



What is this Newsletter about?

Welcome to the new electronic newsletter from IBEX - the Churches Working with the Economy, Central South Coast.

We are here to help the churches to relate our faith to daily life, to tackle issues of social justice and to take action to serve our local communities more effectively.

In this first edition you will find items on:

- What IBEX offers
- A community discussion group addressing gambling issues in Southampton
- Foodbanks - who uses them, and why. A link to research from the national Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)
- Exploring what it means to be 'Fair'.
- What is it really like to work in a shop? Insights from Winchester Town Centre Chaplaincy
- How you can contact us for help in thinking through your own ideas about meeting need in your own locality

Please let us know what you think of the newsletter, what you want to learn about or how you think we can help you in your own activities on email newsletter@ibexsouthcoast.org.uk

Please pass this newsletter on to those involved in mission, social justice and campaigning issues.

Val Potter
Chair, IBEX

Who is IBEX?

IBEX – the Church working in the Economy Central South Coast

IBEX is a Christian organisation relating faith to economic life, in Hampshire and Dorset, mainly Bournemouth and Poole.

We are funded by the URC Wessex Synod, Southampton Methodist District and Baptist Home Mission.

Our main areas of activity:

- Support for local churches serving their communities
- Work with Partner Organisations on Community Projects e.g. local authorities, statutory and voluntary organisations
- Support and development of Chaplaincy

Val Potter (Chair)

David Wrighton (Team Leader)

Cliff Bembridge (Church and Community Officer)

IBEX (the Churches Working with the Economy, to give the full title) has launched with this edition, an Electronic Newsletter. Long ago we produced a printed Newsletter and posted it quarterly to a large mailing list. It cost a fortune. I still get asked about it by people fondly trying to recall a bygone age, people who valued it and miss it, even going back to SHIM days. We hope this newsletter will be punchier, up to the minute, informative, while also providing links to more in depth material on our own website, www.ibexsouthcoast.org.uk or from other sources.

We also aim to establish a blog once a month, and an occasional “one off” for anything urgent or special to report on. Our new website is also being developed to complete the range of ways we can communicate with you.

IBEX is working in three main areas, around which it will support, challenge and listen to the Churches locally – and, importantly, to other agencies, because it is vital that the Churches and the Faith Communities work with partner organisations in the wider world to identify needs and to help to meet them wherever we can.

IBEX areas of work:

The Church in the Community – You will hear more about what my colleague, Cliff Bembridge, is doing with his own Church premises in Buckland, Portsmouth, why he is doing it, and what is going on elsewhere.

Representation and Partnership – Cliff and I both do a great deal of partnership working in local contexts, making no secret of the Christian basis for all we do.

Chaplaincy – a prime example of how the Churches show they care about the world around them. Included in this issue is an article by Margaret Axford, the Chair of the Winchester City Centre

Chaplaincy, which acknowledges the dedication of people working in retail in that City.

One other aim is to *promote the work of the Joint Public Issues Team, (JPIT)*, the national joint venture of the Methodist, United Reformed and Baptist Churches. They research social justice issues and use the results to inform the churches and those able to influence national policy. Too many people in those Churches (and elsewhere) who are interested in this area of work are not aware of the JPIT itself, so we aim to promote its work, which is of a consistently high quality, and to relate it to the local context. Please take the time to check it out at www.jointpublicissues.org.uk . You will find here a link to a recent report about food-banks, which covers all sorts of questions from a fairly controversial subject.

Finally, please forward this to anyone you think might be interested, or tell us of others who should be on our mailing list. We want to be in touch with as many interested people as possible, wherever they are from. Also tell us what you think of it (as politely as possible), and feel free to suggest what we could usefully do in future issues.

David Wrighton
July, 2014

Community Action for Responsible Gaming (CARG) in Southampton

A new community group in Southampton called Community Action for Responsible Gaming (CARG) has been set up and offers a unique discussion forum set up by Aspers. CARG seeks to constructively address problem gambling issues in the community and is a working partnership between Aspers and local based interest groups. It is designed to facilitate discussion, increase awareness, reduce risks of problem gambling and act as a point of reference for treatment. CARG will be attended by religious bodies, community groups, local police and businesses.

CARG is being set up in Southampton in advance of the planned large casino at the Royal Pier development and will help to address any concerns about gambling and the new casino. A similar group was set up in Milton Keynes ahead of the casino that launched there last year and it is a huge success.

More details about CARG can be obtained from Hannah Keddie on Telephone no. 02380 382970 or emailing hannah.keddie@grayling.com.

Faith in Foodbanks?



Simon and Sarah are tenant farmers living in Warwickshire.

Due to ill health, they have been in financial trouble for the past few years. Last Christmas, the couple were given a voucher to collect food from a foodbank in their area.

In a telephone interview with media officer Karen Burke, Simon and Sarah explained how they ended up using a local foodbank and what impact it has had on their lives. Listen to their podcast [here](#).

A further report and look at the Faith in Foodbanks issue from the JPIT can be found [here](#).

Southampton Fairness Commission



Southampton has recently instigated a Fairness Commission, which our readers may find of interest. Although it is an initiative of Southampton City Council, it is an entirely independent commission, and it really is just about what is "fair" - not levels of pay, or benefits, but about anything which might make it difficult for people to "join in".

I heard today, for example, of a pensioner group which highlighted the fact that the Christmas market in Above Bar in the City means that the benches normally available to sit on are covered and people have to spend money to go and sit in a café to have a sit down.

There is a survey as well and, although the questions are specifically about Southampton, it is open to anyone - how fair is that! It does ask for your postcode, though, so will give more weight to answers from in and around the City.

It promises to be an initiative whose initiatives are acted upon, so it should make a difference. It will be interesting to watch!



The World of Retail – or Life the other side of the Counter

A few weeks ago, the City Centre Chaplain, Howard Rowe,

organised a training morning for volunteer chaplains at which three managers from local shops and businesses spoke about 'life the other side of the counter'.

Although they came from very different kinds of shop – a big chain, an independent family-run business, a much smaller chain based largely in the south of England – there were experiences that were common to them all.

- How hard they all worked! One said that on three days a week she started at 5am; another was in the shop by 7.30am and didn't leave until 6pm.
- The pressure of constantly having to meet demanding targets – and, in the case of the big chain, there seemed to be targets for just about everything! While the family-run business had realised that some targets were no longer reasonable given the economic downturn, that was very much the exception and not the rule.
- Staff are expected to 'perform' well and their performance is constantly monitored. Yet some staff are very poorly paid, receiving no more than the minimum wage and often working restricted hours. In every case, the point was made that when a shop is short-staffed, the pressure on existing staff increases still further, especially on the manager.
- The sense of working as part of a team was the great motivator and the source of greatest job satisfaction. All three managers spoke warmly of their staff as a mutually supportive team. It was very obvious to those of us who were listening that the quality of the team was down to their own skills in managing and valuing their staff.
- And finally they talked about us, their customers. Winchester people can be very loyal – and very demanding! One manager said that when a customer was 'difficult', he tried to remember that there might be reasons for that which had nothing to do with the actual purchase as such. He had found that, adopting that approach often helped to defuse the situation.
- Listening to him, I thought how that approach could equally apply to us, the customers, when we find the person serving us is being less than helpful.

It was a very enlightening and worthwhile morning, which certainly made me more appreciative of the people who serve me when I shop. It also provided an insight into the world that the city centre chaplains enter as they visit and support people on the job.

*Margaret Axford
Chair of the Management Group
City Centre Chaplaincy, Winchester*

How can IBEX help your Church?



IBEX works by identifying and strengthening your Churches mission to your Community. Through a unique network we help you to integrate the Church with the local Business and Voluntary Sector, support your church in transforming buildings for Mission or provide help to develop strategies around Fund-Raising opportunities.

IBEX is involved in Retail Chaplaincy in Bournemouth, Poole, Portsmouth and Southampton.

IBEX can help to develop Workplace visiting, a committed observer/critical friend, Pastoral support, or long term engagement.

Can we help you? Contact us here – we'd love to visit with you and your team to see how we can help you!

Copyright © 2014 IBEX All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is: newsletter@ibexsouthcoast.org.uk