

CHURCHES TOGETHER FOR CHIPPING BARNET

Justice and Peace Newsletter 38



APRIL 2017

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1. Hope Corner Community Centre

Rosemary Watkins reports that Hope Corner has become a place of welcome and safety for everyone, especially those living in the Underhill area. It is open every weekday, and on Saturdays for special occasions such as birthday parties. She is delighted that the clergy and congregation of St Mary Immaculate and St Gregory the Great come on some Sundays to celebrate Mass while the building work on their church in Union Street continues. There are activities, surgeries and classes every day, run by various organisations (see J&P Newsletter 37, December 2016).

The activities run by Rosemary and her team depend largely on volunteers, and she would be glad of help in the café in the afternoons and the kitchen at lunchtime. A volunteer with IT skills is needed for Tea and Tech on Wednesday mornings; volunteers with craft skills are needed to help children at the Playclub on Wednesday and Friday afternoons; volunteers with teaching backgrounds are needed for the Homework club on Tuesday and Wednesday. 4- 6pm; and a volunteer is needed for the Film Club on alternate Fridays, 5 - 7pm. Please contact Rosemary Watkins on 020 8364 8756.

Hope Corner Community Centre, 185 Mays Lane, Barnet EN5 2DY

Tel: 020 8364 8756

Their website may be accessed via the Churches Together for Chipping Barnet website: www.ctfcb.org.uk/hope-corner-community-centre.

2. Mayor's Chaplain

Father Tristan Chapman (Vicar of St Mark's Barnet Vale and St Stephen's Bells Hill) reports:

Over the last year I have had the honour to be the Mayor's Chaplain to Councillor David Longstaff during his term of office as Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet. My primary duty is to lead the prayers at the opening of each of the six principal Council meetings at Hendon Town Hall, when the full Council assembles to discuss, debate and vote on key issues in the life of the Borough. The Council's membership is very diverse, reflecting the varied population of the borough and so the chaplain's prayers are addressed to people from many faiths, and none. It has been of great interest to attend these meetings and see the councillors at

work; it is a reminder of the hard work and deep commitment that they give and the challenges they face in making tough choices with shrinking resources.

The year has seen some special events. I offered prayers at a gathering to honour the armed forces, and helped to put together and then officiate at the service marking the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. This was held at the Hendon RAF Museum, with a large gathering that included members of the armed forces, cadets and representatives of the community. Finally, I attended the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony at the University of Middlesex and wrote a reflection for the programme. It has been a great privilege to undertake this role and I will remember it fondly in the future.

4. Refugees

Government figures from December 2016 showed that the UK had resettled over 5,500 Syrian refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) scheme, putting it on track to meet its commitment of resettling 20,000 by 2020.

Barnet Borough Council's website reported in February 2017 that they had resettled 37 out of its commitment of 50. Accommodation costs for the first year are met by central government, using the overseas aid budget, and there are extra funds to help improve their English language skills.

Meanwhile, the Dunkirk refugee camp has been razed to the ground by the fire on April 11th, leaving hundreds more people homeless. Among the charities calling for the UK government to take action is Safe Passage - a project of Citizens UK. They, in partnership with the Dunkirk Legal Centre and Help Refugees, have identified 80 children who have relatives in the UK and the right to be safely and legally transferred, and are calling on the government to transfer them immediately. Rabbi Janet Darley, spokesperson for the project said: "The children that Safe Passage are working with in Dunkirk should never have been in the camp in the first place; they have a moral and a legal right to be with their relatives in the UK. The government needs to learn the lessons of the Calais camp and the fire in Dunkirk and put a fully functioning family reunion system in place between France and the UK."

For more information and ways to help, go to www.safepassage.org.uk .

For information about action being taken in the Diocese of London see www.capitalmass.org.uk/refugee-response.

The Barnet Refugee Service works with refugees from all countries. They are asking for volunteers for their drop-in, advisory services and women's groups. See www.b-r-s.org.uk.

Christian Aid is helping displaced Syrians and Iraqis in Greece and Serbia. See their website www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/refugee-crisis.