

Church Links Bulletin

Number 18
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Church Links



Churches Supporting Communities
Across the Borough of Walsall

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Humanitarian aid for Zimbabwe.

A parent of a refugee living in Walsall, visited an orphanage and a leprosy hostel near Harare, and found that the residents had no underwear, socks, toiletries or sanitary protection.

This was found to be the case in many of the orphanages. The refugee's father was unable to buy anything to help, as

a pair of children's socks cost over a billion Zimbabwean dollars.

Pleck Methodist Church is therefore collecting soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes, underwear & socks, (all sizes, children to adult).

Gifts of money are very welcome, and cheques should be made payable to Pleck Methodist Church, (write Zimbabwe on the back).

Fragile, suffering Zimbabwe has now been hit by outbreaks of Cholera and Anthrax, so the need grows ever greater day by day.

Please contact: Pleck Methodist Church,
c/o Mrs Margaret Gibbons, 12 Bescot Road,
Walsall, WS2 9AA. 01922 633075

Dear friends,

Over the last year the economic climate has changed dramatically. The 'credit crunch' has affected all of us in different ways. But what of those who had nothing to begin with?

Many would agree we have homeless people in Walsall. The Glebe Centre enables many of them to receive assistance they need, though resources are limited.

The future is unpredictable, only God knows what will happen. Some things we can have a good guess at based on what has happened already. Charities are finding it harder to survive as demand for services increases while income drops.

What the Glebe Centre needs is regular donations to help us plan for the future. **£5** per month, **£10** per month, **£20** per month or whatever you can afford will ensure we can continue to support those who so desperately need our help. Standing order forms are available.

Please call us on 01922 625687 or email theglebecentre@yahoo.co.uk

Church Links

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NEWSFLASH

CHURCH LINKS SECURES MAJOR SPEAKERS FOR UPCOMING CONFERENCE

Three major speakers have signed up to address Church Links Conference scheduled for Tuesday 19th May. A senior representative of the **Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts, Bridget Cass** will be talking on "What Makes a Good Application?" giving a vital insight into what Grant making Trustees look for in a Funding application.

Tim Bissett, CEO of the Church Urban Fund will be talking to us on the subject "Why Do Projects Fail?" Tim has a wealth of knowledge regarding Projects supported by CUF and is therefore highly qualified to address us on the pitfalls we should be looking to avoid.

Rev. Malcolm Duncan, Former Leader of Faithworks has been addressing Church Groups for more than a decade. He advises senior politicians, business people and charities around issues of ethos, identity, strategy and values around Christian identity and social engagement.

Plus we will be addressing the vexing issue "Should Your Church Become a Registered Charity?" **Brian Cove, Senior Development Officer for Special Services at Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council**, will be taking us through the New Charity Law & Registration and the implications for the Church.

We will have three presentations from people who have already gone through the process of setting up Projects.

The Conference will be held at St. Matthew's Centre on Tuesday 19th May 2009

DON'T MISS OUT BOOK YOUR TICKETS TODAY ONLY £8.00 PER DELEGATE INCLUDING LUNCH!

Phone Graham on 01922 722062 to book tickets alternatively email graham@church-links.org.uk

Walsall Community Chaplaincy Project

The aim of the Walsall Community Chaplaincy Project is to support ex offenders, who have served a custodial sentence, as they integrate back into the local community. Similar projects in other areas have shown that the support of a Community Chaplain greatly reduces the re-offending rate and therefore reduces the number of victims of crime.

Churches Together in Bloxwich and Blakenall have a vision for the provision of a Community Chaplain working for the Walsall area. A Community Chaplain acts as a link and a support for ex-offenders as they are released from prison. Many prisoners appreciate the support they are given by Prison Chaplains but once they have been released that support is no longer available. Community Chaplains make contact with prisoners as they approach their release date, at the request of the prisoner, and support them as they are released. It has been called 'Chaplaincy through the gate'. There are many ways in which the Community Chaplain will be able to support an ex-offender to include help with housing; healthcare; signing on and finding employment; family support; help keeping free of addiction; budgeting and spiritual support.

Community Chaplaincy started in Canada and there are now a number of projects in the UK that are making a significant difference, specifically:

- There is statistical evidence that Community Chaplaincy helps to reduce re-offending
- Ex-offenders, who have been supported by Community Chaplains speak highly of the support which they have received. They speak of 'trust to deliver on promises' 'understanding of feelings and needs', 'credibility with other agencies', 'access at times of crisis', 'reliability – turning up', 'honesty to say how it is', and 'time to listen'.
- Reducing re-offending also reduces the victims of crime and fear of crime.
- Families of offenders are helped to adjust to receive them back home.
- Community cohesion is increased.
- Reducing re-offending has economic advantages and reduces the pressures on the judicial system.

Overall the project will be working towards a reduction in crime and the number of victims of crime and therefore support community development. A similar project in North Staffordshire is currently showing a re-offending rate of 20% and the Swansea project a rate of 35% whilst the national rate of re-offending is currently 58% (figures quoted from Annual Reports 2006 – 2007.)

The first step of the Project was to raise £5,000 as seed funding, to give the Group money for initial running costs and to enable them to become a registered charity. Once they are registered as a charity they will be better able to apply for further funding from other Organisations. The Project has now raised the initial £5000, they have a Business Plan and are making plans towards their next Step.

This Project managed to successfully raise most of the £5000 it needed through its own efforts, however Church Links was able to be involved by identifying a number of small Trusts to whom a letter explaining the plans of the Community Chaplaincy Project could be sent and of whom donations could be asked.

Church Links can offer this service to other new projects if they are asked. There is no guarantee that the Trusts will support a Project, however we do have computer software that will identify Trusts more likely to be interested, and we would be pleased to meet with you to talk about your project.

Church Hall Marketing Scheme

This service consists of Church Links extending our current data base to include a detailed list of the facilities at each hall, the timeslots that may be available for hire, the rental charges and the main contact name for bookings.

We also offer a booking service for potential users which will include a small administration fee. We can search out and arrange suitable venues for individual requirements.

The overall aim of the scheme is to increase individual Churches revenue.

Stop Press * Stop Press * Stop Press

We are pleased to tell you of 2 recent successes of the Church Hall Marketing Scheme.

Last year Ruth was approached by a member of the Council, who enquired whether we could help them source a couple of Venues that could be used for upto five days a week on a long term basis. Ruth was able to identify a number of possible venues and initial negotiations are now taking place between the department and the Churches involved.

In February this year we were contacted by an Organisation in Walsall that was looking for new Office space. The Group had specific needs and needed to move urgently. We were able to make some enquiries through our database of Churches, and are pleased to say that the Group have found a Church happy to accommodate them and they will officially begin residence on April 1st.

Party In The Park 2009

Dear brothers and sisters

On Sunday July 6th 2008 Walsall Independent Evangelical Church, Walsall Christian Centre, Caldmore Evangelical Church & Walsall Community Church came together in Walsall Arboretum to 'Party In The Park.'

We had a great time of fellowship, publicly celebrating the good news of Jesus under the banner of 'Hope '08.' The all-day event consisted of a time of worship, musical performances, a children's programme & an evening youth event.

Such was its success, another 'Party In The Park' is being planned to take place on **Sunday 5th July 2009**. We would love your churches to join with us in planning and participating in what will be a magnificent day, where Christians from across Walsall can join in fellowship together declaring that Jesus is alive and the only hope for our town.

If you would like more information about how to get involved, please contact any of the leaders from the churches who organised last year's event or David Neale who is co-ordinating the planning team for 2009. David is contactable by emailing dave_neale@sky.com

We look forward to hearing from you!
Regards
Dave Neale
On behalf of the planning Team

Church Links is supported by...

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Church Urban Fund

The Methodist Church



Supported by
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through the Big Lottery Fund



If you or your Church would like to support the work of Church Links, or your congregation would like to hear more about the work that Church Links does to support Churches and Christian Organisations across the borough of Walsall, then please call 01922 722062 or email graham@church-links.org.uk