

*Local Ecumenical Partnership and  
Registered charity: 1105783*



*“Supporting and engaging with people in the workplace”*

## ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

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

## **Introduction**

### ***Archdeacon Andy Wooding Jones - Chair of Trustees***

2022 has been a year of change for Kent Workplace Mission. We have said goodbye to Susan Randall our Team Support Co-ordinator and welcomed Madeleine Shepley who has settled in wonderfully as our Administrator. In the autumn Mark Ball moved to become Chaplain at Canary Wharf and Associate Priest in Rochester and Borstal. We are very grateful for Mark and all he has given in his roles at Bluewater and more widely as our Coordinating Chaplain. We look forward to April when Penny Culliford will join KWM as Bluewater Chaplain and KWM Coordinating Chaplain.

Alongside changes in the core team there have been exciting developments with new chaplains in new areas including Penge and Tunbridge Wells Town Centres and the Outlet Centre in Ashford. Trustees are excited about an increasing number of enquiries about workplace chaplaincy from organisations and potential chaplains.

As Chair of Trustees, I want to honour and thank all who are part of the KWM family as Chaplains, Trustees and Members of the Operations Group as well as individuals and sponsoring denominations for their support in prayer and in giving. Our hope in 2023 is that together we can encourage, resource, and grow the ministry of workplace chaplaincy across Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.



KWM is a community of Christians from different denominations.  
who are committed to living out Jesus' discipleship in the workplaces of Kent.

During 2022 Kent Workplace Mission had an average of 44 chaplains serving a variety of workplaces across Kent, some working individually, others as part of a team.

The locations where KWM chaplains serve are varied and include:  
shopping centres, large transport hubs and a power station.

### **Locations of KWM chaplains:**

ASDA store in Ashford	Bexleyheath	Birkbeck and Anerley
Bluewater, Dartford	Dungeness B Power Station	Eurotunnel, Folkestone
Gravesham Borough Council	Medway Council, Chatham	Port of Dover
Rapport Care Home, (Connors House) at Canterbury		



## Weekly Fellowship

Our online Weekly Fellowship weekly continues to gather on Wednesdays 10am-11am we facilitate chaplains and supporters to share in reflective bible reading and prayer. The access details are uploaded to the website, and everyone is welcome to join any time:

[https://www.kentworkplacemission.org/page-weekly\\_fellowship.html](https://www.kentworkplacemission.org/page-weekly_fellowship.html)

**Here follows the reports from some of the chaplaincies and chaplains supported by Kent Workplace Mission.**



### ASDA, Ashford

***Chaplain: Joy Brumwell***

Through my chaplaincy at ASDA, I still see myself as a 'listening ear' and as such, introduce myself to new colleagues. As the saying goes, '*A problem shared is a problem halved*'. Most new colleagues show interest and are happy to share any concerns although their workload makes it difficult to have long meaningful talks. I have had people tell me they welcome the presence of a chaplain. It is heartening for us all as chaplains when we are made to feel wanted.



### Bexleyheath High Street

***Chaplains: Jane Linington, Jennie Long, John & Marilyn Ormes***

Well, just coming out of the pandemic and we get hit with the cost-of-living crisis! While that has been bad for all of us, it has been disaster for some of the shops we visit. In a bid to help, we were unfortunately unsuccessful in getting a meeting between chaplains and the local authority. But at least the folk we visit know we tried, and we have built stronger relationships with them as a consequence.

Our role can be tinged with sadness when shops are forced to close, even if only temporarily. Closed shops make the area look rundown and have an adverse effect on those shops which are open.

One of the charity shops has been closed for some weeks. We miss our visits there and also are concerned at the financial loss to the charity. The people we visit also have their own very real domestic problems and it is good to be able to lend a sympathetic ear and sometimes a hug!

And it is also wonderful to celebrate when things go well, for example when the florist we visit sold out all her stock on Valentine's Day!



We still need to recruit more chaplains, especially for ASDA. The staff there are under huge pressure, with hours being reduced but no corresponding reduction in workload. John visits as often as he can but one chaplain cannot cover all the staff shifts. But we continue to pray and to rejoice in the ministry to which God has called us!

**Marilyn**



## **Birkbeck and Anerley**

**Chaplain: Jeff Hawthorne**

The Lord has continued to bless and develop the chaplaincy this year, including some exciting collaborations with the community. I have continued to do weekly visits to all the shops, food outlets and local businesses who look forward to, and appreciate, my regular visits. I find they are feeling more confident in sharing concerns and joys as we have got to know each other better, including concerns among the Turkish community for those affected by the recent earthquakes there.

We have had ups and downs with some of the businesses closing and I was able to offer some support to those who had been affected as well as welcome new people starting work in the area. In April I distributed packs of sunflower seeds just as I did last year for people to plant, although this year there was additional meaning as they are the national flower of Ukraine.



I was asked to organise a service of blessing for a local park by the Chair of the Friends of Betts Park. We had the Light in the Darkness service in the park one early December evening where every church took part and nearly seventy people from the



community attended, including local councillors. The service included singing, testimonies, poetry, prayers and a short talk, with the Mayor of Bromley sending a message of support and the service was very well received on social media.

The community carol singing on the High Street was also very well attended and appreciated, particularly by the businesses where we were singing and the KWM Christmas cards were very well received. We are now planning an ecumenical Easter service in Betts Park. A big thank you again to the local churches and the KWM team for all their support.



## **Bluewater**

### **Mark Ball (Lead until September 2022)**

**Tom Brown, Mike Dale, David Green, Mary Olowu, Kathryn Swanston, Joyce Fadeyi, Marylene Ewin, Paul and Valerie Winchester**

At Bluewater we have a chaplaincy team of nine. Here are some of the volunteers' reflections on their experience of chaplaincy this year:

The retail industry has been hit very hard over the last few years, having made it through the various stages of national lockdowns as the country came to terms with how to deal with the Covid pandemic. They are now at the forefront of the cost-of-living crisis in the United Kingdom. I find this has a very real impact on the lives of those in the retail industry. We, as commercial chaplains, have a very privileged position to share some of the burdens that individuals are carrying. I hope and pray that we have been able to bring peace and comfort, and maybe some joy, into very difficult circumstances for people. As a ministry of presence, I'm sure we have brought some comfort to those we engage with.

**Tom**

Joining the Bluewater Chaplaincy team just over 6 months ago has been very rewarding for me. People are very welcoming of our visits and as the weeks go by, I have built up good relationships with staff members of the shops I cover.

People are happy to have a chat while the shop floor is quiet. It's such a privilege to hear their stories, being asked to pray for family members, possible loss of job, discussions on career prospects plus other stories.

*Joyce*



I joined the Bluewater chaplaincy team in the Summer of 2022 after spending time with them on placement, as part of an elective chaplaincy module for my Licensed Lay Ministry training (Church of England), earlier in the year.

As a new chaplain I have found the encouragement and support of the team invaluable. I visit John Lewis and have been made to feel very welcome by the partners (i.e., the employees) and I was pleased to be invited to join in with a charity event organised by the store.

Some of the new chaplains at Bluewater commissioned on 12th September 2022 with the then Lead Chaplain, Mark Ball.

*Kathryn*

I have looked after the upper rose gallery for about four years and in that time, I have learnt that being a chaplain is about building relationships, it takes time and patience to build the trust of those we meet.

Recently it's been quite sad to see long term stalwarts of the shop floor leaving the changing world of retail. Chaplaincy goes on and new people come and once again the work of building that relationship becomes important. Being there for them is a privilege and is never ending, just like the work that chaplains are called to do.

*Dave*

My Bluewater Chaplaincy journey began in 2022 following a chance meeting with Mark Ball at Christ Church Gravesend. The Chaplaincy Training online allowed me to meet fellow chaplains as we followed and discussed our roles using an excellent training manual.

As I began the weekly shifts on my own, I realised how challenging it was approaching total strangers in a working environment who had limited time to talk. I got to know many staff from diverse non-Christian backgrounds during my weekly visits. They were happy to be approached and some showed interest about the role and looked forward to my visits.

I found it a good opportunity to inform new staff of the Quiet Room located on the ground floor for their use. The handing out of business cards was welcomed by the store managers who were agreeable to putting them up in the staff room.

I found meeting with fellow Chaplain volunteers over coffee at Bluewater after the shifts useful as a support and learning opportunity to connect, reflect and share our experiences as we prayed together. It is a true blessing to be part of the Kent Workplace Mission and I am glad this God given opportunity allows me to show and share God's love.

*Marylene*



In M&S during the pandemic a considerable number of staff took early retirement and although some have been replaced it has resulted in more stress on the remaining staff. It has also meant that getting to chat with them is not as easy as before. However, most staff are grateful to see me. Some exchange family news, a few complain about work and occasionally someone asks for help or advice over a bereavement, marriage or faith issues which they are concerned about.

*Mike*



## Dungeness 'B' Power Station

### Chaplain – Les Carter

Generally, my visits have continued throughout the year and each visit consists of unaccompanied access to non-plant areas speaking to staff in their offices, mess rooms, workshops etc.

The defuelling phase of decommissioning the Power Station is expected to start during the first half of 2023 and will take a significant period.

I have been a chaplain at Dungeness B Power Station since 2015 and I believe that the majority of the workforce, both EDF employees and Contract Partners, are aware of my visits and view them in a positive manner.

I judge, that due to the decommissioning, there will be many changes and challenging periods ahead for a number of the employees, and I trust with God's help, that I can, as a KWM chaplain, in some way provide support.



**Port of Dover  
(PoD)**

**Eurotunnel  
(ET)**

**Kent Emergency Chaplains  
Scheme (KECS)**

## Dover Port Chaplaincy

### Lead Chaplain PoD: David Slater

Chaplaincy visits to ships and offices restarted post-Covid, but things have changed in many ways as many staff are working from home, tourist passengers were tending to stay in their cars when waiting to board and ships' captains were very cautious in case Covid came aboard. This was an international problem as seafarers were usually unable to get vaccinated.

The P&O restructuring gave a lot of problems for the redundant staff, and for others who had kept their shore-based jobs but who now faced local hostility, pastoral care was given to those on both sides.

Support was also given in other ways; preparing for Ukrainian refugees; the London & South East Port Welfare Committee; the Kent Voluntary Sector Emergency Group; distressed

seafarers and, following the migrant deaths in the Channel, to the county mass Fatalities Coordinating Group.

Chaplains were able to hold a number of public services again. Sea Sunday at the RNLI Lifeboat Station, Merchant Navy Day by the Memorial opposite the Gateway flats, signing of the Military Covenant by Southeastern Railway and the Remembrance Service at the memorial in Cruise Terminal One for rail and ferry workers killed in two World Wars.

The Bishop of Dover preached at the memorial, 100 years after it was unveiled and dedicated by her predecessor. The Chaplains facilitated several Christian stalls at the Regatta.



A number of ordinands (trainee priests) from different colleges spent time with our team as a part of their training.

The most significant visitor was Archbishop John Wilson, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, who came to see the work of the chaplains, including meeting the Filipino crew of a cargo vessel.

Following the untimely death of one of our number in the spring we now have a team of 7, all volunteers, providing pastoral support for everyone we meet, staff, sailors, or passengers.



## Eurotunnel Chaplaincy

**Lead Chaplain ET, Folkestone: David Slater**

Eurotunnel presented a hard location to minister to this year.

Passenger numbers were much reduced and those travelling were avoiding the passenger terminal and simply heading straight to queue for trains.

Most staff who are not directly working with passengers or trains had been working from home and this continued. The chances of actually meeting an individual were difficult.

The strain on the business meant many staff were let go, many of the middle managers and supervisors who were key contacts. This means life feels as if I'm almost starting again building up a new set of contacts in a new chaplaincy.

There were good points, the year ended with several groups coming in to sing carols to the crowds. As always, it is the occasional 1:1 pastoral chat that provides the reason and the joy of ministering here.





## Rapport Care Home, Connors House, Canterbury

*Chaplain: Christine Barker (Staff chaplain)*

### Everything has changed!

The sun shone through the window lulling her to sleep. She had been knitting but that now lay aside. Little did any of us know how that knitting would unravel as the year wound on.

Springtime saw the gradual re-start of visiting, though few friends or family were seen for a while. Caring staff were the constant presence providing the stability of familiar routine. Residents felt safe and cared for.

In September we held a Service of Thanksgiving for the late Queen Elizabeth. It was a time of remembrance, residents telling their stories of when they were young. Together we sang, prayed, waved our flags, and wrote our names in the Book of Remembrance. It was a good time, being together, sharing our past.

Over the year it was noticeable - staffing personnel was fluctuating. I was constantly introducing myself to new flexi-staff, some of whom I would see only once. Then in October, the news was given that Connors House was to close soon after Christmas. Staff continued to maintain that outer calm, so well-practised in caring work, residents blissfully unaware of a changing future. Behind the smiling faces of staff was a troubled mind, what to do, where to go. Family members of the residents were quick to assess the situation and one by one residents 'disappeared' as that was how it was seen, by those remaining. Permanent staff too were assessing their future as flexi-carers came and went.

Christmas was not such a party. The staff worked hard, decorations in place, Christmas trees twinkling, and the four remaining residents being really spoiled with Christmas fare all to their particular fancy. Come New Year staff were telling me how bored they were. The cook had cooked supper by mid-morning and cleaned the kitchen more times than he could remember. Those final weeks were taken by listening to the carers speaking out their hopes and fears for the future. Some had been at Connors all their working life, some were retiring, others waiting a while to consider their future. One carer, who I have known for over sixteen years, sat quietly filling in the daily activity sheets, as if nothing had changed. It was sad, if not concerning, to see her almost in denial of the situation.

The Dementia unit closed; remaining residents moved to the Elderly Frail unit. "This closure", said a carer, "has really affected the residents behaviour, they're very unsettled". One lady had walked around constantly for eighteen hours. Another, who just the week before was cheerfully telling me of his teaching days, was visibly disturbed, "When am I going?" he kept on asking. I continued to sit beside him providing a presence.

One lady was waiting for her daughter to drive her to her new Home. The daughter met me in the corridor and wept. Pray for me, here, now. Please go to my mum, she's sitting in her room, pray with her. As I prayed her mum took over and prayed powerfully for her daughter. It was humbling to be with them both.

Removing an elderly person from what is familiar and safe affects not just their own self but their family and the carers. The Manager reflected how very sad it was, "It's affected us all", she said. "It's not just the job, not only the business cost, but on an emotional level very hard.

We are a family". Covid and the effect of Brexit with fewer workers coming from overseas, she could see this closure coming. She had hoped she could pull Connors up and eventually leave it in good shape. It was not to be. She had been at Connors House for twenty-three years.

We talked of residents we had both known and where they were now living. One of them was a long-term resident, the dear lady who was always knitting. On my return home a phone message told me of her death following a fall. The 'knitting' had unravelled. Her daughters were distraught. At the funeral I was delighted to see five of Connors ex-carers sitting together at the back. Later we chatted. They were now working in different places but, they said, we are a family and we're keeping in touch.

It has been hard to see the members of our family torn apart. But I hope and pray, in time, the privilege and joy of friendship and caring will become a precious memory in all our lives, carers, residents and family alike.

As John Hart's hymn says:

*'Tis Jesus the first and the last,  
Who shall guide us through all to the throne;  
We'll praise Him for all that is past,  
We'll trust Him for all that's to come.*



## **South East Coast Ambulance Service, Medway Ambulance Station**

**Chaplain and Trustee: Ellen Couzens - (SECAmb Associate chaplaincy of KWM)**

2022 started for us with the incredibly sad death of a paramedic while responding to an emergency call. The funeral was very well attended by her colleagues, and widely reported on by the media. As a chaplaincy team, it was an honour for us to be able to attend to support all the staff.



The restructuring of our volunteers' department, that started in 2021, has continued, and so we've had to adjust some of the ways we do things. But we've all continued to visit our allocated ambulance stations, control rooms and hospitals, and have been working hard to build up relationships with staff and volunteers alike.



I've also been spending whole shifts with crews out on ambulances, supporting the Community First Responders while they deliver CPR training programmes in the local community, and attending a Remembrance Day service with some of them.

We ended the year with the first of a series of strikes by the ambulance service.

As chaplains we've been allowed to attend to support staff on the picket line, and I've found it a valuable way of getting to know the crews better.

As they have to work increasingly longer hours to make enough money to live, and conditions worsen, these strikes are continuing into 2023, and we'll no doubt be needed more than ever.





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