

KWM



NEWS

A newsletter brought to you by Kent Workplace Mission

NOVEMBER 2021

The New Vice-Chair writes....

When John Hougham passed on this role to me he said he had found it “fun”. That was not the first word that came to mind when I found myself immersed in a struggle to identify and remove technical errors from the work of our accountants. But studies show that most people stay in or leave a job more because of the people they encounter there than because of the job content, and KWM is enriched by some remarkable people.

Behind the frontline of our Chaplains we have a team of faithful people cheerfully doing all those unglamorous tasks that any organisation needs to have done. I am glad it is an ecumenical team which does not bother to argue about obscure or outdated differences between Christian traditions but gets on with today's job. Some of the team, like David Slater the Company Secretary and Alan Wood the Treasurer, have been labouring in this vineyard for many years. Others like Andy Wooding Jones, our Chair of Trustees, have taken on their roles more recently.

Andy's day job is being the Anglican Archdeacon of Rochester, which might seem far removed from my formation in the Bank of England. In fact he has served in an intriguing variety of ministries, which have given him an understanding of the entrepreneur's mindset, while I have acquired a few jobs in the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church over the years, including looking after workplace Chaplains. So I hope our leadership partnership brings some useful insights as well as modelling ecumenical co-operation and mutual trust.

Andy and I are both encouraged by the outcomes of the KWM Strategy Review which gives us some pointers and targets for the next stage of the charity's work. We look forward to exploring these in more depth at meetings of the Council of Trustees and are indebted to Mark Ball, our Co-ordinating Chaplain, for all his energy and enthusiasm in moving good ideas into practical action.

John Ellis





Away from KWM I believe have been called to re-introduce some wonderful music to Kentish Methodists and we are working on a Review called “Dreaming with a *Grain of Hope*” (a review of 3 musicals, two by Roger Jones & one by the Rob Frost Production Team).

...If you had told me a year ago I would now be working for KWM I would have said “**Who?**” Well, as 2021 draws to a close, I have been Training Support Coordinator for nearly **6 months** and my “learning curve” seems to get ever longer!

I have now had the pleasure of meeting a few Trustees “in person” and several more via “zoom” — (one of the miracles of modern science)

One of my dearest wishes is to get to know our Chaplains a little better ... please do feel free to ring me for a chat, it would be lovely to talk to you.

I’ve started attending the zoom fellowship on a Friday at 11am, which is a great way to get to know people better. Please, if you are available and free, do join us then. Another group also meets on Wednesdays at 10 am. Everybody is always welcome.

At Mark’s suggestion I have been doing the “Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy” course (partly to see what Chaplaincy is all about). Just before the last session I heard the awful news that, just before coming on shift some nurses sit in their cars for 20 mins **steeling** themselves for the **trauma that lies ahead** ... doesn’t that make you think and **thank God** for **our** workplace chaplains and **pray for** those places of work that **don’t have chaplains** to show God’s love for their workers.

As the last session of the course came to an end, I had vivid memories of leaving one of my roles (a long time ago) on a Friday night and **dreading** the Monday morning when I had to return to it. While I enjoyed the weekend between, as the time got closer to the Monday morning, my “load of dread” became heavier ... (I made the big decision to leave that role a little time later. I was able to ..)

How many people in the world are in roles they **hate & can’t leave** just to pay the bills or support their families.

Yes, we do thank God for our chaplains and pray that more will be called & enabled to work where they are needed.





Living Wage Week

The annual celebration of the Living Wage movement - takes place this year on 15-21 November.

The Living Wage campaign is an independent movement of businesses, organisations and people who believe a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. Employers choose to pay the real Living Wage on a voluntary basis - it provides an ethical benchmark for responsible pay. The campaign for a Living Wage was launched in 2001 - an example of how civil society, businesses and organisations can work together to tackle in-work poverty.

The real Living Wage is independently calculated based on what employees and their families need to live. This is why it's higher than the government minimum wage, now rebranded as the 'National Living Wage'.

The campaign has now delivered more than £1.5billion in extra wages to workers since it began in 2001, and lifted over 260,000 people out of in-work poverty.

There is currently a network of over 8,000 accredited employers, with over 200 new employers signing up since last March, in spite of the pandemic's impact on business.

Two thirds of those earning below the Living Wage saw their pay fall last year, with devastating effects. More than a quarter of those earning below the real Living Wage were forced to regularly skip meals, while nearly half saw a negative impact on their levels of anxiety. Despite the pandemic shining a spotlight on the importance of low paid workers, over 5.5 million continue to earn less than the Living Wage.

livingwage.org.uk

Work with like-minded charities — Shelter's latest venture

I receive regular updates from Shelter and their latest magazine includes an article on "Breaking down barriers to the workplace" which reminded me of KWM.

It contains an article entitled "Growing a way into work" which says that volunteers from the Adecco Group are mentoring people with experience of homelessness and housing injustice as part of their partnership with Shelter. Using their expertise in recruitment to help support with employability skills and securing future employment. They are part of Shelter's GROW programme "Getting Real Opportunities of Work" a 12-month paid traineeship that is **challenging stigma** and **breaking down barriers to the workplace**.

For anyone interested in finding out more, please see England.shelter.org.uk/support_us/volunteer

Our Council of Trustees are delighted to extend a welcome to Mike Dale who is in the process of joining them. Mike is currently well known to the team at Bluewater, and comes with strong recommendations from the Catholic Church.

It is hoped that Mike will be able to join our next Trustees' Council Meeting on Tuesday, 7 December at Larkfield Methodist Church.



We also extend a welcome to Jennie Long who was Commissioned on 31 October as a new chaplain to join the team at Bexleyheath. I gather it was a very special day for Jennie and so welcome her to the "flock"! (We also have Tom Brown and Jeff Hawthorne "on the horizon", for whom Commissioning Services are to be arranged in the near future.



It is my sincere wish that I will one day meet some of our wonderful chaplains and get to know them "in person". (I don't know how many of the KWM family regularly use the monthly prayer calendar, but every working day, I start with praying for those named at that time. On the 3rd day we are praying for a new chaplain for BAE Systems in Rochester. I wonder if anyone knows someone who could be in the process of being "called" to be a chaplain and might need a friendly nudge? Just a thought ...

KWM Website

Have you seen our new KWM website? If not I strongly recommend you "check it out" as there is now a map showing where our individual chaplains are based, something I find very helpful! Susan

Dates for your diary:

As mentioned above, the next Council of Trustees will be meeting at Larkfield Methodist Church on Tuesday, 7 December at 7.30 pm.