

SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUM, report on second year, November 2016 – October 2017

1. The Social Justice Forum.

The idea of the Social Justice Forum is that a small group of committed people meet together four times a year to pray, study and initiate action on different issues of social justice. Prayer is seen as fundamental, since we are trying to discern what God is asking of us, the people of St Anne's Kew, now, in relation to the great suffering and injustice of our world. By social justice, we understand how all that we have been given is from God and is shared between us (the social element), and how fair or unfair these shares are (the justice element).

2. Attendance at meetings since December 2015

The Social Justice Forum again met four times. One meeting focused on refugees and one on asylum seekers. The May meeting, led by Sister Sue of the Anglican Franciscans, was devoted to social justice and prayer, with specific reference to refugees and was held in the Church. We chose a new topic, Climate Justice for our most recent meeting, in October.

Thirty six people are on an email list for communication. Attendance has been as follows:

YEAR 1 MEETINGS	December 2015	February 2016	May 2016	October 2016
Number participating	21	16	13	13
Apologies	3	6	9	9
YEAR 2 MEETINGS	November 2016	February 2017	May 2017	October 2017
Number participating	12	13	11	12
Apologies	12	7	n/av	9

3. Format of meetings

Meetings last two hours. The first hour focuses on study and prayer, the second on action. Claudine produces a hand-out, professionalised in the Parish Office, which is afterwards available on the St Anne's web site.

4. Outcomes

a. *Contact has been maintained with three organisations:*

i. **Breaking Barriers**, a charity whose aim is to establish refugees in employment for which they prior experience and skills. Two members of St Anne's are involved as volunteers. Link person: Sally Cannon (8am attender)

ii. **CARAS** (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers), a Tooting based charity that provides help and support to refugees and asylum seekers in South London. We had a Question/Answer session in Christian Aid week with Eleanor Brown, their Chief Executive, chaired by Margaret Handly. The **Chickpea Sisters** is a social enterprise in catering, set up under the auspices of CARAS. They are going to provide supper for the concert in aid of I N S on October 19th (organised by Sue Lloyd) and give a cookery demonstration on November 22nd for ten people in Sally Cannon's house. Link person: Judith Evans, a patron of CARAS (8am attender).

iii. **Refugees Welcome in Richmond** is a group, working with Richmond Borough, that is dedicated to finding housing for fifty households under the government's scheme to bring in 20,000 Syrian refugees from refugee camps. Two families have been housed in Whitton but finding accommodation has proved extremely difficult. We are in touch with them through Churches Together in Kew. Link people: Claudine McCreddie (8am attender) and Annabel Clark (CTiK representative for St Anne's)

b. *Written materials*

i. the **handout** for each meeting includes facts, references, prayers, reflections, web site references and updates on developments. The handouts are available on the St Anne's web site and at the back of the church (paper copy);

ii. a **prayer card** for refugees was drawn up by Susan Hayman, professionalised by Father Nigel and is in all the pews;

iii. we worked on a statement of positive commitment toward refugees. Marion Mollett chaired this and we decided to subscribe to the Declaration signed by the Bishop of Southwark and the Mayor of London in December 2016. We called this a Declaration of Fellowship. It has been on the St Anne's web site, since March, under Social Justice. We have invited members of the congregation to sign it through The Messenger and the St

Anne's email news. So far 26 people have signed.

iv. Christopher and Claudine wrote a two page submission for Mission Worth Living, drawing on the experience of the Social Justice Forum

c. Talks

i. Judge John Manuell who is a senior judge in the Immigration and Asylum Chamber spoke in March on Refugees and the Law.

5. Views of those involved in Social Justice Forum

We have not explored these this time.

6. Plans for Year 3.

i. This is the final year of the Social Justice Forum in its present form. We will focus on Climate Justice in the four remaining meetings in December (2nd), February, May and October; our topics provisionally will focus on: United Nations Sustainable development Goals (December), Water and energy (February), Voices from around the world (May) – to link with Christian Aid Week 2018 (13-19 May) and Commitments for the future (October). We will continue with our handouts.

ii. At our meeting on October 7th, we looked at a wide range of possible actions for the coming year and cast votes for those we most supported. The most popular were a Carbon Fast in Lent 2018, promoting closer links with Kew Gardens, participate as a church in the EcoChurch audit, arrange talks with Churches Together in Kew, including a study of the Pope's 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si (Praise be!) – care of our common home*; Celebrating Earth Day (April 22) and work with the Junior Church.

iii. **Ongoing contact with** Breaking Barriers, through volunteering; with CARAS, through occasional mutual get togethers; and with Refugees Welcome in Richmond, through information exchange.

iv. Regular feedback to M & M and on church notice board and on the St Anne's web site. We would be interested to know from Mission and Ministry and the PCC if anyone would like to be on the mailing list. We send warnings of meetings and notes of what took place at each meeting. Please email Claudine dandcmcc@gmail.com to go on list.

Claudine McCreddie and Christopher Stephens, 16 October 2017