

News of FWW September 2025

Faith at work in Worcestershire is changing. This special edition of our occasional newsletter aims to tell you about these changes, and our recent Chaplaincy Impact Survey. It also serves as a rather belated Annual Review of 2024.

For a few years now we have been communicating with our supporters and contacts using e-news and our monthly Prayer Guide. This time we decided to produce something more tangible, and send it you in the post (those for whom we have postal addresses) as we find, though e-comms are quicker, not everyone likes to be stuck forever in front of a screen, and we particularly wanted to make sure everyone knows about what is happening.

I hope you find it interesting. If you have any comments or responses to what you read here I would love to hear from you - either by email, or on the phone. Contact details are on the final page.




Dick Johnson, Development Officer

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Anthony Glossop 1941—2025

A long serving trustee of FWW, Anthony Glossop died, at home, on July 29th after a short illness. Well known in the business world, as a former director of St Modwen Properties Ltd, and Worcester Warriors Rugby Club, amongst others, he was also, for many years, a trustee of St. Richard's Hospice in Worcester. Anthony was a FWW trustee for 13 years, most recently as our treasurer.



Chaplaincy Impact Survey 2025

Measuring the effectiveness of chaplaincy has always been a challenge. Counting the number of chaplains, how often they visit and how many people they speak to, gives one measure of what we do. But it doesn't tell us what difference we make. In 2019 we devised an approach to remedy this, a qualitative survey using a questionnaire, which asked those involved, both those providing and receiving chaplaincy, how it had made a difference to them.

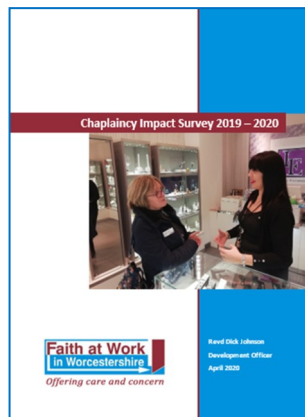
We completed this just as the first COVID lock-down started in 2020, and received lots of feedback – mostly very positive. It was our intention to use this to establish a baseline, and repeat the exercise after two or three years. As a result of COVID this timescale grew. But I am glad to report that, some five years after that initial piece of work, we have now completed our second Chaplaincy Impact Survey.

The delay meant we completed the survey just before a significant change for FWW, as we become a completely volunteer-led and delivered mission. This has been fortuitous, as it provides some real time data to help guide us as we adjust to continuing chaplaincy with fewer resources – people and time. It helps us concentrate on the most important aspects of chaplaincy.

We used the same approach as before; a questionnaire survey of three groups of people –

- those workers that our chaplains regularly visit (we spoke to 42 people)
- the chaplains themselves; (returns from 17 current and former chaplains)
- people from the churches that support chaplaincy, but aren't directly involved in chaplaincy. (28 returns)

One difference this time was that, for the chaplains and supporters, we used an online form, rather than an interview. For those at work who receive chaplains we, once again, visited and spoke to people one to one, recording their responses. Each group had its own set of questions. We collected some data about those who took part in the survey (gender, ethnicity, age, whether they were a manager or an employee, time working in the location or being a chaplain etc.) and asked open questions about their experience and understanding of chaplaincy.



For chaplains, and supporters from their churches, we also asked about how they used the FWW monthly prayer guide.

A detailed summary of the anonymised responses, and the questions we asked, of all three groups, can be found on our website, including quotes and examples that people gave. See the full Survey Report on our website by following this link. www.faithatwork.org.uk/chaplaincy-impact-survey-2025

So, what did people tell us, and what did we learn?

Those workers whom chaplains visit, generally:

- welcome the visits of chaplains and the idea of chaplaincy.
- often have stories of how the chaplain has made a difference by being interested in them, when no one else is, and by listening.
- have all sorts of family, personal challenges and needs they worry about, as well as issues that arise at work.
- always met the chaplain in their workplace, so their work is a key part of the conversation.
- are, like most people, not engaged with organised religion, and sometimes suspicious of it.
- in a very few cases, connected or re-connected to a church because of getting to know a chaplain.



Many were quite passionate about the positive impact a chaplain had made. One person said,

'When I faced a bad time in my life I was able to speak to the chaplain for a long time. She listened and was fantastic.'

Another, referring to a bad experience at work said, ***'I always remember one Christmas, when customers tend to be***

runder and work is stressful, I was having a worst of days ever. The chaplain arrived to listen, empathise, as a human act of kindness. My day improved immediately; stress stopped, like a reset, and put things in perspective, and made it feel worthwhile. It was the kindest thing someone could have done at that moment'.

Not all comments were positive. Asked if they found chaplaincy useful, 18% were negative, 20% neutral (not feeling they personally would likely engage

with a chaplain, but seeing how it helped others) but 62% positive or very positive.

When asked for suggestions for how to improve what we do, one area that came up frequently was the need to provide information to workplaces about their chaplain, and how to make contact outside the times of their visits. Posters and leaflets for staff rest areas would be reminders of the chaplain, and also reach those workers who had never met a chaplain – for example those who only worked at weekends, or part-time on days the chaplain did not habitually visit.

Another theme that was raised by some was how the chaplains were links between their business and the community, including the church. More could be made of this two way link. Two quotes that illustrate this are the person who said, ***'It feels one sided - we take, and the chaplain gives'***. And added, ***'It would be useful if, as well as the chaplain asking how I am, she would pass on news about what is happening in the community and church'***.

Chaplains, asked about how being a chaplain had impacted them, said being a chaplain:



- Helped them put their faith into action in a very practical way, being a Christian caring presence, and seeing God at work in the world.
- Provided an opportunity to meet people they otherwise would not easily meet, which they enjoyed, and the privilege of getting to know them as friends who confided in them about often deep questions and issues.
- Provided a positive experience of fellowship, prayer, and learning, with the local team of chaplains they were part of.

What chaplains found difficult included:

- Dealing with those occasions when they were not welcomed, or workers were not interested.
- The high turnover of staff in retailing, which meant they were always starting again, to build relationships with workers.
- Occasionally feeling out of their depth with the enormity and the challenges some people face in their working and personal lives – and not

feeling they had much to offer or words to help.

- How their home church was not really engaged with them about their chaplaincy, and often didn't seem interested.

Those who were supporters rather than chaplains were:

- Knowledgeable about what chaplains did, and welcomed it as an important part of their church's mission, but felt that their church could be more active in their support of the chaplains, and of FWW.
- Were pleased chaplains visited, because it was one thing which encouraged their church to look outwards into the community when, most of the time, the attention and energies of the church were engaged in keeping the church going.
- Helped them, as church people, better appreciate and understand the experience of those who were not part of the church.



We asked chaplains and our supporters about the FWW Prayer Guide, which has now been produced monthly for nearly five years. We currently circulate this to more than 130 individuals, encouraging them to pass it on to others. Of those who responded about 65% said they read it when it arrives, of which about half said they used it to guide their own prayers, or when

they lead intercessions in their church (or have heard others using it this way). Each month, on the first Wednesday, the guide forms the basis of a prayer meeting online. This is usually attended by between 3 and 6 regulars.

One theme that was touched on was when conversations turned to religious topics, including belief in God, spirituality, perceptions of the church, and prayer. For chaplains an important motivation in being a chaplain was putting faith into action, and deepening their faith. One chaplain said, ***'The rewards [as a chaplain] are very simple, yet compelling because the connection that can be made feels like being connected to God being at work in the world'***. Another said ***'[I feel] especially privileged when those I visit seek me out to pray for them at times of need'***.

For some workers, having a chaplain visit changed their view of what Christians were like. One said, ***'The chaplains are lovely people, have a sense of humour, are great listeners, really care and are non-judgemental. This is unlike some other church people who condemn me because of my beliefs.'***

What lessons do we take from the survey?

1. That there are simple things we can do to improve connections with workers, such as those mentioned above - the use of posters and leaflets in workplaces, and developing the role of chaplains as community champions.
2. One key lesson is how much the ministry of our chaplains is valued by those they visit, but how little the chaplains themselves appreciate this. Just being able to give chaplains the results of our survey should encourage and uplift them in their ministry.
3. Informed prayer for those at work, and about economic issues, has grown in the last five years, both by chaplains and FWW supporters. Prayer, shared with the wider church ecumenically, is now a key foundation for what chaplains do, and as part of the response to the people chaplains meet, and for the issues in the economy they face.
4. Whilst more people in churches are aware of chaplaincy than previously, it continues to be seen in many places as a peripheral activity to what the church actually does and is for. There is much scope for continuing to seek to engage churches in chaplaincy, and see it as a central part of its mission in its own community.
5. To help chaplains feel more confident in workplaces, we need to continue to develop our refresher training and support – one to one, in local teams and to all chaplains, in skills development, theological reflection and safeguarding.

To conclude, one final comment from a shopworker.

'Human kindness means the world, and staff would benefit from talking to a chaplain, even though they don't realise they need someone to come and listen. It is only when it happens that they realise the benefit of it. We all do life so quickly we forget to talk to each other. Chaplains are counter-cultural in this.'



Faith at Work in Worcestershire – Facing Change

As our Impact Survey has shown, at the heart of the work of Faith at Work in Worcestershire (FWW), is the ministry of chaplaincy undertaken by faithful volunteers. Through their many visits and encounters we seek to fulfil one of our key purposes as a charity – to bring Christian care and concern to those at work in the economy of Worcestershire, as we encourage and support the mission of local churches within their communities.

Although we hope this will continue for many years to come, changing circumstances mean that, in the future, this will be organised differently. A big part of this has been the realisation at the end of 2023 that FWW needed to evolve into a fully volunteer-led charity. In part this is due to the increasing pressure on finances of denominations - that have historically supported this ministry - and congregations. The significant grants we had received over the years 2018 – 2023 could not continue.

So when, in March 2024, Alison Sandham, our Communications and Administration Officer, retired from her post, she was not replaced, and now has come the time for me also to retire as Development Officer, at the end of October. I too will not to be replaced. As a result we no longer need the office base at Top Barn Farm. This will close on August 31st.

I will continue my other work, as lead chaplain to West Mercia Police and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, for the time being, and I aim to continue supporting our FWW chaplains and their ministry – only I too will be a volunteer.

Dick Johnson
FWW Development Officer



Review of 2024— 2025

An Annual Review usually appears shortly after the end of the year. This comes to you considerably later than that and so will be a broader overview of 2024 and the first half of 2025 – a taking stock of our activity. Annual Review's had previously been the work of Alison Sandham, our former Comms and Admin Officer, who retired at the end of March 2024, having completed the Review for 2023. With Alison retired, producing a report for 2024 didn't get done as early as previously. More on Alison's retirement later.

Chaplaincy

At the heart of any report on the activity of FWW must be our Chaplaincy. Although we have seen further changes to our roster of chaplains, chaplaincy has continued, and we acknowledge this faithful and dedicated band of volunteers. The Chaplaincy Impact Survey (see pages 2 - 6) captures something of the underlying benefit of chaplaincy, both to those our chaplains visit, but also to the chaplains themselves, and the wider church in its mission to bring the love of God in Jesus to the world. Links in that article will take you to detailed feedback on our website, and are well worth a read. Here we acknowledge those who undertake this amazing ministry of chaplaincy.

Our team of chaplains in **Pershore**, led by **Stuart Sandys**, has continued to be busy in the town Centre. On December 30th 2023 Pershore Indoor Market closed, to make way for a new Aldi store. **Carol Sandys**, whose chaplaincy assignment included the market, provided continuing support and a prayerful listening ear to the traders as they faced real bereavement and loss.

It was a story of ending and beginning - death and resurrection - as eight of the traders then got together to set up their own market, sharing the space in a sizable leased property on the High Street, which opened just a few weeks later in January 2024, under the name of the Pershore Emporium. Our recent Chaplaincy Impact survey was an opportunity for many from the group to pay tribute to Carol's unstinting, caring, Christian presence, as they negotiated the uncertainty of being given notice, and then the hard work of starting again. After sharing and supporting the group through this intense period, Carol has now stepped back from chaplaincy (whilst remaining part of the team), with **Angela Gerrard** taking over chaplaincy to the Emporium as part of her section of the High Street.

The team also includes **David Oldham, Cathy Cooper, John Podd, Christine Dodd, Emily Miller and Alma Organ**, each with their assigned part of the town, and who meet together regularly for prayer, reflection and mutual support.

The team is a unique expression of the ecumenical life of the Churches in the town with all four churches based there represented (Baptist, Anglican Roman Catholic and the Community Church). At the end of 2024 Alma retired as a chaplain, and has been much missed by the team.

Worcester Livestock Market

chaplaincy continues with a regular chaplaincy presence at each week's Wednesday market. **Brenda Williams, Tim Richards and Sue Adeney** visit separately – so most market days are covered – to talk with staff, sellers and buyers. Each has their own rural background to draw on, and are well placed to understand and empathise with those working in the agricultural sector. Tim also covers some of the specialist Saturday sales, which draw people from significant distances. The Market team works closely with the CARL committee of the Diocese of Worcester, and the Farm Community Network helpline, which the team promotes to those who visit.

Kidderminster has a long history of industrial chaplaincy, which is continued by **Barbara Pugh** and **Albert Wilkinson**, chaplains to **Kidderminster Market** (see page 6 for a picture). Although efforts to find others to join them have not been successful this year, Barbara and Albert faithfully continue to visit, and their ministry is highly valued by the traders. In 2024, in addition to distributing Christmas cards, they did the same at Easter. Trading continues to be challenging, and the empathetic, prayerful listening of Barbara and Albert does not go unnoticed.



Above: The Pershore team: L- R (back) John, Emily, Carol; (front) Stuart, Alma, Christine.
[Missing: David, Cathy & Angela.
For a picture of Angela see page 3]

Below: Brenda (centre) visiting Worcester Livestock Market



Sue Brotherton has been chaplain to local businesses in the village of **Alvechurch** for more than eight years, and is our only chaplain who includes in their chaplaincy a car repair business. *(right)*

For most of this time Sue has visited alone, providing a tangible connection between local businesses and Churches Together in Alvechurch, particularly the parish church of St Laurence, where Sue worships, and which supports her in prayer.

Just to the south lies Redditch where FWW has supported the **Kingfisher Shopping Centre Chaplaincy** team for more than 20 years. **Paul Lawlor** leads the team, now helped by **Elaine Whitfield**, with **Linda McRoy** and **Sharon Forrest** making up the team. Our youngest ever chaplain, **Lucas Allmark**, joined the team in 2024, but had to give up chaplaincy when he moved away from Redditch early in 2025. Paul continues as a director of the Redditch Business Improvement District (BID), a council and commercial partnership promoting and developing the town for business. As the Anglican Area Dean, Paul also leads the recently launched



Redditch Mission Area (RMA), a strategic initiative of Worcester Diocese to build mission focussed collaboration amongst the Anglican churches of the town. The Kingfisher Chaplaincy team will hopefully see the recruitment of new chaplains as a result.

At Christmas 2024 The Kingfisher Chaplaincy team once again ran their hot drinks and mince pies outreach, taking refreshments to all who work in the retail sector during the most stressful weeks of their year.



Left: Paul Lawlor and Dick Johnson with former manager of the Kingfisher Centre, Ken Williams, also a director of the Redditch BID.



Left: Lucas (on right) visiting Heaphy's Menswear in the Kingfisher Centre.

Above: The pop-up base for the Christmas outreach to stressed retail workers, at a quiet corner on the first floor mezzanine.

In October the team also took the initiative in running a Discover Chaplaincy evening in conjunction with Churches Together in Redditch. Speakers from the chaplaincy at HMP Hewell, the Alex Hospital and higher education sectors joined the Kingfisher Workplace Chaplaincy team to showcase their ministries. More than 50 people attended, but with only a few enquiries about joining the workplace team. With changes in the town centre churches, conversations continue.

Visit to Wyre Forest Fire Station – May 2024

In 2024 we ran just one workplace visit, for chaplains, our supporters and trustees, to the Wyre Forest Hub Fire Station. This was opened in Spring 2020, just as the COVID pandemic started. Built to replace the full time station in Kidderminster, and on-call watches in Stourport and Bewdley, it is also the base for local policing, hosts the main regional High Volume Pump resources for the West Midlands, and provides specialist training facilities, including a live fire training house.

The visit was arranged by Dick in his capacity as Lead Chaplain to Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. At the time Mary Austin, FWW Trustee, wrote how the visit had impacted her, and provided some pictures also. Here are her reflections.

'We first met the duty watch, Blue Watch – Chris, Josh, Katie and Mark who introduced us to the wide range of equipment that can be found on a modern fire appliance, and learnt about the work of a fire fighter – so much more than tackling fires!

We also met Station Commander Rich Young and Prevention Officer Robin Douglas. Rich, who has been a firefighter for more than 20 years, following in his father's footsteps, has worked in many roles across the service, before taking charge at Wyre Forest in April. His job can be stressful as, like for so many, it is driven by targets. The higher up you go, the more political the job becomes.



Robin's job includes conducting home fire safety visits, installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and visiting schools to talk about road safety. With his colleagues, working in partnership with many other organisations, he covers the whole of N Worcestershire (Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove and Redditch), working with every watch in every station.



In the course of the morning we learnt about the strain of working shifts, the constant challenges about budgets, the variety of incidents the fire service attend, and all the work of prevention. Through all this their priority and core value is to put the community first, working within what is still a hierarchical organisation – following commands, something essential to staying safe in a dangerous job!



We learnt how numbers of firefighters and appliances have reduced over recent years. Where once, at a station like Wyre Forest, there might have been fifteen fire fighters on a watch, with two appliances; now one appliance with a crew of five is the norm, with Blue Watch on the day of our visit depleted to the minimum of four. We also learnt about on-call firefighters, who have to live or work within 5 minutes of the station and carry pagers, dropping everything to turn-in when called night or day. Wyre Forest has such a supplementary crew, with 17 of the 25 stations across the two counties wholly on-call staffed.

We learned that Dick has been their chaplain since 2006 and initially was one of a team, having recruited 11 volunteers at one stage – similar to FWW. Now that is just Dick and Stuart Sandys (who visits Pershore Fire Station). The role of chaplains is to be there as in other situations, to listen and offer support, but Dick also coordinates the critical incident support team and visits throughout the service helping people cope with traumatic incidents such as death, serious injury or having to rescue children.

Our morning at the Fire Station ended with a buffet lunch, and we all came away with new insights into another area of work - the needs, the stresses and the valuing of chaplains who are there for them'

Mary Austin, May 2024

Marking Alison's retirement

We also took the opportunity, whilst at the Fire Station, to bid a final farewell to Alison Sandham, our former Communications and Administration Officer, who had retired two months earlier.

Chris Harvey, chair of FWW trustees, makes a presentation to Alison



FWW Prayer Guide

Since the COVID pandemic FWW has produced a monthly prayer guide, which also forms the basis for a monthly prayer meeting, for just 30 minutes at lunchtime on the first Wednesday of the month. We now distribute this to more than 135 people, many of whom share it with others.

For the past year, since November 2024, we have increasingly focussed on matters of current concern in the economy, using the guide to reflect on, and inform our prayers. Topics have included proposed changes to employment law; a response to the autumn budget; the endemic crisis of retail crime, and the risks workers face in the sector; the connection between work and sickness; as well as reflections for Lent, Easter and the general uncertainty of the global economy in 2025. We have also included themes which help us pray for the changes FWW is facing this autumn (see page 7).

Our prayer meetings are attended by a faithful few - we would love to have more join us if you are able to attend. We circulate the link to join the online meeting when we send out the electronic, but printable, monthly guide.

Prayer is such a fundamental foundation of all our ministry. Do join us, either in person at the meetings, or in your own prayer times. The guide starts with a short reflection on the theme, includes a prayer for the month, and then more specific items for prayer. Here we include the prayer for July 2025, when the theme was giving thanks for the ministry of our chaplains, prompted by the very positive results from the Chaplaincy Impact Survey.

**Almighty God, we give you thanks for all our workplace chaplains
and the impact of their ministry which proclaims Christ;**

by who they are, and how they care, and share His love.

**Guide their steps, inspire their listening,
and hear their prayers for those they visit.**

In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



Trustees

One further change over these past few years has been in the structure of the FWW charity, which has particularly affected our Board of Trustees. Workplace Chaplaincy has always been an ecumenical ministry, which is the case for FWW with chaplains, trustees and supporters drawn from a wide range of churches. It has also been reflected in our relationship with Churches Together in Worcestershire (CTiW), with trustees appointed by the five regional denominational bodies (Anglican, Methodist, URC, Baptist and Roman Catholic) as well as co-opted to represent other interests, including our own chaplains.



With the disappearance of CTiW, together with increasing difficulty for some partners in finding trustees to represent them, this has changed. Trustees are no longer nominees of their sending body, but still serve as a link to the different denominations.

Under the chairmanship of **Chris Harvey**, (*picture left*) an old friend of FWW since his time at the Chamber of Commerce, and a member of St Ambrose RC Church Kidderminster, we now have just five trustees - **Martin Allen**, an Anglican from St Laurence Church, Alvechurch;

Stuart Sandys, a member of Pershore Baptist Church and also team leader of the Pershore team of chaplains; **Christine Dodd**, also from Pershore and a chaplain, who worships at the Holy Redeemer RC parish in the town; and **Paul Lawlor**, team leader with the Redditch chaplains, and Area Dean of the Anglican Deanery.

In January 2025 Mary Austin (*right*), a former chair of trustees, representing the Methodist Church, retired. We were also saddened by the death of our treasurer, Anthony Glossop, who was a member of St Martin’s Anglican parish in Worcester (*see page 1*).;

We are always on the lookout for people to join the board, to help guide us through the next phase of our ministry as Faith at Work in Worcestershire.



Accounts 2024

2024 income included two significant denominational grants, £4,875 from the Heart of England Baptist Association (HEBA), being the final portion of a generous 3 year grant, and £4,200 from the Anglican Diocese of Worcester. The Diocese has continued this level of funding into 2025.

FWW is also fortunate to have the KIC Forward Fund to draw on. This fund was established with a grant of £98,821, received from Kidderminster Industrial Chaplaincy in 2021. KIC had been set up in the 1970s to support Industrial Mission in Kidderminster. The gift, which constituted its residual funds when it closed, are to be applied to support Workplace Chaplaincy across the county of Worcestershire. At the start of 2025 the fund stood at £57,878, and constitutes the whole of FWW reserves.

Income 2024	£
Denominational grants	9,075
Donations & Gift Aid	3,141
Bank interest	1,984
TOTAL	14,200
Expenditure 2024	
Staff costs	23,786
Office	5,134
Chaplaincy support	976
Running the Charity	1,132
Trustees	119
TOTAL	31,147
Deficit for year	-16,947
Balance Sheet	
Funds at 1st Jan 2024	74,825
Surplus/Deficit 2024	-6,947
Forward Fund	-10,000
Funds at 31st Dec 2024	57,878

Finances 2025, and future plans

The 2025 budget, agreed by the trustees, reflected plans to move to a fully volunteer-led charity by the end of the year, but also anticipated a further reduction in grant income. With budgeted expenditure of £24,600, and anticipated income of just £7,700 (the Diocese of Worcester annual grant of £4,200 and donations from supporters), the deficit again is expected to be £16,900, as in 2024. This will mean a further drawdown from the KIC Future Fund, leaving a residue of just under £41,000 at the end of 2025.

In 2026, with no office or staff costs, the budget will be very different, focusing on direct costs of delivering chaplaincy - insurance, training, publicity, support for chaplains and communications. We will be a slimmed down charity, adapting to the financial realities of our times and the wider Church, but still with a ministry to engage with those at work, and the issues of the local and global economy. We will be able to continue to undertake chaplaincy - God willing - as we welcome new chaplains, trustees and supporters as the journey continues.

As we move into the final third of this year, the trustees will be planning for how to establish renewed partnerships with our traditional and new partners - starting with seeking a new vision together to join in with God's mission within the economy of our county. This needs to be built on prayer and an ever attentive listening to where God is leading us. We are grateful for all who have been part of the journey so far, and welcome your continued support and interest in the months and years ahead.

We thank our volunteers, chaplains, supporters, trustees, and staff, all passionate about reaching out to support those at work in the workplaces and businesses of our county.



Christian care in the economy

Registered charity, no. 1176881



Christian care in the economy

Visit our website
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