns. Here, a hospital Chaplain reflects on the pandemic experience—terrifying, heart-rending but full of love and hope.

Listening on the outside - screaming on the inside

On the 17th March 2020 I was called to my first known patient with COVID-19 in A&E. I needed to be a bridge between a patient who was unlikely to survive transfer to a ward and her next of kin who was not allowed into A&E herself because she had been assessed to be too at risk. I put on a blue surgical mask, blue gown and purple latex gloves and delivered messages of love between living sister and barely conscious dying sister. All around was noise and pandemonium, and I struggled to create some dignified space in which the dying process could be acknowledged. I think it was on that day in the middle of this 'battle field scenario' that I was first aware I was "listening on the outside but screaming on the inside"

Being called to patients in intensive care was an intense experience. Different PPE had to be worn, which I was



helped into and out of. It became a challenge to find patients in an ITU department that had grown so quickly. A strange 24/7 world of beds and pumps and tubing and IV lines and hooded creatures in blue gowns behind masks and hoods tending to the sickest of the sick.

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And there were the times I was called to the 'dying bays' - areas where COVID-19 patients who were not for active treatment were being kept comfortable. Patients feeling lonely and isolated - enclosed by four walls. Some were discharged home to die, some lingered on the wards. My Chaplaincy colleagues and I offered prayers, holding crosses, listening to life stories, remembering good times, hand holding and just being with people's pain, confusion and sadness. We can't



do anything about the coronavirus but we can attempt to address the loneliness virus. Our ministry is one of being alongside in the shadows and darkness people find themselves in, and of being a bridge between patients and their loved ones to reassure them that they were cared for in a loving and compassionate way. I do wonder about the relatives who might be 'left behind'

but I have to leave that to colleagues and bereavement agencies 'on the outside'.

Staff support is a key aspect of the Chaplain's role too. Creating safe spaces where fears can be articulated and expressed, and listening to and validating difficult feelings is key. As well as anxieties about PPE in the early days of the pandemic there was despair and frustration about having to implement guidelines that did not reflect the individual patient-centred values we were used to. One day a ward sister asked me to run a drop-in session in her staff room for the colleagues of a nurse from the ward, seriously ill with COVID-19 on intensive care. We're a large hospital that functions as well as it does because we're made up of hundreds of little networks & teams - some call them work families. And like other kinds of families, when one of the family is ill - the rest can suffer too.



As a hospital Chaplain it has been challenging to try and remain a calm presence in the eye of the storm. I'm exhausted but also more fully alive in and through my work than ever before. I think it is the first time that Chaplains have been recognised as key-workers and I hope this continues.

Postscript

Our staff are exhausted and still in recovery mode from the traumas of treating Covid patients. They are working whilst carrying multiple layers of loss themselves - family, friends, colleagues, the patients they treated. Just this week, I have just listened to an ITU nurse crying at having to go back to wearing full PPE for an exhausting 12 hour shift looking after Covid positive patients.

Please do your bit to help and continue wearing a mask when mixing in close proximity with the public now that restrictions have eased since the 19th July.



QUOTABLE QUOTE

“And now may you run with perseverance the (next leg of the) race that is set before you, fixing your eyes upon Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith”.

Hebrews 12:1b

Around the Chaplaincies

National Express Bus Chaplains have been back in action for a while now finding that drivers and staff who work in the garages are more willing to talk than ever and that conversations are at a deeper level than before. Christine comments “People have talked and talked and talked. Many have a traumatized look in their eyes from deep, ongoing stress. People have been very tearful. I have had conversations through a glass slat with people locked in offices. It has been very strange.

There are also lighter moments. A group of Christian bus drivers have added me to a WhatsApp group, and they have arranged a collection box for items for a local food bank run by the Baptist Church.



There is still much laughing and banter among the drivers, and I have still listened to staff sharing deeply about their faith.”

Alex French, who used to be a Bus Chaplain working with BCUIM has moved to Birmingham and has joined the Birmingham team.

Birmingham Airport is busier now. Some of the Chaplaincy team have worked throughout the Covid lockdowns. Tanya has been adopted by the Air Traffic Controllers who call her ‘our Chaplain’ in a very appreciative and affectionate way. During the recent national protest Tanya was able to meet a number of managers and was delighted to hear how very much the work of the Chaplaincy team is valued.



Our Chaplains in Further Education have now broken up for the Summer holidays but look forward to starting the new term in September.

Birmingham City Centre Retail Chaplains have resumed their work in the Bull Ring and other areas. Elaine has also been busy with the new Job Club based in Carrs Lane church. (See page 4)

Solihull Retail Chaplains are tentatively resuming their work. Some of the team are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 but all hope to return to their work very soon. Team Leader Beryl is also busy with the revitalised Job Club in Solihull.

Associate Chaplain Rotimi Benjamin continues his work at Jericho and YMCA.

Associate Waterways Chaplain Richard Alford has worked throughout the Lockdowns supporting the needs of the boaters on their various patches.

Chaplains in other areas are gradually returning to workplaces and I hope there will be many positive reports in the next Newsletter.



ANNUAL MEETING

This will probably take place on the evening of Tuesday 28th September and will be part-live and part-Zoom. Further details to follow as soon as they are confirmed.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

LAST WORD

I’ve reserved this little space for myself. After working alongside Peter for almost 10 years I was quite anxious at the thought of his leaving, and the changes that would mean. God often speaks to me through music so I wasn’t too surprised when an old song by Brian Howard popped into my mind bringing reassurance and hope. Here’s the chorus:

“Yes, change will come, and with change we’ll grow; The man who calmed the waters said “Be still and know, before you I’ll go, and I’ll calm the winds. Are you willing to row”.

So here I am



PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH

We love hearing your stories— the exceptional ones and the more everyday ones. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of “Chaplains at Work”.

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