On entering the church, I was confronted by a gallery of artworks hung from the rafts of a modern cafe. St Stephen's, a beautiful city centre church, steeped in history, had been transformed. The exhibition, Who Are Your Neighbours?, was a gallery of 21st Century contemporary art that both challenged and comforted. They resurrected forgotten memories and raised difficult questions. They caused me to stop and consider my own and others' predicaments, to acknowledge the struggles but also to imagine new possibilities.

The exhibition was one of a series of events during Eastertide that gave people a chance to reflect on the global Covid-19 pandemic. It was built around the theme of hope, and was organised by a parent of cancer patients entering a time of strength, creative, refreshing.

One piece that was particularly striking was called The Long Overdue Reckoning by Liz Monahan. The work documented the unprecedented events of the past 18 months. Reading it from left to right, it it began with Boris Johnson, Prism Social and Nightingale hospitals. It recounted clapping for carers, food deliveries and how the NHS. It showed people locked in their homes, the pressure on the NHS, the Black Lives Matter movement with sunlight, smoldering in gardens and birds flutering in the trees. From years, it was leading to a better, more hopeful future.

What struck me most from the painting, which had far more detail than I could describe, was how it had been a time of reflection, of slowing down when needed to stand and contemplate, wondering whether I had deliberately allowed my memory to fade. Was it healthy to let go of the past and to move on, or should I try to remember the details in order to learn from them?

Reflecting on difficult times is not something that I would usually choose to do. It can lead to a sense of melancholy or even depression. However, there are times when it can be essential. In bereavement, reflecting is a significant part of the process. It can be difficult to remember the good times when we are blaming others and denying the truth. But it eventually leads us to a sense of acceptance. It is an important process and not something to be rushed. I think it is the same with Covid-19. My fear is that, in our hurry to get back to normal or to 'build back better', we are going to rush past the reflecting stage and miss important truths.

But it seems that as lockdown days further back in our memory, as does our collective Covid-19 pain, we are in danger of rushing forward without wondering where we can find long stones to deliver our Christmas goods, arguing about whether, or not, we should remove the £20 universal credit uplift or some of the poorest in our country. It feels like we are returning to the familiar, well worn paths of the 'me generation'.

Clearly, we have not yet reached the end of the Covid-19 journey. There will be further twists and turns in the path ahead and more to be learned. Let's be patient and continue to care for one another (and for ourselves). Let's not lose the gains we have made, such as the greater sense of togetherness, the new appreciation for our NHS and the increased awareness of the vulnerable. Hopefully, pulling together, we can indeed build back better.

News
Foodbank, Keep the Lifeline campaign
Kyle AM webinar
Refugee fund re-launched

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Supporting Afghan refugees
Anti-slavery day: 18th October
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Funding
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Vodafone Support for charities
NCF: Funding News

foodbank

We only have a small window of opportunity this September to try and protect millions of people on low incomes from being swept into poverty. We need you **to be as vocal as possible and raise a huge amount of public pressure** to get the UK government to change direction

Our new research shows the devastating impact that will be felt by people claiming Universal Credit if the UK government goes ahead with the planned cut to the Universal Credit uplift.

1.2m people fear they will be forced to skip meals

1.3m people fear being unable to heat their homes this winter

1.9 million claimants, in the last 30 days, already had one or more days in which they did not have enough to eat or drink

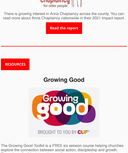
That is why we're saying the UK government must choose to protect people when they need support, not cut them adrift.

We know that together, change is possible.

When you can do:

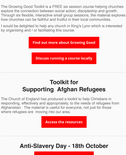
Acts 435 Norfolk Webinar

Last month Katie Greene from Acts 435 kindly led a webinar for groups from churches and groups in Norfolk to find out more about Acts 435 and how it can help by directly connecting those who have to give with those who are in genuine need of their help. You can watch the webinar recording by clicking below.



Watch webinar

Refugee fund re-launched



Refugee fund re-launched in response to Afghanistan crisis

A refugee fund has been re-launched by the Diocese of Norwich to enable people to donate to refugees from Afghanistan re-settling in Norfolk.

Bishop Graham says:

"The appalling plight of families fleeing Afghanistan has been deeply moving and we want to do what we can to support those who are now in Norfolk. Meanwhile, I am relaunching the Bishop of Norwich's refugee fund.

"This fund has given small grants to help with welcoming refugees from Syria and I am now extending it to support Afghans. It does not duplicate the work of the Norfolk Refugee Resettlement Partnership but is intended to help refugees settle. One example has been buying TV licences that help people to learn English and understand British culture and entertainment.

Your generous support, in loving our suffering neighbours as Jesus asks of us, would be hugely appreciated at the time. Thank you."

Norfolk County Council (NCC) has asked us for help to enable them to respond to requests to donate financially to refugees arriving in Norfolk. The Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance will administrate the fund.

Donate now

TRAINING

St Giles

Turning a past into a future

Register here

REPORTS

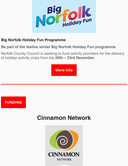
Anna Chaplaincy Impact Report 2021

There is growing interest in Anna Chaplaincy across the county. You can read more about Anna Chaplaincy nationwide in their 2021 Impact report.

Read the report

RESOURCES

Growing Good



The Growing Good Toolkit is a FREE six session course helping churches explore the connection between social action, discipleship and growth. Based on the Church of England's Fruitfulness Framework, it helps churches have fruitfulness can be faithful and fruitful in their local communities.

I would be delighted to help any church in King's Lynn which is interested by organising and / or facilitating this course.

Find out more about Growing Good

Discuss running a course locally

Toolkit for Supporting Afghan Refugees

The Church of England has produced a toolkit to help Christians in responding, effectively and appropriately, to the needs of refugees from Afghanistan. It includes practical ideas for churches, not just for those where refugees are moving into our area.

Access the resources

Anti-Slavery Day - 18th October

Liturgy and prayer resources

Big Energy Savings

Community Action Norfolk (CAN) are delivering Big Energy Savings sessions for groups/communities in Norfolk. These SUCH free sessions help people to understand about switching suppliers to get a better deal, how to read their bills, and how to access support for vulnerable people around energy supply.

Community Action Norfolk

Free tree packs

Free tree packs

As part of a Defra-funded scheme, from August you can apply for a free tree pack - ahead of the planting season in November
The trees are available to everyone including:
- Schools
- Community groups
- Parish councils
- Landowners
- Farmers

You can plant the trees on your own land, or land owned by someone else as long as you have the landowner's permission.

Here to apply for a free tree pack
Before you apply, make sure you have:
- Read the guidance on how to plant and care for the trees
https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/1-million-trees-for-norfolk/get-involved/free-tree-planting/guidance-notes
- Read the terms and conditions
- Someone responsible for planting and maintaining them

You will need to be able to collect the trees from a Norfolk pick-up point on the specified date. Trees will be in bundles of 10 or 25, with tree guards and stakes to help protect them.
Applications will close on 31 September, or once all the trees have been allocated.
Here
https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/1-million-trees-for-norfolk/get-involved/free-tree-planting

CAMPAIGN

sign the petition

EVENTS

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun 20th-23rd December

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun Programme

Be part of the festive wellbeing **Big Norfolk Holiday Fun programme**

Norfolk County Council is seeking to fund activity providers for the delivery of holiday activity clubs from **20th – 23rd December.**

More info

FUNDING

Cinnamon Network

Churches of any denomination across the country can currently apply for a £2000 grant to start a new Cinnamon recommended project. The list of projects includes food hub, gas bills, support for ex-offenders, houses for the homeless and much more.

View list of Cinnamon Recommended Projects

Apply for funding

Vodafone support for charities

Vodafone charities connected

Digital poverty means some people can't do the things most of us take for granted - such as set up online accounts for bills, apply for jobs online or access vital information online. Vodafone's Digital Skills programme for digital inclusion programmes, you can apply for free Vodafone SIMs, each loaded with 20GB data plus unlimited calls and texts to be used over 12 months. Vodafone's Digital Skills programme is ideal for help-to-grow, help-to-work with service users, or deliver training to people in need.

For more information and to apply please visit:
charities.connected / find-digital-exclusion / datafone

NCF Funding News

Vodafone charities connected

Digital poverty means some people can't do the things most of us take for granted - such as set up online accounts for bills, apply for jobs online or access vital information online. Vodafone's Digital Skills programme for digital inclusion programmes, you can apply for free Vodafone SIMs, each loaded with 20GB data plus unlimited calls and texts to be used over 12 months. Vodafone's Digital Skills programme is ideal for help-to-grow, help-to-work with service users, or deliver training to people in need.

For more information and to apply please visit:
charities.connected / find-digital-exclusion / datafone

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NCF Funding News

NCF Funding News

LET'S TALK...

I would love to hear from you to discuss any of the following things:

- How you are getting involved in your local community, and any good news stories about the difference this is making
- Events you are running, which welcome the local community
- If you would like me to visit your church, church meeting or group
- Anything you would find useful in future editions of this letter
- Just to say hello!

Andrew Frere-Smith
t: 07949 964932
e: andrew.frere-smith@dioceseofnorwich.org

Imagine Norfolk Together is a partnership between the Diocese of Norwich and the Church Urban Fund. We support local churches creating stronger communities through social action.

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