

Church Links Bulletin

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Church Links



Churches Supporting Communities
Across the Borough of Walsall

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Following on from successful grant applications made by Church Links on their behalf to the Lichfield Church Urban Fund, Rowlands Trust and the Grass Roots Grants, Holy Trinity are replacing their aged Computer Suite equipment. Originally installed in 2000 as part of the UK On-line initiative run by Mercian Trust, the equipment is well past it's sell by date, although it has served the local Community well and has helped a number of people to gain new skills and some jobs. The new equipment which includes 12 new PC's, a new Server and a new Scanner/Printer, will be installed in July and the Centre will be given an official opening at a ceremony on Friday 2nd October at 2pm led by the Bishop of Wolverhampton the Right Reverend Clive Gregory.

Holy Trinity have been working for some considerable time with Bloxwich Community Partnership to deliver IT Training Programmes through their Centre and are looking forward to be able to continue that work.

Humanitarian aid for Zimbabwe.

Margaret Gibbons would like to say a very big Thank You to all those Churches who contributed to the appeal and she reports that the first consignment of 7 large boxes of Clothes, Toiletries, Sanitary Ware, Bedding and Towels which was sent via Airfreight has arrived safely and has been distributed by the three Churches who have been co-ordinating the appeal. The three Churches consist of one Catholic, one Methodist and one Evangelical Church, amongst them they have distributed the goods to 3 Orphanages, 1 Leprosy Hostel, several outlying villages and the poorest of the city of Harare.



The second consignment being much larger and consisting of 36 large bags equalling 2 small containers was sent by road but problems arose after the G.B. organisers were told that they would be charged by the weight of the goods only to find that when they came to ship the goods they were charged by the volume/size of the containers. This increased the overall cost to £2,200 a considerable increase which the Church has had to carry. This Consignment is due to arrive on the 20th July 2009 Margaret asks that we all pray for it's safe arrival and distribution to the needy.

This group of Churches in Zimbabwe have reported that the co-ordination of this appeal has brought them closer together as Christians and they recently held their first combined service to give thanks to GOD for the success of the appeal and the generosity of the donating Churches here in the U.K.

If your Church has more to give, please contact: Pleck Methodist Church, c/o Mrs Margaret Gibbons, 12 Bescot Road, Walsall, WS2 9AA. 01922 633075

WHAT A CONFERENCE! Church Links Conference a Resounding Success!

More than 45 delegates attended the Church Links Conference held at St. Matthew's Centre on May 19th and the response to the day was an overwhelming:

WOW! What a Conference! Brilliant! When's the Next One?

The day started with a presentation from Father John Nankivell from The Orthodox Church (Caldmore). He talked about how his Church has looked at measures to reduce their Carbon Footprint They have put in Ground Source Heat Pumps and laid under floor heating. The work they are doing to improve their ex- Anglican Church is geared to improving the facilities to enable them to reach out into the very diverse local Community of Caldmore and facilitate activities which will help to improve Community cohesion and understanding. Along with this, the new improved building will enable the Church to host the Theological Courses they are running.

The next presentation was done on behalf of Emmanuel Church Bentley. It highlighted the problems which can be encountered by Churches who rely on one person too heavily to develop a Project. Emmanuel found that due to the sudden death of their Treasurer who had been solely in charge of their Grant applications, they were left floundering. The Church Council did not have sufficient information to be able to pick up the pieces and turned to Church Links for help.

Unfortunately the Lottery Programme they had gained funding from had a very restrictive claw-back clause which had a life span of some 80years after the grant had been paid. It also meant that the Diocese of Lichfield would have to agree to pay back the grant at any time during those 80years should the Church ever fail, close and be sold off. Needless to say the Diocese was not willing to sign such an agreement.

It was a bitter blow that the Project which should have given the Church renovated facilities for the community, could not go ahead. However Church Links were able to gain £15,000 of funding from Cory Environmental Trust to address part of the original plans, this replaced the very dilapidated kitchen and subsequently the Church were able to celebrate Christmas 2006 with their brand new facilities. The Church are now planning how to proceed with the rest of the work.

The next speaker Mr Brian Cove from Wolverhampton VSC had to admit he had a very dry subject to tackle. Brian addressed the issue of the new Charity Law, Registration and the implications for the Church. Brian tested the delegates on what they knew already and was then able to point out the right directions to find websites and sources of information to keep everyone up to date with developments.

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The following session raised the important question “Can we be in it for the Long Haul?”

Rev. Martin Stephens came from St. John’s Welcome Centre Abbey Hulton Stoke on Trent, To speak about a Project which included the re-ordering of his Church some 10years ago, and the trials and pitfalls of a major Project; how it can become hijacked by the Funders and then, how the Church can lose both control of the Project and lose its congregation as a consequence!

However it was not all bad news, despite having to close the Company which was part of the original requirements of the funding body, the Church has now begun to regroup and grow. The outreach work of the Church which was the original aim of the Project has once again regained its focus and its credibility with the local Community.

Following lunch we were given an insight into the way Grant making Organisations look at funding applications by Mrs Bridget Cass from the Sainsbury Family Trusts. Her observations were both amusing and enlightening, she was able to explain how as the Trusts had been set up by individual members of the Sainsbury Family, the focus of their funding could change and be very specific. As an example she highlighted the fact that many charities come asking for funds for Projects which do not meet the criteria of the Trust they have approached. In such cases they just get rejected out of hand. The lesson? Read the Criteria thoroughly! And don’t waste your time or the Funders!

Next up was the CEO of the Church Urban Fund, Mr Tim Bissett. Tim came and reiterated the lessons mentioned by Bridget but also to give the benefit of his experience of Projects which fail to stay the course and why they fail. Once again as with the case of St. John’s Welcome Centre one of the most common causes is failure to plan and put in the procedures needed to manage the Project properly. Tim emphasised the need to be absolutely clear about the aims of the Project, setting in stone the core reasons for the Project and staying on course.

The final speaker was later described on the evaluation form as ‘Inspiring’. The Rev. Malcolm Duncan’s talk, entitled “Confidence, Clarity and Conviction” contained all three of these and some! Malcolm reminded delegates that the Church in all it’s variety has for centuries been at the heart of the Caring, Compassionate Community and voluntary work geared to helping the poor, isolated and rejected members of our communities. How the Church had set up the first Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Hostels. A fact we should be proud of, not in a boastful way but in a confident way. He also told us that we should be clear that although many Christians are involved in Charitable work, we are not the only ones who care or indeed who do such work. Both people of other Faiths and those who have no faith number among the ranks of people who work in this area. However we should have the conviction that we are following Christ’s example when we do these things and in so doing are living out our Christian Faith.

The conference ended with a vote of thanks from Graham Hackett to all the speakers on behalf of those who had attended, with everyone still buzzing from Malcolm Duncan’s talk.

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.

Churches Directory

We are currently working on Updating the Directory that Church Links keeps of all Churches in the Walsall area.

This Directory is available via our Website, and will be available through the Reference Library. It provides information on Services and Activities that Churches hold so that members of the public know what you offer and where to find you.

Some of the information in the current Directory is now out of date, and we would encourage any Churches that have not returned their up dated forms to do so soon, as work has begun on inputting the new information.

If you cannot find the forms that we have sent you or are unsure whether they have been sent back, please contact Beryl on 01922 722062 who will be pleased to assist you.

Church Links Helps Make Another Successful Funding Bid!

We are please to announce that working with St. John’s Methodist Church in Bloxwich we have been successful in gaining them a grant from CSG the Walsall Environmental Trust to for £12,500 towards the replacement of their windows. This is part of their on-going commitment to reduce their Carbon Footprint, save energy and reduce their running costs.

This work will enhance the replacement of their heating system, which they have already carried out, ensuring that the current 1000 people per week using their facilities will be able to enjoy the activities and worship held at St. John’s even in the coldest of winters.

Future mailings dates

17th September & 10th December 2009

These are the dates that the Newsletter will go into the Post-box. If you would like to include an Insert or Flyer or you have information for an article, then please phone or email for more information. There may be a nominal charge if the postage costs are affected.

Church Links is supported by...

The Big Lottery Fund, Lichfield Diocese of the Church of England, and the Church Urban Fund. We are also grateful for contributions from The Walsall Methodist Circuit and from Willenhall Methodist Circuit, The Mercers Foundation and The Alfred Haines Charitable Trust.



Church Urban Fund

The Methodist Church



Supported by
The National Lottery
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