



*Mission Partnership Newsletter*  
*April 2020*

Dear Friends,

It has been a privilege to take part in some of the conversations run by ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) aimed at bringing a wide variety of groups across the public and voluntary sector together to celebrate MK, explore its challenges and wonder how to respond to them. It was heartening to see the interest and commitment to the city expressed by the police, headteachers, young people, faith groups, health professionals, community workers, voluntary groups of many different kinds, council staff, MK Dons, the Co-op and Sam Crooks, the mayor, even attended all four evenings. Drawing on his early life in Northern Ireland, Sam spoke with passion and real insight into the importance of working upstream of problems before they grow out of control, of building up the social fabric and not allowing divisiveness to creep in. The issues that were raised in the conversations were, of course, familiar: knife crime, housing,



transport, social isolation, provision for young people, mental health to name a few. These things are not easily resolved. What struck me, however, was the overlapping nature of the issues themselves coupled with the groups trying to respond to them. There is a clear need to develop real working partnerships amongst people on the ground so that problems are addressed in their interconnected complexity not simply in silos, and to foster a strategic response which harnesses the energy which was apparent in each of the four conversations. My hope is that there will be sufficient will to move on to that next stage and really make a difference to the city as a result. With the commitment to the well being of the city for its own sake which underlies our vision, the churches have a key role to play in this. With the deep understanding of partnership which underpins ecumenical life, the churches have a lot to give. Approached in this

way and offered in service, faith becomes active in the public square with integrity and energy. ROC will be producing a report out of the conversations which I look forward to reading. Look out for a copy and see if you are being called to get stuck in.

Every Blessing,  
John

P.S. With apologies to all those who have put time and energy into the **Mission Fair on 21<sup>st</sup> March** and to all those who were looking forward to coming, we have not been able to secure enough stalls to make the event viable this time and have had to cancel it. We will review the situation and hope to return to the plans in the future.