



Churches
Together in
Westminster

An Occasional Newsletter

Welcome to Issue 21 (Winter 2020/21) of our Occasional Newsletter. Please feel free to photocopy this for distribution amongst your congregation.

REPORT GIVEN TO CTIW ANNUAL MEETING ON 18 JANUARY 2021 by Rev'd Jonathan Evens as Chairman

Our activity in CTiW focuses around three areas: education and getting to know one another; worship and social action. However, the particular challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 have impacted our activities within these three areas considerably.

As a result of restrictions on in-person meetings we were only able to pursue our first aim through churches hosting events, primarily online services. Our AGM was hosted by Hinde Street Methodist Church where we were greeted by Rev Peter Cornick with a prayer for faith and spirituality. Peter also quoted the hymn "Jesus, we look to thee" written by Charles Wesley in the middle of the 18th century, but still relevant today.

Our online services enabled us to visit two other churches virtually. We visited Farm Street Church for an Ecumenical Pentecostal Mass on 31 May and again for a Solidarity Service in December with the Farm Street choir and Fr Dominic Robinson SJ in church and recorded contributions from elsewhere. Our Advent Service was hosted by St James Piccadilly with the service primarily recorded in church but with a closing reflection and prayer in the church courtyard beside an Advent fire. Rosa Postance has prepared three Newsletters which have focused on our AGM, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, London Prisons Mission, Homelessness, Refugees, and Solidarity Sunday.

Our second aim, which invites us to worship together regularly, has been primarily as above beginning with the Ecumenical Pentecostal Mass at Farm Street. The Mass included recorded music by Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir and the choirs of Farm Street and All Saints Margaret Street. All were welcome, from whatever Christian tradition or none, to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and to pray for our country and world at this time of crisis.

The Advent Service led by Revd Lucy Winkett at St James Piccadilly with their Lay Singers and other recorded contributions was a beautiful way to step into Advent. It was a privilege to be a part of a deep, rich and beautiful service. This was an Advent like no other – and to have been able to broadcast a recorded service as part of our marking of this holy season was really encouraging. It was really moving to see and hear all the contributions. For the reflections on the nature of Advent, it was very helpful to focus our thoughts on the core themes of Advent itself, rather than treating the season just as preparation for Christmas. This service can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eL7YLPyE_7I

Issue 21
Winter 2020/21

Contents

Report given to CTiW Annual Meeting on 18 January 2021 by Rev'd Jonathan Evens as Chairman 1-3

SPIRITUAL HEALTH OF THE NATION Report given at the CTiW Annual Meeting on 18 January 2021 3-5

London Prisons Mission (LPM) Report to CTiW Annual Meeting 18 January 2021 by John Plummer 6-8

CTiW Future Events 9

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Our Solidarity Service at Farm Street was also a meaningful, thoughtful service. The care in preparation was evident thanks to Fr Dominic Robinson, Jen Copestake and Sam Dixon who did the bulk of the work and to their homeless guests who were so inspiring. The service took World Day of the Poor as its focus with contributions from CTiW members and a very thoughtful sermon from Tricia Hillas. We continue to pray for the response from all who view what was a deeply moving and challenging service. This service can be viewed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvJ4mE5C3AY&t=1s>

Our third aim involves us in support of the London Prisons Mission about which we will hear more in a separate report. LPM has once again produced an excellent resource booklet for Prisons Week and has undertaken a substantive project around Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison which is of national significance.

Our social action began this year with our AGM which focused on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking through talks by Kevin Hyland O.B.E., the former UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and also by Major Heather Grinstead (Deputy Director for the Modern Slavery Unit) and Abigail Lennox (Modern Slavery Post-NRM Survivors Support Service) of the Salvation Army. Information about other resources and organisations was also available from information stalls. A Solidarity Sunday resource booklet was prepared for Churches Together in Westminster by Gillian Dare, Joan Ishibashi and Sara Mark to help churches focus on those in developing countries who are suffering from the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is hoped this will encourage congregations to engage actively with Christian organisations worldwide in their work with vulnerable communities. This should surely be a part of our response to the universal gift of God that we remember and celebrate in Christmastide.

The booklet has been arranged as a series of daily readings around key themes:

- Day One: Impact of coronavirus on people in fragile countries
- Day Two: Health, shelter and survival
- Day Three: Poverty and livelihoods
- Day Four: Education and children
- Day Five: Violence against women and girls, and gender inequality
- Day Six: Impact on those with disabilities
- Day Seven: Loss of rights and freedoms
- Day Eight: Impact on peace processes and conflict

CTiW is encouraging churches to make the booklet available to their congregations and consider holding a Solidarity Sunday service to introduce the booklet and encourage support for the organisations listed in the booklet's appendix. Solidarity Sunday is about reminding ourselves and each other that there is so much good we can do - through giving, through prayer and through powerful demonstrations of unity. The booklet is available from <http://ctiw.london/>.

Churches Together in Westminster have also been raising awareness of the impact of the congestion charge extension on London's churches including letters to the Mayor and minister plus radio and newspapers publicity about the revised congestion charges and its implications for people attending churches, synagogues and mosques on various BBC programmes and channels. The British Board of Deputies had contributed to one of the interviews. These eventually resulted in a meeting with Heidi Alexander, Deputy Mayor for Transport & Deputy Chair, Transport for London.

In this meeting we were given information about TfL's congestion charge charity reimbursement scheme, details of which can be found at <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronaviruscovid-19-faqs/are-there-any-reimbursements-available-congestion-charge> The link takes you to a GLA webpage that contains the eligibility document, registration form and FAQs for the charity reimbursement scheme.

The scheme is open to Charity staff including seconded or contracted staff members, as well as Trustees and Charity volunteers. Eligible journeys include among others: delivery or collection journeys to directly support vital coronavirus response work within the CCZ of the following eligible items: a) food deliveries, b) medicine or medical equipment deliveries, c) deliveries of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), d) cleaning / hygiene supplies and also services at accommodation for rough sleepers who are at a high or moderate risk from coronavirus, including the driving of such vulnerable people to the accommodation. Claims may only be made for journeys which are reliant on a chargeable Congestion Charge vehicle and cannot reasonably be undertaken by any other mode. You may already be aware of this scheme but, if not, we hope it's helpful to have this information. If an application seems appropriate, support is available from Matt Doherty who manages the application process. He can be reached by phone at 07593 130 399 or by email at CharityCongestionRefunds@london.gov.uk

Following our conversation Heidi Alexander is considering whether the criteria for the scheme could be broadened to include people volunteering for other forms of social action.

The Exec this year has been:

Rev'd Canon Anthony Ball (Westminster Abbey),
Rev'd Matthew Catterick (St Saviours Pimlico),
Gillian Dare (All Saints Church, Margaret Street),
Rev'd Joan Ishibashi (St James's, Piccadilly) Treasurer,
Rev'd Roderick Leece (St George's Hanover Square),
Majors Richard & Caroline Mingay (Salvation Army, Regent Hall),
John Plummer (St George's Church, Hanover Square),
Rev'd Dominic Robinson (The Immaculate Conception, Farm Street),
Rob Thompson (Hinde Street Methodist Church),
Martyn Watson (Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church),
 and **myself** as Chair.

Rob Thompson has informed us that he feels the time has come for him to step down from the executive committee. Having begun a PhD in September, and with the pressures of the current situation, he feels unable to give CTiW the time and attention that it deserves. We

are very grateful for all Rob has contributed to the Exec and wish it were possible for him to remain with us longer. 2020 was very significant year on many levels and we are glad to know that his PhD represents the way forward for him at this time. We wish him every blessing as he gives that study and research the time and attention it requires amidst the challenges of our current circumstances.

My thanks to all the Exec for their support and input in challenging times and especially to Joan Ishibashi for her very effective work as Treasurer. The Exec has been ably supported, as in recent years, by Rosa Postance who, as Administrator, keeps CTiW running and looks after our communications including our website and Newsletter. My thanks to everyone who has played a part for the tremendous contribution made.

Rev'd Jonathan Evens
 Chairman

SPIRITUAL HEALTH OF THE NATION

Panel Discussion at the CTiW Webinar held on 18 January 2021

Following the Annual General Meeting of Churches Together in Westminster those attending participated in a webinar and discussion on an issue much in the minds of Christians and non-Christians at the this time of crisis; an exploration of the spiritual health of the nation led by our two eminent speakers **Fr Roger Dawson, SJ**, Director St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre, and **Ann Morisy**, Community theologian and director of the Commission that wrote the report *'Faithful Cities'*.

Fr Dominic, of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, set the scene reminding us that during the last year we had seen increasing levels of loneliness, destitution, homelessness, domestic abuse and loss of jobs. But he reminded us that we had also witnessed a great deal of sharing, voluntary and community activity, generosity and compassion with many people helping others. This had led to much reflection in churches and denominations across the country and given us pause to stop and think about ourselves as individuals and as worshipping communities. A time of soul searching, about what was important to us and what we as Christians had learned about what it meant to serve Christ and our neighbour.

Fr Roger Dawson, SJ began by saying that he didn't want to start on a depressing note, nor did he intend to end on one. His reading of the spiritual health of the nation can be described as somewhere between 'inadequate' and 'requires improvement'. He considered that for a long time now we have been living on

the spiritual capital of our nation, and there is very little left in the bank. He made some observations about the run up to where we are now and went on to make some observations about the current crisis, and to say something about our spiritual health.

The long look suggests that we are not in great shape. He reminded us that a recent report by the Mental Health Foundation found that 19% of 16-24 year olds experience mental health problems like anxiety or depression and worryingly, suicide is the most common cause of death among young people, especially men. The tools that frame our modern society, new technology and social media are here to stay and are by no means all bad, but our desire to connect in cyberspace rather than to relate in physical space can leave us, 'alone together'. This does not bode well for the future of our nation.

As both a clinical psychologist and a spiritual director, he suggested that there was not a clean divide between our *psychological* state and our *spiritual* state. Much of our culture supports a view of the 'big me', that I am the centre of my universe, and social media amplifies this. But what about spiritual health? Spiritual health is difficult to define, but it is not characterised by the 'big me'; it is focused on the sacred – in the Christian context, on God in Jesus Christ – and the self is 'de-centred'. He suggested that the spiritually healthy person has a distinctive attitude to time: grateful for the good times in the past, and both forgiving and learning



Fr Roger Dawson S.J.

from the tough times; able to enjoy and savour the present moment, to accept what is; and at the same time to be hopeful about the future, changing what can be changed to build the Kingdom of God; all this placed on what we would call the 'eschatological horizon' of our final destiny – life with God in heaven.

In the spiritual person we would hope to see signs of solid virtue – signs of love, compassion, generosity, gratitude, service, truthfulness and honesty – and for these virtues to be evident in practices and habits. His concern was that these values seem largely absent in public life and in our culture at the moment, and that many of us sense that something serious is missing. Kim Daroch, the former ambassador to the USA, described the nation as preoccupied by the Three I's: immigration, inequality and identity. These three things are about the individual; they are about 'me', but this is the 'little me', who is just another organism in God's creation, and not the 'big me'. The discourse around these issues is marked by fear and anger, which are not signs of spiritual health, or what we would call spiritual consolation. The Churches and the Christian tradition have something to offer to the whole of our society.

First, to keep the focus on God. Spiritual consolation is only to be found when God is at the centre, not us. Second, to cultivate loving and generous relationships. We need each other and my salvation is caught up with yours, and the psychological importance of this is clear:

Spiritual Health of the Nation cont'd

Loneliness and isolation are toxic. Finally, cultivate gratitude. We need to look for the things we appreciate, to say thank you, and start to see signs where God is at work in our life. Our faith calls us to welcome the stranger and that there is no place for narrow nationalism; gross inequalities where some waste food and others go to foodbanks are anti-signs of the Kingdom of God; Christians find their identity not in tribalism but in baptism, a baptismal identity where we know ourselves as sinners who have been forgiven and are loved by God.

He ended by noting that more people on Google have searched 'Does God exist?' and 'How to pray' than ever before and this is a sign that we are becoming 'more spiritual' an indication that people are thinking about spiritual dimension of life if not the religious as found in organised religion. And what is the blessing or grace? It can take a while before this becomes clear or obvious, but if we ask the questions, God may do something significant with our spiritual health.

Ann Morisy explored some of the traditional pillars of social structures and controls, and the changes in these which had increasingly led to an undermining of self-worth, values, social cohesion and spiritual and mental health. She identified four key pillars: Government, Church, Family and Civil Society. She discussed the challenges facing Governments in managing the tensions between competing expectations: maintaining economic growth, valuing personal and political liberty and ensuring social cohesion which had resulted in many different styles of government, from open democracies to the autocratic exercise of power. But overall most Governments had lost people's trust and belief that they could meet the challenges and deliver. The churches in the past have exercised social control by harnessing theology - the threat of eternal damnation - to inhibit people's behaviour. Churches could no longer rely on this approach and authority as people began to question their assumptions and teaching.

The third pillar, the family, was also undergoing a crisis as the nature of the family becomes increasingly fluid, the frequent absence of a father figure and loosening of bonds and increasingly diverse values within the family preclude its playing its traditional pivotal role in maintaining and setting standards of belief and behaviour.

That leaves the fourth pillar, Civil Society, which has become increasingly important. Founded in the early Methodist movement, it has embraced and promoted the values of community, identity, fairness and solidarity which still underpin civil society. Civil society, by its very nature, provides opportunities for people to hear themselves think and to share their views. It displays a

creative sympathy as demonstrated throughout the Pandemic with people offering their time and commitment and banding together to help the more vulnerable and isolated in many different ways. It embodies the belief that people can rise above their circumstances to achieve more together than individually, the confidence that people can be transformed, and brings to the fore accountable natural leaders. Incidentally, civil society is not about negatives or even killing people! It is about engendering self-worth and self-value, respect for others and building people up not rejecting them. These are Christian values and research has shown that a very high proportion of people in civil society are people of faith.

Ann concluded by talking about the role of forgiveness (of self and others), of our unique value in the sight of God. Christians can be confident that we live within the grace of the Holy Spirit. This is where our spiritual health lies and is nurtured. Becoming a person of faith and going to church helps us to reassess the odds in a positive direction. Church helps us regain confidence that we have chances and choices. Doing business with God, and the solidarity that can characterise church life, helps us to counter passivity and resignation as well as bring a change of perspective.

In addition, at a time when we are all at risk of social bigotry, church can more than anything be a place unfazed by diversity, because only when diversity is understood as an opportunity rather than a threat will we be able to respond to the challenges of a globalising rather than a Eurocentric world. Faith communities, particularly in the context of the rich diversity of London, bind people together, provide much needed local leadership, play a significant role in the lives of many who profess different or no faith, they are committed to local areas over long periods of time, indeed are faithful to the City. Faithful capital makes a difference for the better to the lives of whole communities, cities and nations.

She concluded:

"I'm of a generation that grew up with the presumption that it was normal for things to get better. And yet I think we are possibly the first generation who are perceiving that their future will be less good than it has been for people in the past. That's actually something that is really important to me about how generations provide for each other. Because if we unhitch a commitment to future generations simply by being preoccupied with the now and our own needs and desires, then that really is a measure of just how messed up the species is."

"I'm late to come to joy as being a powerful, transformational phenomenon. Joy is something quite profound. And you can't guarantee it, it is not to be managed – because if it's been managed and manipulated, it's something less than joy. And that joy really can only



Ann Morisy

come from encounters with others. Joy is not a solitary thing. Something might come close with solitude. But joy, I think, is a relational phenomenon. And I think that our churches at their best are places which can multiply joy because of the acceptance of everybody's contribution".

The two presentations were followed by a lively discussion based on the ideas put forward by the two speakers.

Gillian Dare
3 February 2021



LONDON PRISONS MISSION - REPORT TO THE CTiW ANNUAL MEETING ON 18TH JANUARY 2021

The London Prisons Mission, like churches and everything else, has been very substantially changed by the impact of the Covid pandemic. It has however continued to be extremely busy, often with different activities, concerns and issues.

1. New Arrangements and Charitable Status.

CTiW Newsletter Issue 17 reported late in 2019, that “The Prisons Mission Grows up”. It had been decided that the project, which had been carefully and cautiously developing since 2013, should cease to operate under the auspices of the CTiW, but become an independent charity, continue to deliver the same services, with involvement with London churches, and its own management structure, accountability and fund-raising.

After several months of correspondence with the Charity Commission, the London Prisons Mission (LPM) was formally registered on 13th November 2020 (Number 1192327).

In accordance with the assurances given in advance, the newly independent LPM has continued to be closely involved with the CTiW and many of its member churches. The Coordinator, John Plummer continues to serve as a member of the CTiW Executive and presents a report of LPM’s activities and issues to every meeting of the Executive. LPM aims to improve the effectiveness and usefulness of its work to churches and requests their advice, interest and active engagement and support.

2. Covid – Inside Prisons.

As the Covid pandemic began to sweep into the UK, government and relevant agencies estimate the probable fatalities of 2/3,000 among the 80K+ prison population of men, women and children, often of poor mental health, detained within many overcrowded, ancient and unsanitary establishments. As a result, extremely severe restrictions were very strictly imposed from a very early stage. These prevented all family, professional, and external visitors, including Probation Officers, lawyers, volunteers and others. All education, recreation, employment, (except some catering and cleaning), Chapel worship, and many other activities were suspended. By this means, inmates would only be released from cells, either one, or a few at a time, for a brief shower or very limited exercise. In consequence of these restrictions, almost every inmate was confined to a small, single, or shared cell for 23 or even 24 hours every single day.

During the first lockdown the arrangements for Covid testing of inmates, new admissions and staff going in and out daily, were inadequate.

The negative effects upon the mental health of inmates was becoming apparent to staff and identified as a very serious concern by the HM Prisons Inspectorate, which conducted a series of Short Scrutiny Visits, to focus on Covid related measures.

As volunteers, even regular weekly visitors with useful skills and experiences, from several well established organisations, are not admitted, most LPM volunteers have been effectively furloughed (without pay) since early in 2020. Although they are aware of the plight of staff and inmates inside, there is very little they can do to help.

Because the Coordinator is well known within the prison system he has been able to maintain links with some senior Managers and Managing Chaplains. This has enabled him to obtain semi-confidential information and extend support.

Conditions within prisons have improved a little and the management and staff are doing their best to ease the severe stress caused by the restrictions on mobility, lack of family visits, and denial of almost all out of cell activity, let alone “meaningful activity”. This is all very harmful. Incidents of self-harm have risen sharply and experts now anticipate long term mental health impairment of many inmates.

It is significant to acknowledge that instead of the deaths of prisoners and staff being in the low thousands, these have actually only been in the low hundreds to date. This is a direct result of the restrictions imposed by the HMPPS.

One benefit we must press hard to maintain after the pandemic is that there have been modest improvements in in-cell telephony and the use of video facilities for family communications. This is long overdue.

At present LPM is optimistic that volunteers will be able to resume their regular visits, in support of prison chaplaincy teams and other activities, in late spring additional volunteers will be urgently needed and will be given the training, preparation and support they need for this interesting, worthwhile, different and challenging work. We are poised and ready.

Covid – Outside Prisons.

Those LPM volunteers whose regular activities centred on weekly visits to one of the London prisons, informally split into two groups. Those who focussed on their day-jobs and families and put LPM on hold; and those who devoted time, energy and skill to other LPM activities and especially the Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison initiative.

We soon learned that our churches and many of their ordained and lay people were under a variety of heavy pressures and anxieties, as a result of the pandemic. Consequently, the plight of prisoners and the deteriorating conditions inside tended to be understandably low on their lists of priorities.

During the spring and summer, we provided a steady stream of articles, reports and short personal prison stories for publication in the rapidly improving and expanding online Bulletins and Newsletters produced by more churches. These were well received and even reproduced by churches far distant from London. I consider this to have been a very useful role for LPM to perform, particularly, but not only during the pandemic. I consider it to be a failure that as we were overtaken by extremely heavy pressures of other work, we were unable to maintain a regular supply of prison and criminal justice system reports for churches. In my view, this is an important task for the future which LPM must endeavour to fulfil to a high standard.

4. Prisons Week 2020

The booklet of resources for Prisons Week published this year focussed on women in prison. It contains new readings, reflections, prayers, a quiz as well as a lot of information to fuel debates and discussions. The artwork, all drawn by women in prison is very striking, and the booklet includes many useful addresses. The Foreword is by Rt Revd Rachel Treweek Bishop of Gloucester and Anglican Bishop for HM Prisons. Bishop Rachel has become a valued and effective leader of the Safe Homes initiative, and is also a very busy advocate in the House of Lords.

Unfortunately, the restrictions on mobility and limited church opening meant that LPM volunteers were unable to visit, attend and contribute to nearly as many special Prisons Week services this time, so we were largely confined to remote advice and support. Many church people have told us that this is the most attractive and useful booklet we have yet produced. It really can be used for 52 weeks and not just for Prisons Week. We would welcome reports about how Prisons Week was marked in your church, and your suggestions and ideas for the 2021 booklet. A few hard copies remain available from St George's Church Hanover Square (on application - verger@stgeorghanoversquare.org).

5. Shows of Art by Prisoners.

For two years Shows of Art by Prisoners arranged in several prominent central London churches, and supported by lectures, information and discussions, have been a significant part of LPM's aim to engage more people in learning and thinking about the British prison and criminal justice system. We were not able to mount these in 2020, and our provisional plans for 2021 are now on hold. We are keenly awaiting the right time to announce new shows.

6. Church Engagement.

It is clear that the level of church interest and engagement in prison related matters has declined, in some cases during the pandemic. This is partly because they have no longer had members of their congregations regularly visiting a prison and informally reporting back and discussing issues at service times. It is also because all

churches and church goers have had other concerns during the pandemic, and LPM has failed to be a regular source of a variety of relevant news and stories to keep the subject in front of folk. (See item 3 above).

Despite this problem, some churches have been determined to maintain support and engagement, and LPM aims to follow their example in future. One such is St George's Hanover Square. In addition to donating the proceeds of one of their (much smaller than usual in-person) collections to LPM, they included a comprehensive report of LPM work in the formal Annual Parish Meeting, which was then discussed in person and on-line. Another is St Martin-in-the-Fields, where space within their very widely circulated Parish Pipeline is frequently devoted to reports about the Safe Homes initiative or other relevant issues.

7. Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison.

Work on what has become by far the biggest project ever attempted in the short life of LPM, began in spring 2019, when volunteers and members of the multi-faith prison Chaplaincy team became increasingly concerned about the plight of vulnerable women leaving Bronzefield prison to homelessness. Enquiries showed that while some of these became rough sleepers under the bridges in central London, most were even less visible. Some returned to previously abusive partners; some sofa-surfed; some squatted; some exchanged temporary accommodation for sexual services, and all these were at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation and addiction. They could not obtain or retain employment; register with a doctor to continue treatment begun in prison; resume care of dependent children, or maintain steady progress towards rehabilitation. The early reoffending and return to prison of many of these vulnerable women was often almost inevitable, and they became well known there.

LPM took the view that while the plight of these women was desperate the scale of the problem must be manageable within the resources of Greater London, and that it must be addressed with urgency and determination. We quickly found that our assessment was shared by the management of Bronzefield prison, the leading national charity the Prison Reform Trust, and St Martin-in-the-Fields, which is the parent body of The Connection, which provides services and support for many homeless people. And MOPAC (the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime).

This network of informal partners commenced extensive consultations with public, private and voluntary sector organisations with responsibilities in this field, with the purpose of identifying realistic and sustainable solutions. These began in and around the metropolis, but widened out as it became apparent that although chronic in London, this is a national problem.

Several unexpected factors made it necessary for LPM to take the lead in coordinating this initiative. This has been a huge strain on very modest human resources, but has been just feasible, due to the very generous commitment of time, effort and skill by many LPM and other volunteers.

In November 2019 a Summit Event was convened at St Martin-in-the-Fields, chaired by Bishop Rachel, and attended by scores of leading agencies and organisations. This was another significant step towards the goal. The research, consultations and planning continued through the spring and summer, despite the encroachment of the pandemic on the activities of every single body involved.

On 14th October the Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison report was published and presented to the Secretaries of State for Justice and Housing, and the Mayor of London, by Bishop Rachel, with requests for each of them to meet separately with her and the Safe Homes team. The SH report was also circulated to every London Borough, scores of responsible agencies and many other interested parties. The report sets out many detailed recommendations for changes to policies and practises which, if implemented would prevent the discharge of vulnerable women to homelessness.

Since this launch the SH team have attended very constructive meetings with Deputy Mayor Sophie Linden, Justice Minister Lucy Frazer and senior representatives of many of the authorities whose active support is essential for success. At this stage, we can candidly report that our recommendations are being treated seriously and there is a huge increase in the overall recognition of the problem and an acceptance that its solution is realistically manageable. Once again, several leading churches have lent their valuable support by circulating the SH report and promoting the cause.

LPM has unexpectedly gained some unsolicited funding from a philanthropist who learned about this initiative. We have only just agreed a plan for the deployment of these funds to improve the effectiveness of the campaign.

The active engagement of so many volunteers and supportive organisations has enabled the SH initiative to make very encouraging progress, but a great deal more must be done to secure tangible benefits for vulnerable women presently leaving prison to homelessness. The interest and support of CTiW Member churches and their people is needed for this purpose.

Additional Regular Volunteers Needed.

LPM needs additional volunteers now. Also, as the pandemic restrictions eventually begin to ease the prisons will urgently need additional regular volunteers to work in support of the multi-faith Chaplaincy Teams and many other, interesting, unusual, and challenging, but rewarding activities. We fully appreciate that churches have many other interests, responsibilities and often conflicting priorities, but please discuss this at your church. If there is just an initial interest we can discuss and explain the opportunities and the training and on-going support provided.

If there are any matters about this report or the work of LPM you wish to question or discuss, please contact the Co-ordinator, John Plummer, Tel: 020 7272 1639, Mob: 07967 761841, or Email:

CTiW FUTURE EVENTS

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent AGM and Panel Discussion which was held on-line. As to future activities, the ongoing situation with Covid-19 does make it very difficult to plan ahead with any certainty, particularly for live events such as "Meet the Neighbours". However, various options are being explored, and hopefully with the aid of the Internet we can at least all stay in touch.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected us all in one way and another, meaning we have perhaps had to learn new skills and adapt to on-line meetings. The CTiW Executive has been no exception, and instead of meeting face to face, they have used Zoom to continue with their regular meetings. It has also meant that it has not been possible to hold our usual annual services such as Pentecost and Advent in church with a congregation present, but it is hoped that you will agree the livestreamed services were excellent, and we wish to thank all those involved with these.

We will continue to circulate your news via Email, so please do let us know of any ways we can help to let others know your news and if you are holding an on-line event.

We wish you a safe and blessed Lent and Easter.



Churches
Together in
Westminster

CTiW Executive Members 2021

Rev'd Jonathan Evens – St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square – Chairman

Gillian Dare – All Saints Church, Margaret Street – Minutes Secretary

Rev'd Joan Ishibashi – St James's, Piccadilly – Treasurer

Rev'd Canon Anthony Ball – Westminster Abbey

Rev'd Matthew Catterick, St Saviours Church, St Georges Square, Pimlico

Rev'd Roderick Leece – St George's Church, Hanover Square

Major Richard Mingay & Major Caroline Mingay – Salvation Army, Regent Hall, Oxford Street

John Plummer – Coordinator. London Prisons Mission.

Rev'd Dominic Robinson SJ, - The Immaculate Conception, Farm Street

Martyn Watson – Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

Rosa Postance – Administration & Communications (inc Website & Newsletter)