



## MILTON KEYNES MISSION PARTNERSHIP

**Minutes of the Mission Partnership Assembly** which took place on **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019** at Christ Church, Stantonbury

1. **Opening Worship** was led by Rev. David Lewis

### 2. **Business**

(a) Minutes of the Assembly AGM meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019 are available on our website. These will be approved at our next AGM in Summer 2020.

(b) Ecumenical Oversight News presented by Tim Norwood, current Chair of the EOG.

The work on developing a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) document for our LEPs continues. This will provide a structure to help the LEPs to function and will require the big LEPs to register as charities. We are very close to having a format that all the denominations are happy with. There will be 3 documents:

- CIO
- Church Partnership Agreement
- Operating Procedures

They will provide a legal, efficient and effective way of operating. A meeting with the LEP Team Leaders and LEP Lay Chairs will take place in the next few months.

(c) Date of next Assembly – To be advised.

### 3. **Vital Signs, Vital Faith**

Presentation by Dr Vasco Fernandes, Vice President of MK Community Foundation



*Vital Signs MK* is an annual report that provides some up to date information on the communities of Milton Keynes presented in an easy-to-read format.

The purpose of the report is to help us in the voluntary, community, commercial, faith and public sectors to invest our resources/efforts efficiently and effectively, towards the areas of our community where it is most needed.

Vasco ran through the areas of the report and noted particular findings:

- 1 in 4 respondents said that they felt lonely for long periods of time
- The most deprived areas in MK: Woughton Ward (100% of Netherfield and Beanhill, 80% of Tinkers Bridge, and 20% of Coffee Hall), 80% of Fullers Slade in Stony Stratford Ward, 20% of Water Eaton in Eaton Manor, and 60% of Greenleys in Wolverton Ward  
*(note: deprived people do not only live in deprived areas or vice versa)*
- MK has a higher number of children with moderate learning difficulty known to schools
- Just under 1 in 3 Children in MK live in poverty (31%), and as high as 50% in some wards

***How Can We:***

- Relate our faith to the issues
- Develop practical responses to the key issues

Worksheets were then given out for the group work.

Vasco then looked in depth at the following issues

- ***Poverty*** - Poverty is going without the necessities of life; inequality refers to the gap where some people have less than others.
- ***Loneliness***

***What can we as individuals/groups do?***

- Be aware of the issues
- Identify “at risk” individuals
- Be inclusive
- Do something about it

***Do what?***

- Befriending
- Signposting
- Referral
- Telephone contact
- Practical input/support
- “Spread the word”

### ***How can I/we do this?***

- Be a volunteer in your own “setting”
- Be a volunteer in a “charity/voluntary organisation” targeting the need eg Winter Night Shelter, Samaritans, MK MS Therapy Centre
- Provide financial support to your own “setting”
- Provide financial support to a “charity/voluntary org” targeting the need
- Obtain resources from funders, eg MK Community Foundation, to start something new or expand a current provision
- One’s individual inputs with individuals

### ***Signposting***

- There are many organisations and services both nationally and locally that can offer information and support around particular issues.
- Signposting is about the “client” taking (or being given) responsibility for contacting other organisations to help them resolve their problem.

### ***Referral***

- Referral is about “the trusted friend” taking at least partial responsibility for contacting other organisations when, for whatever reason, they are no longer able to assist the individual or that signposting itself is not sufficient to meet the individual’s needs.
- A referral usually involves “the trusted friend/adviser” making contact with the organisation to arrange an appointment and make any other necessary arrangements to ensure that the case continues smoothly.

### ***Some other ways***

- Offering a lift to Church Services, shopping, to Cafes for a Coffee
- Visiting isolated (elderly) neighbours, others
- Visiting isolated single disadvantaged mums
- Inviting isolated neighbours to your home during festivities (eg on Christmas Day)
- Being a good neighbour
- Being inclusive

### ***Where can I do this?***

- In your home/next door/in your street
- In your own setting – eg Church, Church Hall, “drop in/open surgery”
- In charity/voluntary organisations settings
- In other settings – eg Parent and Child Groups, Luncheon Clubs for Older People
- In other Community settings eg in the shopping centre, in Parish Council offices, Food Banks, Winter Night Shelters

### ***Spotting the signs of Loneliness***

- being neighbourly and being more aware of the people around us.
- reaching out to an older neighbour with a smile and a hello.

- thinking about simple everyday things to connect with older neighbours, for example, helping them with the bins on the bin collection day.
- brief chat on the bus or at the supermarket can help an older person feel less alone

Vasco is happy to be contacted by those who need further info or support.

email: [vfernandes@doctors.org.uk](mailto:vfernandes@doctors.org.uk)

### **Feedback from the floor following group work:**

- One of the things we can do is consider carefully how we vote.
- At Christ the Cornerstone signposting advice takes place Monday - Friday.
- How can we lobby our MPs?
- Money management advice.
- David from New Life Church talked about Unity Park.
- MK Deanery's Understanding Mental Health project. Knowledge is required to set things up and sustain them.
- A directory would be useful so we can do good signposting. Vasco advised there is a lot of information on the MK Community Action website.
- St Mark's Meals are tackling child hunger.

John Robertson suggested MKMP could hold a Mission Fair in Spring 2020 to showcase all the agencies in MK. John concluded by saying it is amazing to see how many areas church are involved in, eg St Marks Meals, MK Food Bank etc.

4. **Prayer for the City** - The meeting closed with prayer.