

Sefton Faith Forum Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting

**Wednesday 24 February 2021****Present:**

Pete Spiers	Archdeacon Knowsley & Sefton
Rebecca Gommersall	Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure
Maria Parker	Birkdale Catholics
Steven McGanity	Christ Church, Southport, Area Dean - North Meols Deanery
Patricia Jameson	Christians against Poverty
Richard Owens	Compassion Acts
Hayley James	Formby Methodist Church
Tony Slingo	Heart Stone Catholic Parish Ainsdale
Ian Roebuck	Hope Community Church, Aintree
Jean Washbourne	Iraneus / St John's Church Ainsdale
Doreen Iddon	Liverpool Rd Methodist Church
Luke Smith	Methodist North Circuit
Munzi Ali	Sefton Muslim Centre
Selwyn Goldthorpe	Southport Synagogue
Jackie Parry	St Luke's Church, Crosby
Debbie Statter	St Oswald's, Netherton
Andrew Stott	St Phillips, Litherland, Team Rector Litherland & Orrell Hey Team Ministry, Area Dean Sefton South
Romils Mathew	Syro Malabar Catholic Church
Ravi Sangra	Team Vicar Litherland & Orrell Hey Team Ministry
Peter Lyth	URC North Sefton
Claire Morgans	Y Kids
Angela White	Sefton CVS, CEO
Maggi Aslet	Sefton CVS, Group Development
Nigel Sharp	Sefton CVS, Group Development

Apologies:

Ian Roxburgh	Old Road Methodist Church, Aintree Community Trust
Simon Cunningham	Shoreline Church, Southport

Welcome

PS and AW welcomed and thanked all for attending and supporting the Forum, and for the continued commitment to the community sector throughout such a difficult time.

Introduction and Group Updates

MA reviewed recent Sefton CVS support for faith groups, which has included zoom sessions providing an overview of SCVS activity and services, with response including more specific advice on funding and programme development.

Groups attending were invited to provide a brief, one minute update of current activity, response to Covid-19 issues and impact on their respective communities:

URC North Sefton (PL)

Premises are closed, worship continues on zoom sessions. Support provided through telephone befriending with Sefton Carers' Centre, care parcels have been distributed, additional support and links through 'Churches Together'.

More details: <https://www.urcmerseysynod.org.uk/welcome.htm>

St Oswald's, Netherton (DS)

Part of the Netherton Team Ministry, church has sustained contact and developed new relationships with services and group activity provided on zoom, also telephone service support. Packages have been distributed and additional contact maintained through social media with positive feedback. Diverse support has helped maintain and develop contacts.

More details: <http://www.stoswaldsnetherton.org.uk/>

Christians Against Poverty (PJ)

Support through the Ainsdale Job Club – building still open, to provide necessary help, adopted Covid secure building measures.

More details: https://www.stjohnsainsdale.org.uk/cap_part.php

YKids (CM)

Christian charity supporting children, young people and families. Work has continued on line, augmented with activity packs. Also support with a community pantry and delivery. The youth church 'Rise' moved to Monday Night Not Live', pre-recorded session interest has increased from 30-40 to 60—70 and more.

More details: <https://ykids.co.uk/>

Birkdale Catholic Churches (MP)

Representing 3 churches, delivery now includes live-streamed mass. Foodbank support from the churches, vouchers bought to enable people to get the particular food they need, also deliveries with church community support.

More details: <https://birkdalecatholics.com/>

Syro Malabar Catholic Church (RM)

An independent eastern Catholic church, normally c600 at services, mass now provided on zoom for 150-200. Key issue – large proportion of families include NHS workers so much of church community affected by pressures from this key worker role, in need of support for both work stresses and their spiritual needs.

More details: <http://queenofpeacesmcc.com/>

Heart Stone Catholic Parish, Ainsdale (TS)

2 Catholic churches currently closed, zoom support has helped new alliances, links with Woodvale Community Centre and Compassion Acts – working to avoid duplication of support. Issues include loss of established volunteer support (older, vulnerable people).

More details: <https://www.heartstonerc.co.uk/>

Area Dean Sefton South (AS)

Team Rector for Litherland and Orrell Hey, includes St Phillip's, St Paul's, St John & St James, with links to The Orrell Trust providing support including shopping services for those self isolating also 'Soup in a Basket' adapted to 'Soup in a Bag' delivery for 30+. Additional half term activity and support, finding different ways to deliver the previous range of support for different beneficiaries.

More details: <https://www.stjohnandstjames.org/the-orrell-trust/>

Compassion Acts (RO)

Providing Southport Foodbank (Trussell Trust model) complimented with welfare benefit and community money advice, providing life skills for the future. Current challenges include loss of volunteers.

More details at: <https://www.compassionacts.uk/>

Area Dean – North Meols Deanery (SMcG)

All churches open or on line, continue to work with Compassion Acts, including providing support for asylum seekers at the Scarisbrick Hotel, Southport. Have developed new connections, attracted new volunteers.

More details: <https://www.northmeolsdeanery.org.uk/>

Liverpool Road Methodist Church, Southport (DI)

Reviewed operations, planning and preparing for future, delivering pastoral care by different means and also aware of other needs – developing a food pantry and library, continue to work to determine community needs.

More details: <https://birkdalemethoist.org.uk/>

Formby Methodist Church (HJ)

Active on line and providing digital support, also responding to provide bereavement support and 'Hope Bags' for additional comfort. Virtual funeral support, expect to develop community work further post-lockdown.

More details: <https://www.formbymethodistchurch.org.uk/>

Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure (RG)

Providing meals for the vulnerable, socially isolated and lonely, also a shop and café but effectively 'mothballed' in April '20 since activities and related income are necessary to sustain services. Delivering to members of Formby Lunch Club and support for faith groups, keen to develop services further subject to funds.

More details: <https://ainsdalelunchandleisure.org.uk/>

Hope Community Church (IR)

Foodshare has continued, activity and communication includes zoom and WhatsApp. Community café closed. Christmas Nativity Star Trail popular for families, maintaining contacts and networking, young people supported with online activity and You Tube resources.

More details: <https://hccaintree.co.uk/>

St Luke's Church, Crosby (JP)

On line services each week, keen to find more links and develop further support.

More details: <https://stlukecrosby.org.uk/>

St John's Church, Ainsdale/ Iraneus (JW)

Involved with 'Churches Together', also providing support for teenagers and 13 families through the 'Bags of Hope'. Value networking to provide additional links and support.

More details: <https://www.stjohnsainsdale.org.uk/>

A selection of additional contributions were provided in greater detail:

Litherland and Orrell Hey Team Ministry (RS)

Work at St Phillip's and St Paul's Churches, highlighted issues e.g. St Paul's:

- Financial pressures, loss of income from hall hire and plate collections.
- Response includes opportunities for on line giving and wider support from Sefton CVS – practical and financial (e.g. PPE), and even a replacement bike (MA via One Vision).
- Continued communication includes WhatsApp and a Bible Study Group.
- Support in the community includes shopping and prescription collection for those vulnerable or self isolating.
- Letter circulated to households inviting requests for practical or spiritual support- led to 20+ offers of support.

More details: <http://www.stphilipslitherland.co.uk/>

Sefton Multi-Cultural Centre (MA)

Established support for Sefton Muslim community in Crosby 10 years ago, Centre support covering Bootle-Waterloo-Crosby areas

- Sessions closed now until restrictions lifted.
- Loss of several members due to Covid-19.
- Centre offers bereavement support and links to Liverpool Region Mosque Network.
- Isolation issues prevalent and exacerbated by Covid – especially elderly members.
- Weekly phone calls and befriending including tech. support.
- Particular impact on Friday prayers and Ramadan, weekly zoom provided.
- Support for community to encourage vaccination.
- The Centre is based at Sing Plus (Seaforth) but issues include limited opening at key times hence the Centre is seeking their own premises.

Southport Synagogue (SG)

Currently closed, the Synagogue supports a widespread community from the North Merseyside, South West Lancashire area.

- Loss of some vulnerable members to Covid.
- Community also at high risk – similar to BAME vulnerability.
- Interest and good response to zoom activity – adopting a streaming model from New Zealand.
- Loss of rental income for use of facilities.
- Members remain in contact with rota of community calls.
- Doorstep deliveries including specific support, e.g. unleavened bread for Passover.
- Bereavement support through the national movement with online support group.
- Additional national support groups, north regional services links, include Jewish Women's Aid support for those affected by domestic violence.
- Continue additional initiatives such as Trees for Africa.

More details: <https://www.southportsynagogue.co.uk/>

Methodist North Circuit (LS)

Covers Liverpool North and includes Linacre Mission.

- Church buildings host foodbanks.
- Loss of services, such as baptism bring loss of community contact and engagement in Church.
- Increase in funerals but loss of associated pastoral care, during illness and after loss.
- Loss of engagement and awareness of certain needs, unable to support or console.
- Loss of meetings, social activity – coffee mornings, Bible Study.
- Reduced interaction bringing increased social isolation.
- Loss of activity and delayed heritage project.
- Gas/ electric fuel poverty – lockdown impacts from staying at home.
- Regular food support expanded to include toiletries, cleaning products – along with food.
- Concerns about reopening – social distancing issues impact on activity provision – and income.
- Concern at possible loss of community groups and activity, membership – and income.
- Additional support - distribution of worship sheets, by e-mail or post (postage cost offset by reduced travel).
- Services delivered on zoom, also You Tube and a dial in offer for those without tech.
- Support for funerals on line and extended offer of support for future memorial services.
- Also work with local schools to help identify beneficiaries for 'Hampers for Families'.

More details: <http://mclnc.co.uk/>

Sefton CVS support

NS provided a brief overview of Sefton CVS support, comprising core services and more specific project areas. Key items to note:

- Committed to connecting people to services and networks.
- Aim to develop a strong, resilient voluntary, community and faith sector.
- Project areas include support for specific themes including volunteer mentor programmes and particular support for health & wellbeing through the Living Well Sefton collaboration.
- Core services include help with policies, procedures, DBS and community accountancy.

- MA & NS part of Localities including volunteer and group development support.
- Group development activity includes:
 - o Signposting and networking to help peer support and partnerships.
 - o Sharing information and guidance.
 - o Training.
 - o Group organization and governance.
 - o Funding advice - from identifying options to 'critical friend' comment on applications.
- Current operational and support networks include:
 - o Every Child Matters
 - o Health and Social Care Forum
 - o Sefton in Mind
 - o Volunteer Coordinators Forum
 - o Sefton Performing Arts Network

Further details and support is available on the Sefton CVS website <https://seftoncv.org.uk/> with a dedicated funding website <https://mfip.org.uk/> an additional resource.

Further advice and help available from maggi.aslet@seftoncv.org.uk and nigel.sharp@seftoncv.org.uk

Discussion and Next Steps

PS reflected on comments raised which included recognition of the value of networking. It was agreed to arrange a further meeting to review the continued faith sector response, issues and support – particularly how local needs may have changed.

AW commented on the extensive and inspiring activity and support provided by Sefton's Faith groups, a remarkable commitment and contribution to social action. It was noted that next steps to consider include:

- Referrals – how can people be made aware, engaged and supported by services?
- Considering increased and new needs is there scope to expand support, share and collaborate?
- Is there a need for more local networking, focusing on smaller areas?

Date of Next Meeting

- 10.00am Thursday 15 April [by zoom]

All note