

# Shrewsbury Diocese JP&SR E-Bulletin – November 2012

[www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk](http://www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk)

Vision: *A diocese fully engaged with the call of God to be a people of justice and peace*

## Contact details:

- Correspondence to Michael Crawley, Secretary, Shrewsbury Diocese Commission for the Promotion of Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility, 5 Riddings Court, Timperley, Altrincham, WA15 6BG [mjcrawley@waitrose.com](mailto:mjcrawley@waitrose.com)
- Donations or contributions for *MouthPeace* to Ged Cliffe, Treasurer SDJPSR, Fern Villa, Four Crosses, Llanymynech, SY22 6PR [ged.cliffe@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ged.cliffe@tiscali.co.uk)
- Items for the e-bulletin, diary dates and notice of events to Anne O'Connor [anneoc980@hotmail.com](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)

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### 1. Open Commission Meeting '*The Way Forward*'

A report of the October Open Commission Meeting will be sent out shortly to all participants. Please contact Anne if you were unable to attend the day but would like a copy of the report [anneoc980@hotmail.com](mailto:anneoc980@hotmail.com)

### 2. J&P Calendar for the Year of Faith October 11 2012 – 24 November 2013

As our contribution to the Year of Faith Shrewsbury Diocese Commission for Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility has produced a comprehensive J&P Calendar for groups and parishes. The calendar is updated regularly – please check the website (last revised 9.11.2012) [www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk](http://www.jp-shrewsburydiocese.org.uk)

### 3. Youth unemployment rises as government support is cut, says TUC

Long-term youth unemployment in England has increased by 23% since the government came to power in May 2010, according to a **TUC analysis** published on 15 October 2012. **The North West** is the worst hit region with a 53% increase (26,000 young people) in the number of 16-24 year-olds out of work for six months or longer, followed by the East of England (40%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (29%). London is the only area to have witnessed a small fall. The TUC research also shows that as long-term unemployment has rocketed, government support for unemployed young people has fallen by 26 % following the replacement of the previous government's Youth Guarantee (which included the Future Jobs Fund) with the new Youth Contract. £98 million less will be spent this year on support for jobless young people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) in England than was previously provided under the Youth Guarantee. The North West has also witnessed the largest drop in funding - with nearly £16 million cut from budgets. With the new funding levels under the Youth Contract dependent upon employers taking up the government's job subsidy places, the cuts could be even sharper. Concerns have been raised by the manufacturers' organization, the EFF, that many employers do not know about the new scheme. The findings highlight the impact that austerity measures are having upon young people and the inadequate levels of support being given to them. The TUC believes that the funding cuts, combined with the axing of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), the hike in tuition fees and the proposed scrapping of housing benefit for under 25s, are making it much harder for young people to get on and find decent long-term work. Source: <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/17179>

### 4. Ask your MP to speak out on tax dodging

**Tax dodging** has been in the news again this week. The scale of tax avoidance by international names such as Facebook, Starbucks and Amazon has been exposed. Some MPs are now calling for a Parliamentary Inquiry into

these practices. If we act now, we can get more MPs to join them. This is the next step after the highly successful **Tax Bus tour**, which finished with a big event in Manchester on 15 October. 5,000 people visited the bus, calling on David Cameron to push this issue on the world stage through the '**Tick for Tax Justice**'. But there's much more we can do. With your help, we can show MPs that their constituents care about this issue. **Email your MP now**, asking them to demand a tax dodging inquiry! Many thanks, **Liam Purcell, Communications Manager, Church Action on Poverty** [www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk)

## 5. Food Banks: a National Crisis?

*Columban Father Peter Hughes suggests that food banks may be a short term necessity, but cannot be the long-term solution.*

Every year around this time **UN World Food Day** (16 October) reminds us to pay attention to the multitude of people who suffer from not having enough to eat. The hunger statistics are overwhelming. According to the World Food Programme 870 million people are hungry – that's greater than the combined populations of the United States, Canada and the European Union. Every day approximately 16,000 children die because they are too poor to live. When we read these kinds of statistics we normally think of far distant countries in Africa or Asia. However, we can look much nearer home to find a severe problem of hunger in our own country.

This is manifesting itself in the alarming rise of **food banks** which have sprung up around the country. The Christian charity, **the Trussell Trust**, reports that 100,000 people have received emergency food from its network of food banks in the last six months. New food banks are being opened at a rate of three a week to meet the demand. The network has fed almost 110,000 people across the UK since April 2012 and is expecting to feed over 200,000 people by the end of the 2012 to 2013 period, compared with 128,697 during the whole of last year. These figures do not include the many other groups in the UK who are also involved in food banks. The increase in demand is being put down to rising food and fuel costs, together with static incomes, high unemployment and changes to benefits. A breakdown of the figures also shows that while less than one percent of those being referred are pensioners, there appeared to be a prevalence of young teenagers and adults taking up emergency food aid. In the latest set of figures, 14,500 people, 16% of all those being referred, were aged 16-24, a group that makes up around 11% of the UK population in total. Trussell Trust executive chairman Chris Mould, said that while they weren't reaching as many old people as they should be, travel and rent increases and the dire state of the youth employment market had left many of the UK's young adults in a desperate state with little financial resilience.

The boom in Britain's food banks reflects a number of worrying trends. As well as rising unemployment, more people are seeing their hours cut at work. For the past couple of years, charities have been warning that a shift to a less generous way of updating benefits in line with inflation, combined with rising food and fuel prices, would make life more difficult for people claiming benefits. Then there is the start of a new, harsher benefits regime, as a result of which more claimants are having their payments sanctioned – cut or stopped entirely – if they miss appointments. At the same time, the state system of a social fund and crisis loans is being wound down, so emergency cash payments from the welfare system for those deemed to be in extreme need are now exceptionally difficult to procure.

There needs to be a concerted effort to regain a social justice footing as a basis to tackling hunger. Speaking recently on BBC Radio Wales, Niall Cooper, Director of Church Action on Poverty highlighted that at least 90,000 children in Wales are in families which can't afford both adequate food and heating their homes. In the context of growing inequality and hardship, food banks fill a gap that is widening week by week and church involvement is inspiring. Yet, Niall pointed out that the number of people being helped, when compared to the need, "is deeply worrying". He added that the "deeper safety net that society provides is increasingly frayed". As we meet the immediate need, let's also campaign against the injustices that have caused the need. Social action must be coupled with social justice. Let's make our voice heard by the Government ministers who want to cut a further £10 billion from the payments made to the most vulnerable and needy.

Food banks may be a short term necessity, but cannot be the long-term solution. If a UK food crisis is to be averted, concerted action is needed to boost the incomes of the poorest and to hold down the escalating cost of food and other essential goods. But what chance of this in an age of austerity?

**Fr Peter Hughes SSC heads the Columban programme for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation and sits on the Executive of the National Justice and Peace Network.** For more information see: [www.columbans.co.uk](http://www.columbans.co.uk) and [www.justice-and-peace.org.uk](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk)

## 6. CAFOD launches new food campaign

CAFOD'S new campaign, **Hungry for Change**, is calling for fundamental changes in the global food system so that power is more justly shared between rich and poor people, and more people can have access to enough food. Launched on November 10 it will run for 12 months, using campaigning and political moments, such as the UK's hosting of the G8 in May 2013 to highlight the issues at stake and call for further support. There are an estimated 870 million people worldwide without enough food to be healthy and live an active life. The overwhelming majority of these live in developing countries. Hunger is the world's number one health risk, killing more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. The recent financial crisis has pushed even more people around the world to the brink of starvation.

The new campaign highlights the fact that a handful of supermarkets and food companies dominate the food system, making the rules that decide cost, price and standards. They often also control access to vital resources such as land, seeds and water. Yet 50% of the world's food is grown by small-scale farmers in developing countries. With little power in the global food supply chain, these farmers are often forced to agree to big companies' demands regardless of how unfair they may be.

### CAFOD'S Hungry for Change Campaign is asking for:

- The UK government to ensure 'empowering aid' - that helps small-farmers, especially women, speak up for their own needs and supports initiatives such as farming co-operatives - is a global priority
- The UK government to include global food companies in the new statutory register of lobbyists so that we can all see how companies seek to influence government policy behind closed doors
- For us all to look again at the choices we make about what we eat and buy. We are all part of the global food system and by choosing local, sustainable or Fairtrade food, reducing the food we waste, and eating less meat, we can all make a difference

**Take action:** Sign a Hungry for Change action card or email Prime Minister David Cameron calling him to put the power in the food chain back in the hands of the poorest men and women. The final day for returning campaign action cards to CAFOD will be 1 October 2013.

**Take the online action:** <http://www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Take-action-today/Hungry-for-change>

**Watch** CAFOD's Hungry for Change short film: <http://www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Get-clued-up/Food>

## 7. Buy Nothing Day 24 November

Everything we buy has an impact on the environment. Buy Nothing Day highlights the environmental and ethical consequences of consumerism. The developed countries - only 20% of the world population are consuming over 80% of the earth's natural resources, causing a disproportionate level of environmental damage, and an unfair distribution of wealth.

[www.buynothingday.co.uk](http://www.buynothingday.co.uk)

## 8. International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 25 November

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread violations of human rights. It can include physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse, and it cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth and geography. It takes place in the home, on the streets, in schools, the workplace, in farm fields, refugee camps, during conflicts and crises. It has many manifestations — from the most universally prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence, to harmful practices, abuse during pregnancy, so-called honour killings and other types of femicide.

Based on country data available, up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime. A World Health Organization study of 24,000 women in ten countries found that the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner varied from 15 percent in urban Japan to 71 percent in rural Ethiopia, with most areas being in the 30–60 percent range. Violence against women and girls has far-reaching consequences, harming families and communities. Gender-based violence not only violates human rights, but also hampers productivity, reduces human capital and undermines economic growth. In 2008, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched his campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* to draw international attention at the highest level to the issue. **Say NO – UNiTE** is designed to support social mobilization to drive actions and accountability, in contribution to the *UNiTE* campaign.

[www.saynotoviolence.org](http://www.saynotoviolence.org)

## 9. Woman's Hour Power List – Nominate Pat Gaffney! \*\*\* NJPN Action of the Week \*\*\*

Woman's Hour is requesting names for a list of a **Hundred Women of Power** in any walk of life in the UK by the **END of November**. The **National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN)** suggests we propose **Pat Gaffney, General Secretary of Pax Christi** for 22 years, as a dedicated peacemaker! Through her leadership Pat spreads the message of reconciliation, a culture of peace and non violence and the means to bring about peace both by promoting the peace message in the UK in dioceses, churches, universities and schools but also internationally as an advocate for non violence on solidarity visits to Palestine, East Timor and Russia. In 2005 she was nominated with a 1000 Women of Peace for the Nobel Peace Prize. Here in Shrewsbury Diocese we experienced at first hand her skills as a facilitator when she led our J&P Open Meeting in October. Visit [www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/womans-hour/power-list](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/womans-hour/power-list) Please use your own words. For more info Google 'Pax Christi' [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk) and 'Pat Gaffney'.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

**16 CAFOD Quiz Night in Our Lady's Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port, starting at 7.30pm**

**17 Stockport Annual Fairtrade Fair 10am -3pm Stockport College, Wellington Road South, Stockport SK1 3UQ**

**23 Talk by Stephen O'Brien MP, formerly Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for International Development. 7.30pm in the Best Building, University of Chester.**

**27 Talk by Andrew Pinder *The Global Banking Crisis, the Web and what next?* 7.30pm at the URC High Street, Church Stretton.**

**29 An Audio Visual Presentation by Kevin Flanagan *Austerity, Human Work and the call to Action' - A Challenge for the Church in the Year of Faith* 7.30pm at the Evron Centre, Shaw Heath, Stockport SK3 8HT arranged by Our Lady's Justice & Peace and Social Responsibility Group, Shaw Heath, Stockport. Kevin is Director of the St. Antony's Centre for Church and Industry, and editor of *Centreview* a publication that covers Catholic Social Thinking in action. He will be talking about today's economy, the employment situation, help to those that are living on the breadline, and those that have become homeless due to the economy. All welcome. Contact Brian Potter 0161 485 8312**

**29 Advent Reflection Day 10.30 for 11am until 3.30pm at Luther King House, Brighton Grove, off Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 5JP led by Jean Harrison, former Christian Aid staff member, who undertook a three-month placement in Bethlehem as an Ecumenical Accompanier. The day will include sharing and worship plus Palestinian Crafts on sale. Booking Fee £16, Coffee & Tea and Lunch included in the price. Contacts: Wendy Ross-Barker 0151 423 1215, [wrossb1@gmail.com](mailto:wrossb1@gmail.com) or Jan Davies 01704 872788, [janet@christianaid.plus.com](mailto:janet@christianaid.plus.com)**

### DECEMBER

**1 Coffees & Lunches 10.30am-2.30pm at The Welsh Church, St John Street, Chester. Proceeds to Christian Aid.**

**5 The 2012 Olivier Memorial Peace Lecture sponsored by Ludlow Quakers *Building Peace: How can we build peace in a violent world?* given by Professor Mary King at Ludlow Assembly Rooms 7.30pm. Admission £5 on the door. Mary King is a distinguished writer, teacher and lecturer on peace building and non-violence who worked alongside Martin Luther King Jr in the non-violent American civil rights movement of the 1960s. Under President Jimmy Carter she directed the international operations of the American Peace Corps.**

**9 J&P Advent reflection, 4pm Wistaston Hall, Crewe with Clare Dixon, Head of CAFOD's Latin America & Caribbean team. Please bring a plate of food for a buffet. Drinks provided. Contact Sue Bownas 01244 677594**

**10 Universal Declaration of Human Rights Display at St Peter's Centre, The Cross, Chester, to mark the 64<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UN's formal adoption of this major charter on human rights. Open 10am to 4pm**

**27 CAFOD Fun Run at Bollington near Macclesfield. Warm-up at 10.45am for 11am start. Details from Keith Taylor 01625 429915**