

Suffolk Modern Slavery Network Meeting: 21 August 2 pm.

Churchgates. Convenor: Revd Carol Mansell

There was a lesser turnout than before, but August is holiday time. Many apologies had been received. Cathie, Janice and I represented MU.

Janice showed the ABC card which affirmed MU commitment to the issue. It was well received.

Anti-Slavery Day is 18 October and opens Freedom Week through till 24 October. Discussion was invited for ways to mark this period. The proximity of the timing rather curtailed any complicated events, but it was resolved to try and be simple and effective in what was offered. We agreed that this subject was largely unfamiliar to the wider public and MU reps reported that it had taken quite a time to raise awareness amongst our members and churches about Domestic Violence, Lighthouse, FGM and 16 Days of Activism but our members were now familiar and involved with both issues in prayer and active support. We asked for copies of the A4 poster to distribute at the Healing Service and in Branch packs at Nov Council.

Carol would approach the Uni Chaplaincy team and endeavour to invite the students who were at our first meeting to be part of a display at Suffolk Uni. This was best done from a secular approach using the excellent materials from **UNSEEN** rather than an overtly Christian perspective. Becky, the Suffolk Modern Slavery Coordinator agreed to produce an information handout citing the 3 most prevalent MS issues in Suffolk, which are County Lines, Sex Workers and labour in 'factory' venues. The British Red Cross and the Police rep would be involved. For next year it was hoped that the Uni Drama Dept might stage street dramas to impact the students and start discussion. Having nail painting available was another conversation starter. Richard Stainer would approach the Theatre in Bury St Edmunds to see if they might have a Drama event on the theme in 2020.

Richard offered to create a display in the Cathedral to include information from **UNSEEN** and to demonstrate the beginnings of the Diocesan engagement with the **Clewer Initiative**. MU would, of course be a natural partner in this and Christine agreed to assist in the set-up and hoped to attend on Friday morning. There are 2-3 min video's which are very effective and those will be considered to give impact. We realise that time is tight for permission from Trustees, but Cathy, Christine and Janice were happy to support Richard for however long he thought the display should be staffed. There is a prospect of Modern Slavery and Diocesan support of Clewer being included in the Cathedral Worship on the Sunday (*this is now not happening 2019*).

Many agencies are involved through the Network Meeting and although the Police area covers Norfolk too, there is a strong local focus. Richard shared that he had raised the Modern Slavery issue at a Diocesan Training day and was disappointed by negative responses that this was not something for the Church to be involved with. However, he was subsequently contacted by one person who apologised saying that at the time he knew neither facts nor ways of being involved. Information is important but is difficult material to assimilate the first time you hear of it.

Further information on 18-24 October would be circulated as it was available. We pointed out that MU had our Healing Service at Rendlesham in the afternoon but would do our best to be available in the morning and evening, if required. We three wondered if prayer could be included in the Healing Service for those 'Unseen and Hidden' affected by Modern Slavery; those working to alleviate their suffering; those inflicting this misery on the vulnerable.

Notes on Freedom Week- Friday 18 October

The displays were set up at the University and at the Cathedral as discussed. Revd Carol Mansell attended the former and Richard Stainer the latter. Our President, Linda, spent time at the Cathedral before attending the Healing Service and was pleased that a MU tablecloth and our Clewer Initiative information were a significant part of it. We were fortunate to have a prominent position and the display remained until the following Thursday. It was affirmed that the issue of Modern Slavery was largely unknown by many people and our MU involvement in raising awareness will be of vital impact. The Network has begun in a small way but by next October it could be a very different story. For MU to be working in partnership with the Diocese will have prayerful impact and that our Diocesan Network group includes the many agencies who are actually addressing this scourge must ensure that it's work will be relevant and effective.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 03 December, please hold the Network, it's outreach, it's members and the victims of Modern Slavery, in your prayers.

Christine