

Annual Review 2023

I am pleased to introduce this review of the work of FWW during 2023. In these few pages we aim to provide a flavour of what our faithful volunteer chaplains have been busy with, of special events we have run through the year, and how we have continued to seek to bring the light of Christ to bear on the economy and how people experience work, across the county.

The work people do, and the economic activity we all engage in, is such a central part of what makes us human and shapes our communities. It can provide meaning and purpose to our lives, is where we spend a significant amount of time and energy, and where we develop and use skills and talents to serve the common good. Work, so central to life, must be something the Church takes seriously in its mission and ministry. It is a privilege to serve the churches of Worcestershire by supporting chaplaincy to those at work, and promoting discussion and debate about the shape of economic life.

One key task for 2023 was working out how to sustain our activity with fewer resources. This is something all churches, public bodies and commercial companies are having to face. There are fewer people able to volunteer as chaplains or trustees, and less money to support chaplaincy. At the same time, there is more need for the ministry of chaplains and bigger questions to be addressed about the future of work and the resilience of economic endeavour, given international conflict and the ongoing climate emergency.

2023 marked the final year of our latest three-year plan. Decisions had to be taken. At the beginning of the year, after prayer and careful consideration, FWW's Trustees took the bold step to begin the move, from the start of 2024, to become a volunteer led charity by the end of 2025. During 2023 we shared these plans with our supporters, chaplains, partner churches and sponsoring denominations, and sought support from them. It has been a key part of the year, but in the meantime I am pleased to report that our core work has continued. I hope you enjoy reading about that here.



Dick Johnson, Development Officer



CHAPLAINCY

It has been a quiet year for the recruitment of new chaplains. A few others have retired or moved away, which means, at the end of the year, we have 23 active chaplains, compared to 25 at the end of 2022. Linda McRoy and Lucas Allmark were commissioned as part of the team in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch. Malcolm Wilkes and Sarah Leeson retired from Redditch, after many years of faithful service, and Mick Sayner (Kidderminster) and Jules Bird (YMCA) have moved on to other ministry. We produced a brief video which includes several chaplains explaining what being a chaplain means to them, in order to promote chaplaincy. (<https://www.faithatwork.org.uk/home/chaplaincy-in-action/>)



Events

We aim to run two events during the year for our chaplains, supporters and anyone who is interested. These bring people together from across the county, to share the experience of chaplaincy, and consider important issues in the economy.

Spring Seminar



In June, hosted by Pershore Baptist Church, one of our Partner Churches, we spent time sharing our different experiences of chaplaincy, exploring why this ministry is part of the mission of our churches and praying together. The second half of the morning provided a chance to share and discuss our plans to evolve into a volunteer-led charity by the end of 2025. It was an encouraging session, and people enjoyed meeting others from outside their own area.

Field trip

In October we visited the livestock market in Worcester, by the kind invitation of MacCartney's Auctioneers. Shown around by our three regular market chaplains, we met farmers, dealers and those who work there. Moving to a seminar room at the nearby Country Park, with guests from the farming and agricultural sector, we heard about the particular issues and difficulties which they face. The morning ended with reflection and prayer, a simple lunch and a chance to network.



The importance of prayer

During the COVID pandemic, when chaplaincy in person was impossible, the need for chaplaincy mushroomed. Whilst chaplains couldn't visit, they could still pray. So, towards the end of 2020 we began to produce a monthly Prayer Guide, which was used at a brief lunchtime online prayer meeting. Though the pandemic is over, the Prayer Guide has continued. A review during 2023 showed the Guide being used both by individuals, and as a resource for intercessions in church services. Each edition, which is posted on our website and emailed out to those on our mailing list, includes a brief reflection on issues concerning work and the economy, a topical prayer, and suggestions for prayer, for the local and global economy, including for our chaplains, and those they visit.

Handing on the baton

In December Rev'd Mary Austin (below) handed over the role of Chair of Trustees to Chris Harvey. Mary started as a trustee in March 2015, taking over the Chair in 2019. We are grateful to Mary for her leadership during four years of significant change, and to Chris for taking this on.



FINANCE

Income 2023	£
Denominational grants	12,700
Forward Fund drawdown	10,000
Donations	4,021
Bank interest	1,119
Other	218
TOTAL	28,058

Expenditure 2023	
Staff costs	30,360
Office	4,517
Chaplaincy support	1,519
Other	159
TOTAL	36,555

Our work is currently mostly funded by grants from our sponsoring denominations, and an annual drawdown from our KIC Forward Fund.* 2023 saw a greater than expected rise in local donations from supporters and congregations, and with tight control on expenditure, the budgeted deficit was less than expected at £8,497.

** This Fund is the residue of a one-off grant made by the separate charity, the Kidderminster Industrial Chaplaincy, when it closed in 2021. With £69,000 in the Forward Fund at the end of 2023, but with expected reduced future grant income, this allows us to continue our work as we move toward being a volunteer-led organisation by the end of 2025.*

We would like to thank the following for their financial support in 2023

Supporters of FWW
The Anglican Diocese of Worcester
The Heart of England Baptist Association
The Birmingham District of the Methodist Church
The Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District of the Methodist Church
Kidderminster Industrial Chaplaincy/FWW Future Fund
Partner churches and individual supporters

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

Visit our website

www.faithatwork.org.uk

email us at

enquiries@faithatwork.org.uk

or call

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All contacts are handled in confidence

Faith at Work
in Worcestershire

Christian care in the economy

Registered charity, no. 1176881

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