

*Local Ecumenical Partnership and
Registered charity: 1105783*



“Supporting and engaging with people in the workplace”

ANNUAL REVIEW 2019

Kent Workplace Mission is a registered charity which is an LEP and Mission Partner of Churches Together in Kent.

It is a community of Christians from different denominations who are committed to living out Jesus discipleship in the workplaces of Kent, Medway, Bexley and Bromley. We are convinced that God's love for the world includes where we do our daily work.

Over the course of 2019 Kent Workplace Mission has had an average of 40 chaplains serving a number of workplaces across Kent. These chaplains work either as part of a team or individually. The locations where KWM chaplains serve are varied and include shopping centres, large transport hubs and a power station.

Locations of KWM chaplains

- ASDA stores in Ashford, Bexleyheath and Ramsgate
- BAE Systems, Rochester
- Bexleyheath Town Centre
- Bluewater, Dartford
- Dungeness B Power Station
- Eurotunnel, Folkestone
- Fremlin Walk shopping mall, Maidstone
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Maidstone Hospital
- Medway Council, Chatham
- Port of Dover
- Rapport (formerly Abbeyfield) care home, Connors House at Canterbury
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

The day-to-day work of the chaplain is in meeting people where they are and making connections with them, whether they have faith or not. It is being known to be a non-judgemental listening ear that someone can turn to when they are in need. To get to this point relationships need to be established and built up in a quiet way over time – this is the work of a chaplain: to be there.

To be an 'intentional presence'.

On the pages that follow are reports from the KWM Lead Chaplain and some of the chaplaincies and chaplains supported by Kent Workplace Mission.

ASDA, Ashford

Chaplain: Joy Brumwell

I continued making the hourly visit twice a week. A main problem discussed has been the new contract to which now everyone has to adhere despite disagreement covered by the media. The contract entails flexibility in working hours and the sections in which colleagues work. This has caused some inconvenience and hardship as some have found their wages decreased although pay per hour has increased.



BAE Systems, Rochester

Chaplain: Alec Hollingdale

I was glad to be able to maintain chaplaincy visits to BAE, Rochester site again throughout 2019. My visits are normally made on alternate Tuesdays and 2019 was the sixteenth year of the continuing Agreement between BAE and KWM that provides access for this ministry.

Staff numbers have been sustained with new recruitment to fill significant vacancies especially through retirement of a number of long-serving staff, including some of whom I had got to know well over the years. I miss seeing these folk and will especially miss several who were key contributors to the Annual Carol Concert, which last year was again well-attended and apparently much enjoyed.

I value the good operational support from KWM for my chaplaincy work at BAE with the wider cross-denominational and geographical identity that it brings. I also see site visiting as an extension of my membership of St Justus Church, Rochester. This direct Medway connection is significant with the BAE site falling within the Church of England parish boundary for this church; and because many staff live locally as I do or have local connections. Last year BAE agreed security clearance to enable me to be accompanied on site visits by Revd. Adam Pyrke, then a trainee ordinand on placement at St Justus, and since ordained and appointed as Curate at St Justus. Adam has joined me on some site visits during the year including notably in December for a Staff Induction Session along with around 30 new employees. Following this we felt there was the potential to explore the prospect of mounting a

lunchtime Alpha course and after discussing this with HR and Occupational Health the offer was made. The matter is now due to be raised at the next site Joint Consultative Committee.

As the KWM chaplain to the BAE Systems, Rochester site, I have attended several specific events elsewhere during the year, including: a KWM Quiet Day at West Malling Abbey; an Inaugural Lecture given by BAE engineer Professor Khosru Ramen at University of Greenwich; and in mounting and decorating a KWM themed tree for a Christmas Tree Festival at St Justus Church.



Bexleyheath High Street

Chaplains: Jane Linington, John Ormes and Marilyn Ormes

2019 has been a year of highs and lows. The lows mainly down to frustration at not having sufficient chaplains to meet the needs of the shops in Bexleyheath, in spite of attempts to get other churches to join with us. However, we continue to pray and to stay in touch via Churches Together in Bexleyheath.

Another low was the closure of one of the shops, leading to redundancy for five members of staff. We visited weekly, and sometimes more frequently, during the period when redundancy dates and payments were being negotiated and gave cards to each member of staff as they left. It seemed to us that we were doing very little but a chance meeting with one of the staff members recently showed how much our visits had meant to them.

In fact, 2019 was a year of opportunities for making small gifts: Christmas cards to each shop, a wedding card for a long-standing member of staff in one of the cafes, and Palm Crosses to all the shops which were open on Palm Sunday. This was at the request of some members of staff in ASDA, who would have been at church if the staffing rotas had allowed. The crosses were very well received and in fact some staff were still asking for them during the following week. Only two people felt unable to take the crosses as they are Muslim but even this led to a very amicable discussion about the similarities and differences between our two faiths. So, we pray that 2020 will bring similar opportunities!



Chaplaincy Service at Bluewater

The Chaplaincy Service at Bluewater (CSAB) team during 2019 was:

Chaplains

Mark Ball (Lead Chaplain)
Prince Brown-Engmann
Michael Dale
Kelvin Ediale
John Eni-Uwubame
Jan Foreman
David Green
John Hougham
Mary Olowu
Jacqueline Littlewood
Paul Winchester
Valerie Winchester

Chaplaincy Partners

Alistair Gregory (Chair of Bluewater Community Forum)
Imam Darr (Muslim Chaplaincy Partner)

I was appointed as Lead Chaplain in January and began working in February, with a week of handover facilitated by the Interim Chaplain, Malcolm Cooper.

The first few months were mostly taken up with orientation and training and getting to know the KWM and Chaplaincy teams, the Bluewater staff and the wider community contacts associated with the role. I was formally commissioned at the KWM AGM in May and a number of the volunteer chaplains were re-commissioned:



*Left to right:
Dave Green, Revd. Mark Ball, Rt
Revd. James Lagstaff [Chair KWM],
Mary Olowu, Jan Foreman, John
Hougham*

The work over the year mostly consisted in awareness raising and relationship building. A particular focus in this was on broadening the perception of the chaplaincy as a predominantly 'religious' service, whilst at the same time working out and integrating my own religious role and spiritual life within this new context. There was an increasing sense of people opening up and engaging with pastoral support over the course of the year, with the number of both one-off encounters and ongoing relationships increasing.

Alongside this general pastoral work, and the day-to-day management of the Place of Quiet, particular projects included:

- distributing Easter eggs to retailers
- offering reflective nature walks and Spanish classes during the annual 'Wellbeing Week' initiative
- hosting four theology and ministry students on mission and pastoral care placements
- restructuring the whole system for memorials in the grounds
- building a better relationship with Imam Darr and the Muslim community using the Place of Quiet;
- setting up weekly Wednesday morning bible study and prayer group (for all, not just chaplains)
- setting up weekly Thursday morning mindfulness sessions
- redesigning the 'Innkeeper' project (emergency accommodation over Christmas late opening)



If you are unable to get home after a late night shift,
we can offer emergency overnight accommodation.

Call Mark (Bluewater Chaplain)
07394 081521



- hosting a team Christmas Lunch, to thank the volunteers for their contributions.



Bluewater chaplains' Christmas Lunch

Outside Bluewater, I worked on promoting the chaplaincy and building good relationships with local faith and community leaders, through the Bluewater Community Forum, North Kent Council for Interfaith Relations, and local churches and community groups. I helped facilitate a KWM Quiet day and the KWM Conference, which was held at Bluewater.

This 20th anniversary year, 2019 was a challenging one for Bluewater, with several retailers going out of business and internal restructuring and redundancies. My first Christmas period was a real eye-opener in terms of the intensity and complexity of pressures experienced by Bluewater and retail staff. It was very much a case of 'in at the deep end' and I ended the year very much looking forward to all that 2020 will bring.

Mark Ball, Lead Chaplain



Eurotunnel Chaplaincy

Chaplain: David Slater

- After 9 years I have finally be able to say brief public prayers at the Eurotunnel memorial garden at two commemoration events. Being a half French company this has always been a contentious area.
- During December there were many groups carol singing in Eurotunnel, including a school from France and a church from Dover.
- The year ended with the White Cliffs Christmas Market in Cruise Terminal 1, facilitating many chaplaincy opportunities and cumulating with the Churches Together Carol Singing in the Saturday before Christmas.



Port of Dover

Chaplains: David Slater, Malcolm Sawyer, David Clark, Sean Sheffield

- The first major event of the year for the Chaplaincy was the Herald of Free Enterprise memorial service on 6th March, rather difficult this year as it clashed with Ash Wednesday.
- There have been meetings with Sailors Society and national officers from RMT & Nautilus unions about a memorial for the Herald of Free Enterprise, especially highlighting that half the crew were among those who lost their lives.
- Passenger traffic was busy through the Port and Channel Tunnel over the Easter holiday period.
- Contact was made with the new Chaplain from the Railway Mission with responsibility for South-eastern Railways, she helped with the Torch of Remembrance service in November.
- Planning for the Torch of Remembrance service was interesting, given it could have been only a week after a no-deal-Brexit, finally all went off well. As is often the case these meetings generate 'fortuitous' meetings, this occasion was with the new Chief Operations Officer for the Port.
- Due to diary conflicts with a 50th anniversary of ordination there was no Sea Sunday Service in Dover this year, although David did preach that day with the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports in the congregation. David was also invited to robe and join the clergy procession for anniversary, recognising the ministry of the port chaplains.
- Several Chaplains attended the Marina Open Day and assisted with Christian stalls at the Regatta. David was also involved with the Merchant Navy Day Service & Parade in Dover Town Hall & Sea Front Wreath Laying. Sean Sheffield & David took a Kent-wide service commemorating 30 years of the Merchant Navy Association, and Sean was also asked to bless a kayaker doing a cross channel sponsored row (actually out to the middle & back as the French half is closed to rowing events).
- The mid-summer cross-channel passenger rush was busy but not to the levels hoped for, giving even more uncertainty for staff, on top of Brexit worries.
- In September Paul Glock, the Apostleship of the Sea (AoS) deacon for the area retired. A few weeks later Mike Piper suddenly resigned from our chaplaincy, claiming to just be working for AoS. There was a slight hiatus until the new AoS Deacon, John Fogarty, was appointed in November. He is building a good relationship with the team.
- Dover was very much on the 'Front Line' for Brexit Planning and Extinction Rebellion who protested at the port.
- David been invited to join the Canterbury Diocese Community & Partnership Team, (previously known as a 'framework') in both his Critical Incident and Port of Dover

hats. David hosted Jonathan Arnold, the newly appointed Director of Communities and Partnerships for a day in Dover/Folkestone in September, just days after he started in the post.

- David has done various talks on Chaplaincy including the local Methodist Men's Breakfast.
- David has only been on the Radio Kent Sunday Panel twice this year; Operation Brock and M20 roadworks made the journey difficult.
- New rules on PPE for anyone accessing quaysides threatened to stop ship-visiting as the Port of Dover forgot to tell us as we are neither staff nor subcontractors. We were quickly given free PPE by the Port and had an opportunity to meet the new General Manager for Cargo. The new cargo terminal opened in November, doubling the capacity for freight ships, although access and ministry to crews is still evolving.
- The death of 39 Vietnamese people at Grays in Essex caused a number of contacts from the national press recalling the 58 Chinese killed at Dover in 2000. It also caused flashback problems for various staff who had been involved in that situation in many ways. Malcolm Sawyer, as a Port Chaplain, read prayers at a requiem mass in the local Catholic Church which has a number of Vietnamese in the congregation.
- It has been a busy year for lifeboat crew with some 58 'shouts', a high proportion involving migrants. The Dover Lifeboat wanted 'a proper vicar' who can be robed appropriately and do 'proper blessings' for services on the boat, which David not entitled to. Revd. Andy Bawtree has been appointed as their 'vicar', however, they then realized that they still need someone with Critical Incident expertise to be chaplain to deal with pastoral /emergency situations, so David is still there.
- David is concerned that he may be suffering some mild secondary PTSD over the Migrant situation, from the stress of detailing with those hurt directly, however being aware of it is over half the solution.
- Between the BBC, Lambeth Palace, reconnaissance visits, and the actual filming, facilitating the Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year message took some 4 days. When it went out it had some good shots showing 'chaplain', as well as highlighting the work of the RNLi Dover.
- The real business of course is all the one to one meetings with people. They may be on the 87 ships visited, following special services, widowers referred by their colleagues or just casual unplanned encounters - at least they are unplanned by the chaplains.

David Slater, Lead Chaplain Port of Dover



Rapport Care Home, Connors House, Canterbury

Chaplain: Christine Barker

Opening the door into the kitchen at Connors House is always a pleasurable moment. Today the chef is busy putting finishing touches to the birthday cake, spelling out 'Happy Birthday Stan' in white icing across the middle of the chocolate sponge. There's enough for everyone and Stan will enjoy being the centre of attention. With over thirty residents, birthday cakes are a frequent treat. Their memory may be fleeting but today Stan will sense he is special.

It is in this 'today' that most of the residents live. Many have dementia of varying degree and seem content, mostly, with the 'now'. Whether that's as a young apprentice, or a young mum caring for her children, or like Stan up at 4.00 in the morning packing up the freshly baked loaves in his parents' bakery, ready for delivery around town.

Connors House is a microcosm of society, maybe as it was, but certainly lived here today. Finally, the Manager told me, after five years of constant change, this past year staff have settled down and are working as a team. Staff are here, she said, because they want to care, rather than seeing it solely as a means of earning money. Attitude is better, they are doing their training, there's less negativity and more positiveness. Long may this continue she added, with a smile on her face.

Staff are key to the residents' well-being, to contentment with the daily round. Cooks, carers and cleaners, each are enabling residents to live happily as age and fragility of body and mind increase. I've noticed over this year how more volunteers are coming in to help with craft activities and musical games. Family members of the residents are joining in including not only their family member but those who have no one to visit them. All this has become 'catching' adding to the relaxed atmosphere.

I have found it a privilege to listen to staff members sharing with me their own concerns. At work they may wear their professional face but still carry within their own worries. Giving space and time and offering genuine interest in the whole person is helping them as individuals and this, in turn, helps to maintain that positive atmosphere where laughter and smiles walk along the corridors. Last week I pushed open the door to the kitchen and found the chef preparing afternoon tea - a large tray of meringues, filled with fruit and cream. He was finishing them off with a cherry on the top. Just now, this is what it's like at Connors House, life is sweet with 'a cherry on the top'.



Other activities of Kent Workplace Mission

Conference

Our fifth annual Conference was held on 21st September at Bluewater and the subject this year was "Seeing Our Economy Differently". We were pleased to welcome nearly 40 delegates from different parts of the county and beyond.

The conference was led by one of our Trustees, John Ellis who as well as being a former Moderator of the United Reformed Church was a former Adviser on Business Ethics to the Governor of the Bank of England. Rt Revd. James Langstaff, Chair of KWM and Bishop of Rochester welcomed everyone to the conference and Revd. Helen Hollands, Trustee of KWM and Assistant Chair of the Methodist South East District led opening worship.

We were pleased to welcome Revd. Dr Richard Higginson who led the Faith in Business project in Cambridge for 30 years and Dr Nathan Mladin, a researcher at Theos who has recently co-authored a book titled "Forgive Us Our Debts - lending and borrowing as if relationships matter".

John gave a talk looking at the economy through a bible lens. Richard Higginson spoke on Driving Business by Christian values and Nathan Mladin spoke about some of the research in his book and a Christian vision for economic justice. There were opportunities for small group discussions and during the breaks there was time to make and renew connections.



John led a panel discussion based on a chapter about the economy in the

Archbishop of Canterbury's latest book "Remagining Britain". The panel members were David Slater, KWM Trustee and Lead Chaplain at Port of Dover, Revd. Dick Johnson chaplain with Faith at Work in Worcestershire (and former Lead Chaplain

with Kent Industrial Mission) and Angela Buckley the Bluewater Retail Manager leading the relationship between the owners and retailers.



Bishop James brought the Bishop of Harare, Dr Farai Mutamiri to speak at the end of the conference.

He said that economic hardship is affecting Zimbabwe and asked for our prayers.

Quiet Day

There were two Quiet Days in 2019. One at the end of March in All Saints Church, Tudeley, and one at the end of November at St Benedict's Centre, West Malling Abbey.

The day at Tudeley was attended by six people who all enjoyed the time spent in reflection and the Marc Chagal windows of the church. The time of reflection was led by John Ellis and John Hougham (KWM Trustees) and Mark Ball (Bluewater Lead Chaplain).

The day at West Malling was attended by ten people and led by Bishop Laurie Green.

Comments received about the Quiet Day at West Malling Abbey

"The quiet day was extremely worthwhile. It is a beautiful place with good car parking.

I was a little concerned about what to expect but need not have been as everyone was very friendly. The day was perfectly balanced between relaxed encouragement (teaching) and personal quiet time and reflection. It was well worth arranging my diary to attend."

"Thank you for the quiet day led by Bishop Laurie Green at the St Benedict's Centre. He somehow managed to make it feel like a really spacious, refreshing space for us to be on our own with God, at the same time as teaching us quite a bit about the Benedictine life: a useful challenge to me personally in my approach to my own physical work, and good for us as workplace chaplains thinking about our attitude to the work that goes on in the places we visit.

It was an extra blessing that as well as such expert leading, we also had plenty of physical space this time, so that we could have some quiet solitary time. It was a special gift to receive just as Advent begins, and I'm grateful to KWM and all involved".



A 'Chaplain's' Thought

This is a regularly updated feature on the Kent Workplace Mission website. Every four weeks a contribution from a Chaplain or Trustee is posted on to the website. This can be found by clicking on the link on the front page of the website. Do have a look and see what you find.

If you think you could contribute a thought, please contact the Team Support Coordinator by email to admin@kentworkplacemission.org.



Living Wage accreditation

Becoming accredited as a Living Wage employer was something that Ella, former Bluewater Lead Chaplain, took to the Trustees. She suggested that as a chaplain she could not advocate for payment of the Living Wage if KWM was not already a Living Wage employer. We have carried this through and KWM is now a certified Living Wage employer.

The Living Wage Foundation independently calculate the Real Living Wage each year to meet the real cost of living. The Real Living Wage is different for Greater London and outside London. As an accredited Living Wage Employer KWM has committed to pay its staff the Real Living Wage. It also is asked to advocate for the Living Wage, particularly for those employed by different organisations in the same building.

We have been sent a plaque to 'place on our reception area wall'. As we don't have a reception area we had a photo taken with the Operations Group and the plaque is in the office (which KWM shares with Larkfield and East Malling Methodist Church).



The KWM Operations Group: L-R, Mark Ball [Lead Chaplain, Bluewater], Alan Wood [Treasurer], David Slater [Secretary + Lead Chaplain, Dover], Jacky Trice [Team Support Coordinator], John Hougham [Vice-Chair and Chaplain, Bluewater team]



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