

# Newsletter

## July 2023

### Welcome to the round up of our latest news

Thank you for your continued support and interest in SWCC

#### SWCC Office Move

In April, SWCC relocated its office base to Exeter Community Centre. We now have our own designated office on the second floor. Our new address is

**South West Community Chaplaincy,  
17 St David's Hill, Exeter, Devon, EX4 3RG.**

We are still waiting for the phone line to be connected so in the meantime, if you need to get in touch, please email us at [enquires@southwestcc.org.uk](mailto:enquires@southwestcc.org.uk) or pop in if you are passing!



Exeter Community Centre

#### High Sheriff's Charity 2023-2024

**We are delighted that retired Bishop of Plymouth, Rt Reverend Nick McKinnel has chosen SWCC as his Charity of the Year 2023-2024. His interest and support of us is invaluable in promoting the work we do. Here is what he says...**

A year or so before I retired as the Bishop of Plymouth, I received a phone call out of the blue asking if I would consider being the High Sheriff of Devon for 2023-2024. Not only was I honoured to be approached but as I have often encouraged clergy to embrace new ministries on retirement, this seemed an appropriate way to take my own advice. The challenge is to explore how this ancient office can engage with and contribute to contemporary life. High Sheriffs date back to Saxon times, when they were known as Shire Reeves and acted as royal officials appointed to collect taxes, enforce law and order, punish criminals and raise a military force in the County. Fortunately for me and the County all those responsibilities have over the years been passed to other agencies, but the office of High Sheriff remains an independent non-political Royal appointment, held for a year and offering support to the Crown, the judiciary and all involved in the administration of justice as well as the emergency services, local authorities and the voluntary sector.

A challenge for me personally is to think out what part my Christian faith can play in this role. I have therefore chosen to support South West Community Chaplaincy for my term in office. From visits to the three Devon prisons over my time as a Bishop I have become aware of the problems faced by prisoners on release. Given a travel voucher and around £76, it is too easy even for those who want life to be different to be dragged back into old ways, especially if they have no home or family to return to. SWCC's work with those who want to change their lives on release from prison, with its dedicated provision of mentoring support to listen, support and walk alongside people on release is so important. They are in fact currently looking for mentors who can be trained for the task, as well as needing funds for their invaluable work. so please get in touch with them if you can help!

**SWCC is keen to involve those with lived experience of the criminal justice system in the planning and development of future services. Jim has recently joined us as a volunteer Project Development Worker. His insight and personal experience is a real asset to SWCC. Here he shares with us a little about what he has been doing and what that means for him...**

The concept of being asked to write something for a newsletter was not one I ever expected to be approached about. Through a series of life events, I found myself unemployed, low on self esteem and not feeling I had anything to offer not only employers, but the world in general. My skill base from my previous work was extremely specific and not exactly transferable but there was no way back to that career for me. Each day rolled into the next and Groundhog Day was a feeling I knew well. I had lost hope, motivation and direction.

By a stroke of good fortune I was made aware of the work of SWCC and following an introduction, it turned out that I may have something to offer. My general life experience meant that I could bring something to the team and be given the chance to help others whilst regaining my own sense of purpose. After being out of the workplace for a while it was with some trepidation that I headed into the SWCC office on that first morning to begin my role as Project Development Worker. It's a broad ranging position that allows me to be involved with the many different aspects of what we do. I've primarily been working on the Services Database and helping to expand it. For those of you that are familiar with it you will have hopefully noticed the reorganisation and growth of it in recent weeks. With other ideas being discussed and plans for future projects, I'm excited to see what the next work day will bring.

The sense of feeling I have when I walk into the office is something I felt I would not have again. To be part of a team, to have a sense of purpose and to be at the foundation of ongoing projects is something that I have a great deal of gratitude for. Everyone has their part to play in the work of SWCC and for me to be a small part of that is life changing

## Chaplains Chat

Education, Training and Employment often play a significant part in a client's desistance. Recently we have been put in touch with a new project being run by the Salvation Army in Exeter called Employment Plus. They are looking to work with Job Centres, charities, and any other services supporting people who are 18 and over. They are happy to take self-referrals as well as referrals from other agencies such as SWCC.

The scheme offers practicable and tailored one-to-one and group sessions for those who may need extra support with any of the following:

- CV Writing
- Employability Support
- Job Searching
- Creating Cover Letters
- I.T. Support
- Training
- In Work Support

This list is not exhaustive, and they will tailor their help and support to the individual needs of the client. The programmes are not prescriptive and after completing an induction, staff then agree an individual action plan with everyone and then work towards their goals according to the individual's needs.

The main difference between Employment Plus and many other providers is that they are self-funded so can work without being tied to specific criteria. Being over 18 is their only stipulation. It is a free, voluntary offering and anyone can leave the programme at any time.

For more information about this very worthwhile service contact:

Caitlin Crocker  
Employment Development Coordinator  
The Salvation Army Employment Plus UK  
Mob: 07435 791928 Freephone: 0800 652 4276  
The Salvation Army, Exeter Citadel  
Exeter Temple, Friars Gate, Exeter, EX2 4AZ  
[www.salvationarmy.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk)

**We look forward to welcoming more volunteers like Jim to SWCC in the future, who have lived experience, to enhance the service, scope and support we can offer as an organisation.**

