

Annual Review 2022

Supporting the workplace, caring for people

Welcome to this Annual Review of our year of Workplace Chaplaincy in Birmingham and Solihull, 2022. Covid-19 was still very much in evidence early in the year and posed a few challenges but CIGB Chaplains continued to visit their Chaplaincy areas and their presence and support has, once again, been greatly appreciated. All our Chaplains were invited to write a report about their work in 2022. Some Chaplains asked their Team Leader to submit a report on behalf of the team while others wrote their own individual reports. I have tried to limit my editing so that individual 'voices' can be heard through their stories. I hope that you will enjoy reading this Review.



Steve Faber, Chair of CIGB, writes:
The London Institute of Christianity (LICC) have produced a series of really helpful resources showing

how Christians can engage with their family, friends, neighbours and colleagues – anyone that they meet – and witness to their faith through what they say and how they act. They describe these encounters as our “frontline.”

Our excellent Chaplains take a different approach – at least whilst they are “on duty” – they can engage on their frontline like any other Christian at other times. Our work is to provide people who will listen to people in their workplace. They can – and do – show that they are interested in the person talking to them. They listen carefully, and offer support and encouragement. Sometimes they will be invited to talk about their faith, but they will wait for that invitation. The work of a Chaplain is not to proselytise, but to show care.

Workplace Chaplaincy is a special kind of ministry. It is not for everyone, although we can all show care and listen to others. But to be a Chaplain and answer the call to serve in this way is to be applauded.

I haven't been able to count how many hours of service our Chaplains have given over the last year – I don't have that information. But I do know that across our various teams and sites, we have touched many hundreds of lives. People who have had good news they wanted to share, and people who have been at their lowest point because of work stresses,

illness, bereavement, mental illness, or just having a bad day, have found in our representatives someone who cared enough to stop and listen and make a difference.

Chaplains: thank you. The work described in this review shows how much we owe you.

Supporters: thank you. Please be encouraged by the reports on the following pages and continue to support the Chaplains in every way that you can.

Once again it has been a challenging year for us all. The pandemic restrictions are in the past, but many people are still having to live cautiously because of underlying health concerns. We also cannot afford to think that the pandemic is over – there are still new “variants of concern” emerging, and good hygiene is still important to reduce our risk of contracting Covid which in turn carries a risk of passing it on to someone who might be far more vulnerable than we are.

Those who have worked so hard through the worst of the pandemic are also finding the strains catching up with them. Continue to be kind with one another.

This is my last report as Chair. It has been a delight and privilege to serve in this role and work alongside such excellent colleagues, but as I step away from CIGB to focus on other work, I shall continue to pray for you all and be grateful for the work you offer.

Churches and Industry Group Birmingham--Solihull

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Administrator's Report



2022 – an overview

As you read this Annual Review you'll find 2022 described as Turbulent, Good, Eventful and Mixed. Another word that appears quite often in these reports is 'Challenging'. There have certainly been – and still are - many challenges faced by CIGB Chaplains but you'll find that they have responded valiantly. Without more ado, here is an overview of 2022 – a very *interesting* year ...

The search for a new Development Director began. Job Descriptions were compiled; adverts were placed. To our disappointment there were very few applicants. A second advert resulted in sufficient applicants to make a shortlist and interviews took place. One candidate seemed to shine, but after a second interview the panel decided unanimously not to appoint. The search continues.

CIGB Management Council met regularly via Zoom video-conferencing throughout the year and we are grateful to our Trustees for their support. Chaplains benefitted from some in-house training in Trauma and Wellbeing led by Tanya Arroba, Lead Chaplain at Birmingham Airport. There were two sessions – one in-person, and one via Zoom for those who were still wary because of Covid-19. Our thanks to Tanya for this very valuable training. A face-to-face meeting for all Chaplains was held in October and we all enjoyed meeting in person and sharing lunch together.

Our AGM took place in June and we are grateful to Solihull URC for hosting the meeting. Our guest speaker was Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health for Birmingham City Council, who spoke about the challenges he faced trying to keep Birmingham safe during the pandemic.

CIGB 'moved house' in the summer, involving packing up all our belongings at 1 Colmore Row and unpacking them again at our new address – see page 1. We continue to be hosted by Church of England Birmingham, and are thankful for their support.

The 2022 Commonwealth Games in August offered an opportunity for Chaplains to expand their horizons with several CIGB Chaplains joining the West Midlands Police Chaplaincy for the few weeks of the Games. Duties included driving and catering but there was plenty of opportunity for some good conversations as we supported officers brought in from all over the UK.

Chaplaincy training courses were held in Spring and Autumn – there is a report on page 8. Huge thanks to John Bradley and Richard Alford who led the training, and to other Chaplaincy Team Leaders who visited and gave some insight into the work of their various teams at the NEC, Longbridge Village, Birmingham Airport and Birmingham Retail. John spoke about his National Express Chaplaincy and Richard about his Waterways Chaplaincy. A pretty wide variety! Not all our trainees decide to take up Workplace Chaplaincy

and sometimes our trainees are called to other Chaplaincy work. One of our trainees went on to join the Waterways Chaplaincy and another resumed her Hospital Chaplaincy having been refreshed by our Christianity-based training – very different from the multi-faith hospital Chaplaincy training! A third felt called to Chaplaincy among the elderly and has gone on to take further training in this specific area.

Welcoming new Chaplains to the team is always a joy, and we were able to Commission 5 new Chaplains at our service in November. Our thanks to Revd David Gould and Holy Trinity Church, Smethwick for hosting us so well; and to the Rt Revd Anne Hollingsworth, Bishop of Aston for her inspirational talk.

Of course, as we welcome new Chaplains, we also have to say a fond farewell to others who, for various reasons, have decided to step down from this voluntary work. 2022 was no exception. Our grateful thanks to Fiona Joseph, Pat Saunders, Pat Raymer, John Taiwo, Dolvis Ferdinand, Char Brydson and Thelma Mitchell for all that they have given to CIGB over the years.

It was with great sadness that we said a final goodbye to Priscilla White and Beryl Moppett who have both gone to be with the Lord. Priscilla was one of our Trustees and her support and insight were greatly valued during her several years of service. Beryl had led the Solihull Town Centre Chaplaincy for decades. Anne Rock offers a tribute to Beryl on page 4. Beryl was also very involved with the Job Advice Club in Solihull.

Both of these women of God are greatly missed.

And so after a year described as Turbulent, Good, Eventful, Mixed and *interesting*, we move into 2023 knowing that as we face another year, we can be confident that we are doing God's work and He has promised to equip us for that service, however challenging it may be.



Finally, a quote: "*Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.*" (Leo Buscaglia)

Secular words, but they apply so well to our work as Chaplains doing God's work.

Birmingham Airport

Lead Chaplain Tanya Arroba recalls a 'turbulent year' as the travel industry was rebooted after the pandemic ...



As the travel restrictions were lifted to allow more travel, there was a rush to fill the vacant posts. Spring saw an influx of new staff, identified by their white badges, looking keen but rather bemused as they got to grips with their new roles as the travellers came back in droves.

One new role for the Chaplains was to escort new members of staff as newbies must be escorted at all times whilst air-side. As there were not enough staff available to act as escorts I spent a very happy – and tiring – morning pushing people in wheelchairs through security alongside a new member of the assistance team. It really gave me an insight into how physically demanding the work is, and added a new dimension to our motto 'here to help, support and guide'!

The combination of increase in passengers and not enough security staff led to long queues forming, snaking down the stairs and out of the building—you may remember the TV reports. It was particularly busy first thing in the morning, between 4am and 7am and a call went out for staff to come in early to help, so another new role was found: keeping the long queues both in order and in good spirits as they waited to board their long awaited-holiday flight as the day dawned!

When the early morning queues died down, attention went to preparing for the influx of athletes and officials for the Commonwealth Games.



Arriving ...



... and leaving

The airport was host to many volunteers in their colourful uniforms and we supported both volunteers and athletes as they arrived. The teams came in over a couple of weeks but they all left within a day or two of the games ending in August and that was when our support was really needed. It was a privilege to be part of the massive, and successful, operation that was the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

The other main area of growth in 2022 was the focus on Wellbeing at Work. The pandemic really brought this whole area to the fore and the airport has grasped this. The Chaplaincy team are seen as a key part of the Wellbeing offering to staff. Three members of the team are now trained as Mental Health First Aiders and the Chaplaincy offers a referral service for anyone with personal issues.

The offer of a monthly drop-in session at the Air Traffic Control tower was resumed and now is being rolled out to the Fire Service as well.



Unfortunately, due to the ongoing work to create a new-generation security system our Carol Service was cancelled again, but the team enjoyed a Christmas meal together.

Airport Chaplain Stephen Saum shares some stories ...



The airport can sometimes feel like a very lonely place—particularly when most of the other passengers are flying off on holiday.

2022 saw an influx of Ukrainian refugees, usually women accompanied by children. Once government funds had been allocated, Solihull MBC provided people at the airport to welcome the refugees and help sort their accommodation. The Chaplaincy team accompanied a few of the refugees from the Arrivals gates out to meet their new hosts. Language can be a barrier, so Google Translate had to be tackled- it comes in useful at other times at the airport too!

During the year the Chaplaincy team were contacted by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). FCDO offer assistance to support the transit of vulnerable British Nationals to and from the country, often via airports. Here are three stories: We were asked to look after a couple who were travelling abroad to attend the trial of someone accused of causing the death of their son. They were accompanied to the Departures gate, and a Chaplain stayed with them as their flight was delayed.

Another time we were called to assist someone who had had their belongings stolen, bank account emptied, credit and debit cards taken and been threatened with violence while abroad - returning home with nothing apart from what they stood up in and a few essentials provided by a women's refuge abroad.

Then there was an elderly lady who had become so confused while away by herself on holiday that the hotel asked that she be repatriated. Her flight arrived in Birmingham at nearly 2 am. This lady was met by a Chaplain at the aircraft door, her passport handed over and she was 'offered an arm' through the airport, her luggage was miraculously located on the carousel, a taxi was called to take her home. Next morning, a Chaplain visited her to check she was OK - and on enquiring of how she was, the local Social Services were contacted.

Hopefully 2023 will bring opportunities to bear witness and show how the call to love one's neighbour brings God's grace to those we meet.

Solihull Town Centre

Tanya Arroba is currently overseeing the work of the town centre retail team. She writes ...

2022 was a challenging year both for Solihull town centre itself and also for the Chaplaincy team.

The town centre was recovering from the pandemic with some shops moving or not reopening and many retail spaces empty. The sense of community was slow to rebuild and there was an air of loss and sadness about the town centre. The team was also affected by the pandemic with times of illness and difficulty for themselves and for their families. One team member stepped down from Chaplaincy work.

The biggest blow came in the summer when the long-standing team leader Beryl Moppett stepped down as team leader due to health issues. An even bigger blow followed in August when Beryl sadly passed away. The team were among those who celebrated Beryl's life at a memorial service on September 8th, a momentous day that will stay in our memories as it was also the day that Queen Elizabeth 2nd died.

However, at a meeting of the remaining team members it was decided to regroup with the help of an interim team leader and resume the Christmas tradition of mince pie distribution in Touchwood. A meeting was held at Touchwood and it was heart-warming to have such support from the Touchwood management.

The year ended on a high with a very successful mince-pie run, we were delighted to welcome a new team member—Julie Sprake, who had just completed the Autumn CIGB training course.



With Thanks to our Trustees

Steve Faber — United Reformed Church; Chair
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David Butterworth — Methodist District; NEC Chaplaincy
Ann Smith — RC Church; Manufacturing
Robert Mountford — Birmingham Churches Together

(As at January 2023)

Beryl Moppett remembered

Solihull Retail Chaplain Anne Rock pays tribute to Beryl with whom she worked for more than 20 years.



Solihull Town Centre Chaplaincy was a major part of Beryl's life from the time of the opening of Touchwood Shopping Centre, about 25 years ago.

Beryl took over from the Rev Simon Lloyd as Team Leader for the Solihull Retail Team and oversaw the recruiting and training of the team. In addition to the regular visiting of shops and local businesses the Solihull Chaplains deliver mince pies and goodwill cards to all at Christmas time. Beryl never tired of encouraging her team, involving us with CIGB activities and arranging monthly meetings to check how we were all feeling about our Chaplaincies.

I worked with Beryl at House of Fraser from the start. We built up many relationships over the years and a reasonable number of staff have been at House of Fraser for many years. Sadly, I had the task of telling them that Beryl had died and there was a great feeling of loss amongst the staff.

Beryl's passion to serve the community never wavered and was expressed in so many other ways. She was a reader at the local church and this association with the Diocese caused her to make several visits to Rwanda, Malawi and Uganda on behalf of the Diocese.

Another initiative was Beryl's involvement with the Solihull Job Club, reaching out to the unemployed. She also helped to set up the Faith Forum, was a member of Churches Together and latterly she provided help to asylum seekers, teaching them English.

Beryl's achievements are too numerous to mention, but she was recognised as someone extra special and was awarded an MBE for her services to the community in 2017. She is and will be greatly missed.



Beryl Moppett receiving her MBE in 2017



'Hope4Jobz' Job clubs

There are two 'Hope4Jobz' clubs: Stephen Saum reports from Solihull, and Elaine Hutchinson reports from Birmingham.



2022 has been a tough one for the club. As we emerged from the pandemic there was an expectation that there would be an increase in those needing help as they re-entered the jobs market. We were aware of the demise of various businesses and that government financial support diminished.

Several members of the group were also struck with ill-health of one sort or another.

For many years the mainstay of the group had been Beryl Moppett MBE. Beryl was very well known for her many charitable activities throughout the area. Sadly she passed away in August. She is greatly missed.

There are now five volunteers and we try to have a rota for duties on Monday mornings from 10:30 to 12:30 at Solihull United Reformed Church Centre, to whom we are most grateful.

The club has seen a gradual increase in the flow of people seeking advice on gaining employment. Most are looking for help with their CVs. Amongst the clients are Ukrainian refugees and people from Hong Kong. Language can be a barrier, but they tell us we do help – and there's always a welcoming hot drink and biscuits.



Hope4jobs at Carrs Lane continues to offer support and a listening presence for those who are seeking employment whether paid or voluntary. In 2022 it has been both a blessing and a challenge!

We are able to help with producing a CV and also with matching a person to the type of work they are looking for, although this is still very much a learning curve. We're also available to chat to people who come to us for help.

We are trying to make connections with other unemployment agencies in the city and the Job Centre have been a support.

Sadly, some of our volunteer helpers have had to leave in recent months making it a challenge to stay open. We know that there is a need for this more informal approach to unemployment, but without the support of committed volunteers we cannot offer that support. As with all ministries that rely on volunteers 'the harvest is ripe but the labourers are few' and so I offer the challenge of this much-needed ministry to God, but faithfully continue to be a presence in the city centre.



CIGB Annual Finances

Summary income / expenditure 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Income		
Donations: Birmingham Airport	9,000	9,000
Grant: FCDO Airport	-	10,000
Donations: Workman (Solihull)	-	2,000
Donations: Birmingham City Council	-	2,500
Donations: National Express	2,500	2,000
United Reformed Church Synod	5,000	5,000
Anglican Diocese	19,890	19,890
Bull St Quakers	-	500
Methodist District	1,200	1,200
Methodist Central Circuit	3,500	3,500
Roman Catholic Archdiocese	750	1,000
Heart of England Baptist Assoc.	-	2,000
Friends and Church Contributions, Interest	848	1,162
Heart of England (HoE) Grant	-	
Govt Furlough /Job Retention Scheme	-	2,053
Total Income	42,688	61,805
Expenditure		
Subscriptions	195	535
Chaplains' Training & Expenses	674	646
Office Expenses	779	512
Insurance, Accounts Examinaton, Misc	2,196	2,635
Hope for Jobz Expenditure (HoE Grant)	-	3,000
Office Facilities Charge	1,605	1,560
Director Employ Costs & Expenses	-	20,428
Other Staff Employ Costs & Expenses	21,209*	17,348
Total Expenditure	26,658	46,664
Surplus Income Over Expenditure	16,030	15,141
Balance of Funds at Year-End	60,426	44,396

The above is a summary of CIGB's Financial Statements for the Year End December 2022 which have been independently examined by Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Ltd in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and FES102.

The full statements are available from the Trustees.

We are grateful to all those who financially support our work.

Donations

a Registered Charity (511711)

We are very grateful for all Donations.

You can give online via www.cigb.org.uk/support-us

David Butterworth, Lead Chaplain at the NEC Group, recounts the involvement of the Chaplaincy before and during the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games

The Interfaith Chaplaincy at the NEC fortunately goes from strength to strength! The Birmingham Commonwealth Games was a huge event and we had been involved in a lot of the planning and preparation.



During the Commonwealth Games we supported the NEC campus and NEC Group with Chaplaincy throughout the build-up and the running of the Games. We opened 2 supplementary Prayer/Quiet Rooms to help cater for the number of Visitors and Staff supporting the events hosted by the NEC. Many thousands of Visitors came through the NEC campus during this time.

We also supported the Commonwealth Games Faith Villages one of which was based on the NEC campus and accommodated 3,000 athletes and their support staff from Commonwealth countries including Trinidad & Tobago, Ghana, New Zealand and Tuvalu. It was wonderful to work collaboratively with Sports Chaplaincy UK and PRIDE House ensuring the Birmingham Commonwealth Games would be the most inclusive in its history.

Alongside the NEC Chaplains were Police Chaplains, Armed Services support, and Rail Chaplains. Some of the Chaplains were NEC Chaplains some days and Police Chaplains the next as you'll see from Sue's report.

We also supported the 'Kick it Out' campaign during the Games by overtly sharing learning and education around Anti-Slavery. As with all large gatherings there is the possibility of human trafficking. The Games was not an exception.

We were invited to support the West Midlands Police Violence Reduction Partnership in drawing Chaplains together from around the West Midlands.

Chaplaincy is immeasurably supported by the NEC Group in the inclusive welcome at all parts and crossroads of the business. We are able to offer support in areas of life and not be afraid to be present in the business. Our fully serviced offices at the NEC and the ICC are really invaluable centres and great investment by the NEC Group which lives out its mantra, 'our people are our best asset'.

Sue Ford reflects on 2022 at the NEC ...



Finally 2022 brought a semblance of normality at the NEC with many of the regular shows returning to the campus. I began to return for my weekly visits in early Summer when the Good Food and Gardening Shows (and many others) returned bringing many happy visitors. The Commonwealth Games in

July provided a very different Chaplaincy experience for me as I was on site over the two weeks, spending three days a week working as a Chaplain for the Police team who were based in one of the halls and one day a week doing my 'normal' Chaplaincy on the other side of the building. It was a unique event. I am grateful to have had the opportunity and experience.

The exciting thing about Chaplaincy at the NEC is that there are never two days the same! Here's a little story: On Remembrance Day I arrived at the the Chaplaincy Office and went to tidy the Prayer Room, where I discovered a bag had been left in a corner. Following procedure, I alerted the staff at a minute before 11.00am - the time when the con-course stops and marks the 2 minutes silence. The Security Officer and I kept people away while we waited for the dog-handler to arrive. Happily, it wasn't long before all was deemed safe, and the package was taken to security - to be collected later by an embarrassed member of staff who had been in a hurry and had left it there!

From September 2022 to January 2023 I visited more regularly, hosting the Staff Induction visits for new staff from each of the NEC sites whilst Revd David Butterworth was away on Sabbatical.

November saw the start of Christmas with seasonal exhibitions and displays; and halls being prepared for Christmas parties. The displays provide a festive welcome for everyone. I look forward to all that Chaplaincy at the NEC will bring in 2023 as we walk alongside staff and visitors- the extensive campus certainly gives you the opportunity to 'get your daily steps in' when walking to and from one side to the other!

Paul Chesterman adds a story of everyday NEC Chaplaincy

Since attending the CIGB course I have had plenty of challenging Chaplaincy conversations but not all as spiritually demanding as this one:

"I want faith, why can't I get it!?" was the heartfelt cry of the homeless man who had been in the prayer room a few times over the previous weeks. I didn't know he was homeless. He just appeared in the prayer room towards the end of each afternoon and was always deep in prayer, or so I thought.

One afternoon after work, curiosity got the better of me. I went into the prayer room and a simple "Hello" opened up a conversation. CIGB training had emphasised the need to listen, to ask open questions and to not push any particular faith. I had a dilemma: this man was clearly asking about having faith in Jesus. What was I allowed to say? How best could I help him?

After a quick 'arrow prayer', I used the signposts to helpful Bible verses in the front of a "Gideons" New Testament (now called "Good News for Everyone"!). I can't say he went away happy or with all his questions answered but he took away the New Testament, to read it for himself later.

Cadbury 6th Form College

Chris Milton reports on a very successful year for the Chaplaincy team at Cadbury FE College



2022 was a good year for us at Cadbury College. We are very warmly received and respected there. So much so that the Chaplaincy team was presented with an award by the Principal, (The 'Sandwell College Group Staff Jubilee Award 2022'*) as recognition for all we bring to the College. The team felt really honoured to be receiving this award. We do what we do to be a Godly presence and to bring the fragrance of Jesus into the college.

Activities at the College during 2022 remained the same: our fortnightly "CHAT" discussion time with students; being available for prayer for the staff; being a presence at exam results days and leading the Remembrance Day service.

Being asked to present a drug awareness session for a group of students at the College was a great opportunity for me. Having had many years of experience and supporting individuals in the area of drug addiction and its dangers, it was a privilege to teach and pass on some of my knowledge to these young students. The College continues to support and promote the website: www.theway.uk.com - providing drug awareness and advice.

"We do what we do to be a Godly presence and to bring the fragrance of Jesus into the college."

During the year, we said goodbye to one of our volunteer Chaplains, leaving for health reasons. We are so grateful for all his time and input at the College. We were pleased to welcome a new Chaplain, Eliakim, to the team.



Richard, Chris and Eliakim

We are excited to see how our team will grow and develop during 2023.

* NB: we are part of Sandwell College

Sadly there is no report for 2022 from the Bournville College Chaplaincy. The College is under new Management and some members of the Chaplaincy team moved out of the area.

Jaguar Landrover

Colin Corke reflects on the challenges faced by the global motor industry—and by the JLR Castle Bromwich plant in particular.

As Chaplain I was welcomed back warmly at the start of 2022 when the Covid restrictions were lifted. It was good to meet the senior staff again but sadly most of them have now moved on.

For many years Chaplaincy to JLR in the West Midlands was coordinated from Coventry and covered six sites but at the moment the Castle Bromwich site is the only one with an active Chaplaincy. The company is currently looking afresh at the value of Chaplaincy so there are sustainability issues. I continue to try to support staff at the plant for half a day each week through these difficult times, and am profoundly grateful to those staff at the Castle Bromwich site who have given time through the year to help me to have an understanding of different areas of the plant. This has meant that I can support the workforce safely, and means I also have some conception of the activity in that part of the manufacturing process.



2022 was a challenging year both for the plant and for me as Chaplain.

The decision was made that the Jaguar vehicles currently made at Castle Bromwich will

not be replaced, and in addition, staff at Castle Bromwich will not be completing the build of any JLR products. This had an obvious impact on morale when combined with the cancellation at a late stage of an electric luxury XJ promised to our plant.

Problems with the supply of various essential components has also had a huge impact as products manufactured by other plants were given priority as they brought in more income for the company.

Activity at Castle Bromwich has been sporadic and varied with staff regularly being redeployed and stood down. The company has promised the workforce that the plant will have a future purpose, though that is still unclear.



The global motor industry is in a time of precipitate change and Castle Bromwich is caught up in this.

You'll understand why photographs are not allowed on site ... I took this selfie outside the perimeter fence!

National Express Bus Chaplaincy

John Bradley is the Lead Chaplain for the National Express Bus Chaplaincy in the West Midlands.



My Chaplaincy work is based in Birmingham city centre and the Birmingham Central Garage. As I chat with those who work for National Express, I realise more and more the challenges they face. Whilst the company has done better than most in

recovering its passenger numbers, they have only recently approached pre-Covid levels.

Driver shortages have been common: some drivers have left the company for apparently better-paid jobs in road haulage, and recruitment of new drivers has been subject to DVLA licensing delays. This has led to reductions in the frequency of some bus services, resulting in overcrowding of the remaining buses and passenger dissatisfaction.

There are signs of hope with some drivers returning from road haulage to buses, and recently more drivers are being trained than are leaving.



Relationships with passengers are generally good, but drivers and inspectors are sometimes subjected to racial abuse, and this increases the stress on drivers, and is reflected in their conversations with me. As in any workplace people face illness, bereavement, family relationship issues and everything else that life

throws at us. In the last year I have found that staff are advised by their colleagues to have a chat with me when they encounter these issues. Feedback following conversations with people who are struggling has been very positive. When possible, I have attended the funerals of National Express employees I know, and this has been appreciated by the bereaved families.

** Members of other faith communities often ask me what I believe. Tragic events, such as fatal accidents, have led to differing perspectives about fate and the will of God.**

As a Chaplain I chat with both managers and Union representatives, not least about Industrial Relations. Improvements to drivers' terms and conditions have been at the forefront of discussions between the company and the Union. The first deal was rejected by the drivers, but an improved deal was accepted, with a whole lot of ups and downs on the way.

More recently, the annual pay negotiations stalled, and currently the Union are balloting their members on strike action. Chaplains are often asked for their views, and I try to give my views objectively, mindful of our independence from the company and Unions. I always try to help people think more clearly about these issues, rather than promote my own views.

We do not try to 'convert' anyone, but people, particularly members of other faith communities, often ask me what I believe. These conversations are always conducted respectfully, even though differences are honestly acknowledged. Tragic events, such as fatal accidents, have led to differing perspectives about fate and the will of God. Sometimes we share personal disappointment about the increasing secularity of society which is reflected in our own families.

A major event this year was the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. Along with some of my CIGB colleagues I was able to help out the Police Chaplaincy and had good conversations with some of the Stagecoach drivers who were drafted in to operate the shuttle services between venues. The subjects of the conversations were very similar to those I have with National Express drivers and it was good to be able to support these drivers too.



Here's a selfie of me on Priory Queensway with a National Express driver.



INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY

In 2022, as in previous years, CIGB ran two 'Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy' training courses, one in Spring and a second in Autumn. The two main Trainers this year were John Bradley and Richard Alford: experienced Chaplains in two completely different fields. Team Leaders from other Chaplaincy areas contributed on a weekly basis. Covid 19 was still very much in evidence during the Spring course but thanks to Zoom those who tested positive, but were well enough, were able to join in the 'live' sessions. Both courses were much enjoyed and resulted in 5 new Chaplains joining our teams in Birmingham City Centre, the NEC group and Cadbury 6th Form College.

One trainee who travelled from Worcester to join the course joined our sister organisation in Worcestershire. Another trainee was very much drawn to Waterways Chaplaincy and is being mentored by Richard. A third trainee returned to her multi-faith Hospital Chaplaincy having very much enjoyed the Christian content of the CIGB training; and a fourth felt called to be a Chaplain to elderly people and has gone on to do extra training.

A very successful year and huge thanks to John, Richard and Team Leaders for your inspirational work.

Longbridge Retail Chaplaincy

Val Dalton reflects on the year in Longbridge High Street.



“No visitors instore” was the message from the manager of the supermarket which forms the backbone of my Chaplaincy ‘patch’ in early 2022. As a guest in the store I had to abide by company policy. When I finally returned in February I was a bit worried about going back: would I be recognised? Well, that worry was unfounded—a member of

staff waved to me as I came up the travelator and was really pleased that I was back in store.

As I walked around my ‘patch’ I was warmly welcomed and it was good to renew old friendships.

“I discovered that one lady went home from work after my regular weekly visits and told her husband about the wonderful support she had received from me.”

Interestingly, staff couldn’t understand why the ‘No Visitors’ policy applied to me: I always wore a face-covering and observed personal space unlike some customers! I heard about new babies born during the pandemic, and about family bereavements in the very worst of circumstances. There had been staff changes too—new people to meet and chat to.

Out on the High Street there were new managers to meet and sadness as I noticed that some businesses had closed. Some conversations were deeper than others, as is always the way, but I was pleased that people I had formed a relationship with before the pandemic were able to share their stories with me. I discovered that one lady went home from work after my regular weekly visits and told her husband about the wonderful support she had received from me.

As Chaplains we have a rule that we don’t talk about our personal faith unless invited to do so. I don’t very often get that invitation so was thrilled when a member of staff (I’m going to call her *Lady 1*) told me that she had felt called to give her life to God and had been praying every day and reading the Bible. She was finding the Bible reading a bit difficult ... she was using the KJV and had started at Genesis 1. I gave her one of the Gideon New Testaments (NIV) and our conversations continued over some weeks until her shift changed. A first was being asked to pray for her *on the shop floor!* She has now moved job, but her new hours and family commitments have meant that attending church on a Sunday is impossible. I guess this is true for many retail workers. We’re still very much in touch!

The supermarket appointed another new manager in April and so, once again, I contacted him to ask permission to continue visiting the store. Imagine my delight when I discovered that he had been deputy manager when I first started my Chaplaincy and was more than happy for me to continue visiting the store as Chaplain as he recognised the value of my visits.

Although there are still some empty shops on the High Street, businesses generally seem to be thriving. My visits to some of the fast-food outlets, of which there are several, tend to be ... well ... fast, as they are very well patronised by students from the college. There are two where longer conversations are possible. I have also maintained a very good relationship with the breakfast team at the restaurant, one member of which I have supported through a number of life’s ups and downs over the years.

Joan continues to visit the shops on her ‘patch’ as often as she can and her visits are welcomed – particularly by the staff in the bike shop!

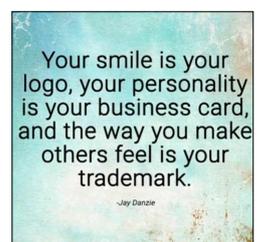
“A first was being asked to pray for her *on the shop floor!*”

You’ll read about the pop-up Gallery in the report from Longbridge Village on page 10. I was really impressed by this subtle outreach to the people of Longbridge. *Subtle* because the artwork and crafts were high quality and beautifully displayed in a way that invited people come and look. *Outreach*, because the Christian message of hope and reconciliation was right there at the forefront, but very gently presented. There was a lot of interest from other traders who welcomed this innovative (but temporary) use of an empty shop – and this gave me an opportunity to talk about the local churches in Longbridge and about my faith. *Lady 1* (see above) went to visit and had a long chat with Sonia Jackson—Chaplain at the Village.

Along with several other CIGB Chaplains I was privileged to be part of the WMP Chaplaincy team supporting Police Officers from all over the country during the Commonwealth Games. It really was a privilege to meet and chat to such professional and dedicated officers and to welcome them to Birmingham. This is me and two traffic officers outside Tally Ho! when I went to collect my uniform.

Like most of our Chaplains, I always pray before I visit, asking God to guide me to those He wants me to meet, and for just the right words to say ... or not! I’m going to quote some words from another Chaplain: ‘It’s a great work and is often joyous and rewarding particularly as you walk away from a meaningful and timely conversation with somebody who was ‘divinely scheduled’ to meet with you.’ Of course, there are the tough times too, but as the old hymn says: “Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work’s in vain; but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.”

I came across a motivational quote which I thought was particularly apt for our role as Workplace Chaplains as we bring something of the love of Jesus into the workplaces we visit.



Longbridge ExtraCare Village

Keith Parsons recalls an eventful year and writes on behalf of team members Sonia and David Jackson, Irene Lees, Irma Hilton and Marlene Parsons



Chaplains from the Village engage in many activities staged within the Village at various times of the year and have developed a fruitful relationship with the management and staff as well as the residents.

The Christian Fellowship meets in the Bistro on Sunday evenings and numbers gradually increased once Covid restrictions were lifted. Guest speakers bring a varied and fresh perspective to these informal times of worship. A monthly Holy Communion service is attended by fewer people but is valued by Village residents who may be unable to get to their own churches.

We are grateful for the 'out of date' flowers donated by Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer. These are distributed by the team and provide a wonderful opportunity for a conversation. This small gesture is much appreciated, particularly during times of illness or bereavement.



Chaplains from the Village were instrumental in planning and supporting the pop-up shop, known as "Our Gallery" in a vacant unit in Longbridge town centre during Lent in 2022. This was very successful, presenting the Easter story alongside an array of beautiful art work and craft work by local artists including members of our own team. This initiative provided a exciting new, if temporary, addition to the High



Street which was much appreciated by local residents and traders alike. We are looking for other opportunities to offer a pop-up featuring a blend of the Christian message and creativity of local supporters, and look

forward to growing support of local church members in an initiative which engages so well with those in and around the town centre.

The Chaplaincy team continue to support events organised by God's Heart for Longbridge (GHfL) churches which take place in the town centre at key times in the Christian calendar. At Easter, the members of GHfL initiated the creation of a Spring garden with a Christian theme. Team members and the public enjoyed planting the garden together. There were also opportunities to explore the Easter story and to offer prayers. The garden remained in situ for a month and received very positive comments. The annual Remembrance has grown into a well-supported event, with the opportunity for local residents and visitors to offer prayers for those closest to their hearts. Our local MP, together with members of the council, attended and laid wreaths.

Kings Heath Retail Chaplaincy

Later in November we welcomed the Christian Music Ministries choir in a performance of "Three Wise Camels" by Roger Jones. We were grateful for the support of the management and staff at the Village in staging this event, which proved, as ever, to be a very popular and most enjoyable afternoon and early evening.

There are daily opportunities to engage with residents and visitors to the open part of the Village to listen to their pain and concerns and to explore living positively in the presence of God, and with God's help and guidance, we look forward to being able to offer an ongoing Christian presence and perspective in and around the Longbridge area.



Graham and Pat Wigley reflect on the challenges that have faced High Street traders in Kings Heath during 2022.

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God" Psalm 43 v 5

It is common knowledge that High Street retail trading has been severely affected by the pandemic over the past three years. However, in Kings Heath, the parallel effect of Birmingham's Low Traffic Neighbourhood policy—including the closure of side roads to traffic - coinciding with already challenging conditions, has had a devastating effect.



For a considerable number of shop owners and employees, it has brought anxiety, stress and eventual closure of their physical presence and, for those who remain, a precarious, uncertain future.

Thirty- five per cent of the retailers we visited in 2019 are no longer there. National brands and independent businesses have all been casualties. Some premises remain empty and others are taken by alternative, possibly temporary, traders, which has changed the whole character of Kings Heath Shopping Centre. Takeaways and cafes abound, together with restaurants only open in the evening, which all provide very different employment situations and serve a specific clientele.

Some premises do not lend themselves to Chaplaincy visits e.g. banks, hairdressers, opticians and nail / beauty salons. When these are added to the 'eateries', the number of premises suitable for our visits has greatly diminished.

We continue to visit where we can but watch the future with interest and prayer, wondering how traders will face the ongoing challenges of coming years.

Birmingham City Centre Retail

Birmingham City Centre Retail Chaplaincy covers a large and varied area and several of the Chaplains have written reports this year.

Elaine Hutchinson, Team Leader, reflects on the events of the past year.



This passage reminds me of the sweet aroma of the ministry of Chaplaincy, and how God leads us to those places, and spaces so the love of God can be encountered. That is how I see Chaplaincy: like a sweet pleasant fragrance that people encounter when they meet us.

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere."
2 Corinthians 2: 14

It has felt like we have come into our own as the Chaplaincy in Birmingham city centre, and the doors are opening, these things do take time, as our journeying with people in the retail sector has taken time: time to build relationships, time to journey time to befriend.

It's easy to overlook the importance of giving time just being around. I am not a fan of the terminology 'loitering with intent' I like the term 'intentional presence' better, we are here on purpose not by accident and those we serve appreciate our presence. Our work as Chaplains takes a total reliance upon God and it's important to listen to the gentle whispers and the movements of the Holy Spirit in those significant moments.

We have had to offer Chaplaincy in some challenging spaces: dealing with the trauma of a suicide can be shocking for those who are the first responders, but dealing with that repetitively can be devastating. At our AGM we heard how Chaplaincy can change lives. We listened to testimony from guest speaker Paul Thompson, (Head of Security at Bullring and Grand Central) who shared how Chaplaincy works and talked about the difference having Chaplains present makes to the Bullring security and Grand Central staff. This has taken time and ongoing building of relationships.

We've had our pleasant moments too; I was invited to the Frankfurt Market stallholders briefing meeting. This was the first time I had been invited to talk about the work of Chaplaincy alongside other agencies, such as West Midlands Police, counter-terrorism and safeguarding, and suggests that Chaplaincy is seen by Birmingham City Council as an important and integral part to those working at the Frankfurt Market. It has taken seven years to get to this point.

"Our work as Chaplains takes a total reliance upon God and it's important to listen to the whispers and the movements of the Holy Spirit in those significant moments"



How wonderful to hear traders in the Frankfurt Market say 'I remember you from last year'. It has felt easier to listen, chat and share. Having a very special someone turn up on St Nicolas' day, (December 6th), really puts a smile on everyone's face, not forgetting the chocolate Santas!

Our Punch&Pies session at the Bullring Markets always goes down a treat it's a wonderful way to say thank you to traders. We offer mince pies, fairy cakes and non-alcoholic punch - always very well appreciated and now it's a bit of a tradition.

Elaine, Peter, Andrew & trolley of goodies



We have said goodbye to team members: John Taiwo, Pat Saunders, Dolvis Ferdinand and Char Brydson; and to Revd Dr Neil Johnson who has been the Chair of the management committee since the beginning. We give God thanks for their giftings and all they brought to the role of Chaplaincy and pray that God's blessing will be with them in whatever they do next. We welcome new volunteers: including Ivor Lewis, the assistant Rector at St Martins; Pete Norman and Abba Tiruneh - the St Martins' posse; and Revd Jeremy Allcock the Rector at St Martins who is the new Chair of the management committee. We are really blessed to have them on the team.

Which brings me nicely to the team of amazing volunteers who give up their time and commit to this wonderful ministry of hanging around but on purpose! Thank you! We give God thanks for this amazing ministry of Chaplaincy, to the management committee, for CIGB and all who fund and support the work of Chaplaincy in the city centre. Thank you.



Samuel Edgar reports on Chaplaincy to Grand Central

It has been a very mixed year for the retail trade at Grand Central. A number of units that closed during the Covid lockdown have not reopened. However, just recently, there have been some 'green shoots' of recovery with a new restaurant opening and a virtual reality shop to open soon. Also encouraging news has been received about the development of the John Lewis site into an exciting new space called The Drum. This should increase footfall in the centre and enhance opportunities for established businesses.

Birmingham City Centre Retail (continued)

On the whole managers and staff have remained very positive and, hopefully, the future looks much brighter.

The Chaplaincy team has changed recently with John Taiwo having to give up, because of pressures of other work, and Samuel remaining. It is sad to lose John who was an excellent Chaplain but Julia Johnson has joined the team and is proving more than able for the task.

We continue to be very well accepted and received by both staff and managers. A few months ago we were in one store when a lady member of staff shared a problem she was having with severe back pain. Not easy when the job means you have to stand most of the day. It was quiet in the store at that moment and John asked if he could pray with her and she readily agreed. John prayed and we went about our business. The next week she insisted that her pain had eased, and she felt much better. It's not something we are able to do very often, but we are always ready to follow the Spirit's leading and who knows what that will accomplish!

We are grateful to God for the opportunities He continually gives us to minister in this situation.



Ashish Shinde reports on his year as Chaplain to the ground floor of the Bullring.

I have served the ground floor of the Bullring shopping centre since 2020 as a voluntary Retail Chaplain. 2022 was a good year for me as I visited the shops and had meaningful conversations with the retail staff. I distinctly remember how a member of staff suffering from mental health issues opened up to me. He was not able to see his GP for a long time because of delays caused by Covid.

Among the retail staff are a number of students who are working part-time and I feel that I connected well with them. I came to the UK 3 years ago as a migrant and find my experience is very useful as I understand the challenges many face of being in a new country with a different culture. At the end of the year I enjoyed distributing Christmas cards to retail staff and this small gesture was much appreciated.

I feel privileged to be taking God's light and peace into the workplace in a humble way and am grateful to CIGB for this opportunity.

I very much hope to be able to join the monthly meetings with Security staff in 2023 and I look forward to many more encounters and conversations.



Andrew Veitch provides the first of three reports on the Birmingham markets.

I have continued to visit the RAG market on a fairly regular basis, but it seems to take less and less time as the years go by.

There continues to be a fairly high turnover of traders. Old faces are gradually disappearing – mainly due to people who are nearing retirement and can't bear the thought of continuing to stand by their stall, day after day and just about making enough money to pay their rent, let alone cover the cost of the stock and pay a wage. But there are some new traders coming in, so that although there are dozens of empty stalls there are new people having a go. Some only last a few weeks until they realise how bad it is.

It takes a long time for new traders to get to know existing traders, so the market has lost much of the bonhomie that was very noticeable when I first started about 12 years ago. It's strange looking at blank spaces and reminiscing about the trader who used to be there. Although no traders owned their stalls, it was quite normal for a stall on one of the main aisles to be 'sold' for tens of thousands of pounds – the value of most stalls is now basically nil

A long-standing trader said that they knew they could make around £200 a day driving a lorry, but found it very difficult to contemplate leaving the community of market traders. He had been a market trader all his life from when he was a youngster, helping his mum and dad out on their stall on Saturdays and holidays. It's more a way-of-life than a 'job' for so many of the traders.

The Commonwealth Games gave a bit of a lift in the summer as the area where the old wholesale market used to be located, was one of the venues for beach volley ball and 3x3 basketball. The temporary stands and associated retailers and take-aways created a real buzz in the area and some of the traders—especially the mobile phone sellers—did very well from visitors who crossed the road to the markets.

The spirits of the traders were also lifted and warmed, the week before Christmas, by the distribution of mince pies/cupcakes and hot spiced fruit tea/punch. The weather was very cold so the hot drink was much appreciated. Thanks to Elaine for organising this.



Andrew, trolley and bemused bear



John Fletcher continues the Market story



I joined the Retail Chaplaincy team at the beginning of the year, taking over from Elaine as the Retail Chaplain for the indoor market.

Although the market is famed for its meat and fish stalls, it does have a large section of general stalls that sell home products and clothing, along with a range of services such as tailoring and hair dressing. I have got to know a lot of the general stall holders by name, and most of them have got to know me. The meat and fish stalls are usually busy, so it's not always convenient to stop for a chat. However, sometimes there is a quiet period, and we are able to have a conversation.

There is generally less bustle around the general stalls, and it is easier to establish a relationship with the stall holder. There have been a few occasions when I have been asked to offer prayers for special intentions, and sometimes a stall holder will ask for a prayer to be said with them. I am pleased to be a member of the team, and it is a privilege to offer Chaplaincy support to the indoor market.



Peter Norman is part of the staff at St Martin in the Bull Ring. His report concludes the set from the City Centre Retail team.

My Chaplaincy area is the outdoor market space. This area has a large number of Muslim traders and many Afghan workers. Building relationships has been slow, with some traders more inclined to chat than others. Some degree of initial mistrust, or at least lack of understanding about Chaplains, has also been evident. The outdoor traders are busy from set-up to end of day with little chance to chat. However, I have been able to talk to one or two traders in more depth and been able to share some of their troubles and experiences. A consistent weekly presence has proved valuable and now it seems that most of the traders recognise me and are willing to say "Hi" and pass the time of day.

The food stalls are a hub for many market and council workers, and it's been easier to form a relationship with traders. I helped distribute mince pies, cakes and fruit punch at Christmas along with other team members and stall holders enjoyed our gifts and good wishes.

As our Church is adjacent to the Market we have been able to support traders a little with purchases for our Christingle oranges and various other bits and bobs. Although I am aware that the amount of money we spend is almost incidental I sense that the desire to be in community here has been well received.

West Midlands Fire Service

The West Midlands Fire Service Chaplaincy covers—as its name suggests—the West Midlands, not just Birmingham and Solihull, and has Chaplains from 3 different Workplace Chaplaincy organisations. CIGB Chaplain Tracy Sweet describes her year.



I visit Erdington and Perry Barr Fire Stations. Because of the nature of the work Fire Officers may not always be at the station but when they are, I am always given a warm welcome and we sit and chat as a group and always over a cup of tea.

We tend to have general conversations about life and they often ask about the Church, and why there are different types of church!

The Fire Officers will often talk to me about their families and enjoy chatting about their children. I'm often shown photographs of family holidays and other occasions. I sometimes hear about Officers who are preparing to get married or thinking about getting married; sometimes someone will want to chat about moving house or one of the many other aspects of family life.

Fire Officers care about the community. Sometimes when they go into the home of an elderly person to fit an alarm, they may be the first person to have visited in a long time, and they love a chat. They are also now able to go back into schools to work with children, teaching about keeping safe.

At a local community event last summer, Officers from Perry Barr came along with their fire engine to the great delight of the children who loved putting on a helmet and sitting in the fire engine.

If I visit the station and find the officers are out on a 'shout' I always leave a card to say I called. My contact details are on the notice board. If I haven't seen anyone for a while I will send a card to let them know they are in my thoughts and prayers.



Erdington and Perry Barr Fire Stations



Associate Chaplains

CIGB has associations with some other Chaplaincy teams of which the YMCA is one. Rotimi Benjamin writes about his Chaplaincy work with YMCA and also Jericho Social Enterprise charity and includes a moving story from 2022.

Jericho

Chaplaincy at Jericho

Jericho provides people with work and training in its social businesses, and help and support via its social projects. It provides supported employment opportunities in businesses which offer great value goods and services to the local community. I continue to provide pastoral support to all who seek or are referred to the chaplain.

Pastoral support is not only provided and limited to Jericho staff and volunteers, but also offered to tenants in the building on request. Pastoral support and care are open to all regardless of faith, background or circumstance and it is given without judgment.

Chaplaincy at YMCA Heart of England

This year the Chaplaincy team at YMCA provided more pastoral care and emotional support to our staff and residents. Some of key issues people sought support for were focused around general wellbeing, mental health, work, bereavement, and family .

Story of a resident

One of the life-coaches was concerned about a resident and asked me to have a chat with her. She had been feeling low, had not attended her usual support sessions and didn't seem her usual self. I knocked the resident's door and invited her to come down to see me in the office, she promised to come down in an hour.

When she came down, we talked for a while and then she told me just how she was feeling: that her life was of no use, of no purpose, she didn't think there was any worth or value to her life and she felt there was no reason to her life.

I listened to her, and we talked about each of the issues and emotions she was feeling. As I talked to her about her concerns, she began to cry, I reached for some tissues and gave them to her. I asked her why she was crying, she looked at me and with a gentle smile she said, **"It's funny that you are saying all these things, because a moment before you came upstairs to my flat, I had my medications in my hand ready to take overdose and just end it."** We talked over why she doesn't have to end her life and looked at things she could do to give purpose and meaning to her life.

She left my office relieved, glad and determined to do something different and positive.

A week later she volunteered to work in one of the charity shops on Erdington High Street, and two months later she got a paid job.



The Waterways Chaplaincy is another team associated with CIGB. Richard Alford writes about his year on the canals.



2022 was a year of changes.

I stepped down from my role as Senior Chaplain for the West Midlands but have continued as a

Waterways Chaplain. This has enabled the hub I was responsible for to split as it was getting too big. The southern half, (Saul Junction and new chaplains in Bristol), have their own hub and Senior Chaplain. The northern half, covering Coventry, Birmingham and the Black Country are supported by the Lead Chaplain South. Howie Pickering, who heads up a ministry called 'God's Garage' in Stockport, is our new Lead Chaplain North.

As for me, I am still helping people I meet on the waterways. Quite often I'll respond to a request for help on our web page www.waterwayschaplaincy.org.uk.

Here are two little stories:

I was asked to take a wedding blessing for a couple on the towpath at Coventry Basin. The couple made their vows under a floral arch with their family, friends and boaters looking on. A very special day in the life of a Waterways Chaplain!

I was also invited to conduct a service of dedication for a bench. That might seem strange, but the bench had been given in memory of a man who had worked for CRT and before that British Waterways. The bench was given to the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society and is outside their headquarters at the Pump House on the Titford Canal.

I was part of a team of 6 Waterways Chaplains who formed a team to be around during the Commonwealth Games both by the Alexander Stadium and in the centre of Birmingham. There weren't very many boaters around but there were lots of people – locals and visitors - and we had many good conversations.

As Chaplains we like to be a Godly presence at various boat festivals. Those held at Crick, Black Country, and Brownhills are just three of the many festivals we attend over the summer months. We often organise a church service at these festivals, working in conjunction with the Boaters Christian Fellowship and local churches. The one held at the Black Country festival was especially well attended with around 50-60 people present.



The photo is of myself along with Gemma Draper, Waterways Chaplain for the Stourbridge area and Jan Halford, Chair of the Boaters Christian Fellowship