

Faith at Work in Worcestershire

*Christian care
in the economy*

Annual Review 2020 & 2021

When, in March 2020, COVID changed so much about our world and economy we could not envisage what the months and years that followed would be like. We did not issue a review a year ago as it felt very much like we were only part way through a life changing experience. So, this review of the work of Faith at Work in Worcestershire (FWW) covers these last two years – 2020 and 2021, the COVID years, and covers how FWW responded to COVID in all its phases, from complete lockdown to the various attempts to return to some sort of normality.

In the pages that follow we look at the different initiatives that we took to continue supporting the mission of the Church in the economy; maintain chaplaincy contact, when we could, with businesses and workers as they struggled to make sense of it all; and reflected on the profound changes to the economy that have resulted, and which will continue to be felt.

Such an experience, touching the whole world and the global economy, but also impacting individuals in the most profound way, inevitably leads to questions. Now that chaplains have resumed visiting they are reporting people's need to talk about what has happened, about what and who they have lost and the changes they have had to face.

Through it all we have found what has spoken most clearly to people, in the midst of chaos and uncertainty, is the compassion and care which is at the heart of the Christian Gospel. It is this which guides our mission to transform our economic life, and the experience of work, one visit at a time.

Dick Johnson, Development Officer



TRAINING, EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



In the first months of 2020, pre-COVID, we completed our Chaplaincy Impact Survey (see page 6). In February, FWW hosted a seminar with the West Mercia Police Exploitation and Vulnerability Team, to explore the issue of modern day slavery and human trafficking within the UK economy. 42 people attended this important piece of training.

As soon as the first COVID lockdown was announced, there was a rush by our chaplains to contact all the businesses they visit and to try to obtain contact details so that chaplaincy could continue remotely. Nevertheless, we did lose contact with many of those we normally support. This was of great concern, especially where retailers went out of business and staff lost their jobs. Our chaplains were saddened by the fact that they were unable to be alongside people in person at this time of great need, worry and fear. There was much concern also for the health and wellbeing of our own chaplains, the need to keep them and their own loved ones safe.

FWW responded, to the growing concern for the number of people who had and who were expected to lose their jobs, by preparing a training video for chaplains, available on our website, on "How to support those facing unemployment". This was followed later in 2020 with an online seminar hosted by FWW and neighbouring workplace chaplaincy teams, and led by the Jericho Foundation on "How to respond to redundancy".

Some chaplains were keen to get back to visiting face to face as soon as they were able to do so in September 2020. For others, their own health or the health of those they live with, prevented this. FWW issued guidance and training on 'Resuming Chaplaincy Safely' as we got used to social distancing, face covering and using hand sanitizer.



Supporting those facing REDUNDANCY

This event is being organised by Faith at Work in Worcestershire, in collaboration with our neighbouring chaplaincy team Churches and Industry Group Birmingham & Solihull (CIBG) and the Jericho Foundation.





As we began to plan ahead for 2021, FWW held a 'Discover Workplace Chaplaincy' event on Zoom to encourage more volunteers to come forward as workplace chaplains. This then led into a 6-session 'Introduction to Workplace Chaplaincy Course' with 16 participants (8 from the FWW area, the others from around the UK, made possible by being online). It was the first time the course had been held entirely online and so, along with others, we discovered the joys and frustrations of meetings on screen.

Using the same technology FWW chaplains were able to join seminars run by Workplace Chaplaincy Mission UK, the national association for Workplace Chaplains. These 'mini-conferences' replaced the traditional face to face residential conference with three events in 2021 on the subjects of redundancy support, the challenges and opportunities of resuming chaplaincy, and understanding and responding to collective and individual trauma. These occasions also provided opportunities to network with others from around the country, share ideas and offer mutual encouragement.

During lockdown, the FWW trustees introduced a more structured system of policy review and a new Volunteer Policy to clarify the expectations, commitments and responsibilities of both FWW and its volunteers. The Volunteer Agreement is part of this and has now been implemented for all FWW chaplains and trustees.

Chaplaincy activity has looked quite different in 2020/2021, but FWW has continued to be alongside people in the workplaces, wherever possible.



NEW FACES



Jules Bird



Philippa Brakes



Alma Organ

FWW has welcomed Jules, Philippa and Alma as new chaplains. Jules is a chaplain with the Redditch Town Centre team, and also to the staff of Worcestershire YMCA, a new connection for FWW. Philippa is part of the Alvechurch team and supports businesses there. Alma, who was already a well known face in Pershore, has joined the Pershore Town Chaplains.

Robin and Martin have joined FWW as new trustees. Robin is a co-opted trustee and serves as our treasurer. Martin, from the same church as Philippa, has been nominated by the Anglican Diocese as a trustee.

Baptist minister Amy Wearing, and Richard Barley have been providing chaplaincy to their town for some time. After pandemic delays, they were finally commissioned in that role at Upton Baptist Church in July 2021.



Robin Gilbert



Upton Baptist Church



Martin Allen

GOODBYES



During these two years several chaplains and trustees have retired from active involvement in the work of FWW. Amongst our chaplains this included the small retail teams in Worcester and Stourport, as well as Richard and Sally Bubbers, part of the Redditch Town Centre team. Richard was priest at St Laurence's, Alvechurch where he also led the small chaplaincy team there. We also wished farewell to trustees Alison Mackay, nominated by the Heart of England Baptist Association, and Siân Battle-Welch, a co-opted trustee who, as programme manager for volunteers with West Mercia Police, was a great help in developing and implementing our volunteer policy. We are grateful to all for their dedication, service and support.

GETTING BACK TO VISITING



Those chaplains who were able to return to visiting again in person after the lockdowns, were warmly welcomed back and found people changed and frequently ready to be more open. Sadly they also found great need, through personal loss of loved ones, stresses of caring for family in lockdown, or financial pressures and much anxiety.

Some retail and town centre teams were able to organise the 'Covid safe' distribution of the traditional mince pies and greetings for Christmas. Our three chaplains maintained links with the Worcester Livestock Market, despite it being closed to all but buyers until late 2021.

In all FWW now works with 25 volunteer chaplains.

INITIATIVES

Newsletters



April 2020 saw the first of our regular Newsletters published, which started as a way of keeping in touch with chaplains and others in the first lockdown. It has proved popular and we have continued to produce editions on an irregular-regular basis depending on when there is news to share.

There were eight Newsletters in 2020 and eight in 2021. Please add your details to our emailing list if you would like to be included.

www.faithatwork.org.uk/home/newsletters/signup-newsletters/

Monthly Prayer Guides & online monthly prayer meetings

FWW had previously sporadically produced prayers, but from November 2020 we began to publish prayers each month covering topical subjects relevant to the local, regional and global economy. This Prayer Guide includes an introduction, a set prayer, and a list of biddings and topics.

The Guide is used at a 30-minute monthly online prayer meeting, held at lunchtime, and its use is encouraged for personal prayer through the month, and as the basis for the leading of intercessions at services.

Impact Survey 2020—What's the point of workplace chaplaincy?

"I am not a religious person but it is nice to have someone to share the burdens of the business with" (Retail worker)

In early 2020, FWW published the results of the Chaplaincy Impact Survey which researched the response of chaplains, workplaces visited and partner churches. The results were hugely encouraging and showed the value to those visited in the workplace by FWW chaplains, as well as how chaplaincy had a positive impact on the chaplains themselves and the churches they are part of. The full report can be found at www.faithatwork.org.uk/about-us/does-workplace-chaplaincy-make-a-difference/

"Chaplaincy has given me a greater awareness of God being at work in every part of life in a more direct way" (Chaplain)

Connecting with other businesses

During 2020/21 FWW hoped to extend the range and types of businesses visited by chaplains. A Business Partnership Volunteer was sought to assist with this. Although no volunteer has yet been found, the intention to extend the reach of chaplaincy remains. The new connection with the YMCA shows what is possible as new contacts are made.

FINANCES

2020

Income from grants, churches and individuals amounted to £38,530. The end of the year, therefore, saw a small surplus of £591.

EXPENDITURE 2020

Staff costs	£31,396
Office	£4,105
Chaplaincy support	£1,983
Other costs	£455
Total	£37,939

2021

Income from grants, churches and individuals was £33,819. By the end of the year, we faced a deficit of £4,736.

EXPENDITURE 2021

Staff costs	£31,592
Office	£5,983
Chaplaincy support	£568
Other costs	£412
Total	£38,555

The largest element of expenditure is staffing costs, which include salaries and pensions for the two part-time members of staff, Revd Dick Johnson, the Development Officer and Alison Sandham, Communications and Administration Officer.

FWW operates from a small office at Holt Heath, just north of Worcester. Although, as with so many other workplaces, 2020/2021 saw staff working from home, FWW was well prepared for remote working with cloud storage of information. Nevertheless both Dick & Alison were pleased to get back into the office as soon as allowed to do so.

For many years FWW has been supported with an annual grant from the charity Kidderminster Industrial Chaplaincy (KIC). In January 2021, KIC trustees took the decision to close their charity and to generously transfer all the remaining funds to FWW, a one-off final donation of £98,821. In the light of the annual grant from KIC no longer being awarded, this lump sum has been transferred to a 'future' fund and will be drawn down year by year in place of the annual grant. We are tremendously grateful to KIC for their support.

We would like to thank the following for their financial support in 2020/2021

Anglican Diocese of Worcester
Heart of England Baptist Association
The Methodist Church (Districts & Connexion)
Kidderminster Industrial Chaplaincy
United Reformed Church
Partner Churches and individual supporters

Supporters of Faith at Work in Worcestershire

The Supporters of Faith at Work in Worcestershire is a community of individuals, churches and businesses that are keen to see Workplace Chaplaincy grow and flourish across the county. Supporters include those who:

- pray regularly for FWW and those we work with in workplaces
- promote our work to others, spreading the word of the transformative ministry of Workplace Chaplaincy
- help raise much needed finance – through donations or running fund raising events.

Please contact us via the email or phone numbers below, if you would like to become a supporter of FWW. Supporters can choose to be added to the E-Newsletter and Monthly Prayer Guide emailing lists.

We rely upon our Supporters to supplement the grants from our denominational partners, especially at a time when finances are stretched. Our funding gap for 2022 is expected to be £15,000. Information on how to support us financially is available at

www.faithatwork.org.uk/donate/

Please do get in touch if you would like someone to speak at your church or business about the work of FWW and workplace chaplaincy.

**We thank our chaplains, supporters and trustees.
Chaplains and trustees are volunteers and are passionate
about reaching out to support the workplaces of our county.**

Visit our website

www.faithatwork.org.uk

Facebook & twitter

[@faithatworkwor](https://www.facebook.com/faithatworkwor)

email us at

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or call

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All contacts are handled in confidence

Faith at Work in Worcestershire

Christian care in the economy

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