



## Justice and Peace at Catholic Leamington

*St Peter the Apostle, Dormer Place, Leamington Spa, CV32 5AA*

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### REVIEW OF THE YEAR - 2021/ 2022

Our monthly meetings were again all held on Zoom this year (Sep2021/2022) as there were still lockdown issues and worries about Covid infection. We found the zoom format reasonably successful with our existing members. There were 10 meetings, every month except December and August. Our numbers have been depleted during the year as we lost our founder members, Janice and Brian Austin as they have moved to be near their family. Recently another long standing member, Wilf Feely has had a severe stroke although, thankfully, he is now recovering. Our numbers at meetings are therefore lower - 5 or 6. However we had a joint meeting with Warwick J and P group in June and shared information about what we were both doing and agreed to keep in contact, sharing ideas and maybe collaborating on projects where possible.

Regular topics of discussion were local issues around poverty and homelessness, Climate change, CAFOD's agenda, fair trade and 'living Simply', awareness raising on peace issues, liaison with local and Diocesan Justice and Peace and other action groups and promoting prayer and actions to the Parish via the liturgies, newsletters, monthly prayer intention a weekly liturgy in Lent incorporating current J&P issues in a PowerPoint presentation of the traditional Stations of the Cross, and Information is regularly put in the Parish newsletters, 'Extra' newsletter, Parish website [www.catholicleamington.org.uk/justice-and-peace](http://www.catholicleamington.org.uk/justice-and-peace) and via the Google group email.

To find out more email .... [cl.iandp@gmail.com](mailto:cl.iandp@gmail.com)

***Many thanks to all who contributed through the year and our Parish priests who have supported us.***

#### **Poverty and Homelessness**

There have been developments throughout the year. The Night Shelter, which met at Radford Road Church and regularly reported to us, decided to close its doors in the last few months. They had not opened at night since the first Covid lockdown although they were still ~~been~~ helping their visitors in practical ways. The Trustees felt that the service had run its course and others were taking on some of the role they had previously filled. The LWS (Leamington and Warwick Shelter) is still providing evening meals although not overnight stays.

We have reports from the Saturday Friendship Group as Catholic Leamington parishioners work in the Way Ahead Project in a partnership between St Peter's and the Salvation Army. Several parishioners work there either on Saturdays or weekdays and the funding obtained from various sources (£550 from parishioners, SPAN and Leamington Town Council Community Fund) continues to be paid monthly to WAP. Numbers attending the Drop-in average 20 during the week and up to 15 on Saturdays, when a cooked breakfast is available. Visitors can access washing facilities, laundry, food bank vouchers, clothing vouchers, advice from the staff as well as food and refreshments and a listening ear. The staff can advise

on housing, benefits, bills, health services, and drug issues, and refer clients to a suitable agency. Several agencies access their clients at the WAP, particularly mental health and homelessness services.

A drive for more volunteers during the year brought a few new people along.

The latest issues regarding the cost of living will make all these services on the front line more necessary and may increase homelessness again, after a fall during Covid under the 'Everyone In' policy.

There is now a small team of volunteers supervising the SFG project, co-ordinated by Julia Fan.

## **Live simply**

The 'live simply' team had a stall for 'Ecofest' on the Pump Room Gardens in September 2021. This event promotes environmentally beneficial ways of living. The stall promoted green energy and had a display about the ways we can try to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor. There was colouring and activities for the children and this was very successful, combined with promotion of fair trade including giving out fair trade bananas. A lot of families engaged and this led to good discussions on how we can improve our carbon footprint.

There will be another similar stall in September 2022 including a contribution from CAFOD too,

There is a recycling box to collect old mobile phones, jewellery, stamps etc which has gone between the 3 churches and has raised more than £150 for CAFOD so far.

During the 'Season of Creation' 2021 we arranged a tree walk in Jephson Gardens – which attracted a number of people. It was led by Councillor Sydney Syson, and included prayers and reflections.

The SP Choir led a concert during the Season of Creation to incorporate the themes of creation, and readings from 'Laudato Si' were included in the concert.

During 'Live simply' week in May we had a 'walk to church' Sunday at both Our Lady's and St Peter's as well as a display encouraging people to make 'just one pledge' for climate change, e.g. walking more, using public transport, eating less meat, conserving water etc.

## **Climate Change**

We participated in **CAFOD's** campaign on the climate crisis and the effect that it is having on the poorer countries who have many extra burdens to cope with. We promoted the post cards to send as part of the petition to go to Government prior to the COP26 meeting of nations in Glasgow. We promoted this at the 3 churches in CL, collected the cards and posted them.

Brian Austin signed up to be local Community Champion for the Climate Coalition and promoted the petition <https://thetimeisnow.uk/declaration> to show politicians that there is a mandate for protecting the environment.

Some of the J&P group met with young people on a walk from Cornwall to Glasgow for COP26 – they arrived in Leamington and went to see the MP. We welcomed them and wished them well. One of our group went on 2 legs of the next stage of the walk.

Brian also signed up to the 'Laudato Si' animators course and was part of a writing group of Laudato Si' animators in the Diocese. He is continuing this from his new home in Bristol.

We keep up to date with the CAFOD campaigns at our meetings and support the Family Fast days in the parish.

## **Fair Trade**

We were able to run Traidcraft stalls at St Peter's and Our Lady's for Fairtrade fortnight in 2022.

We have highlighted Fair trade in the Newsletter EXTRA although no longer running a regular FT stall.

## **Peace issues**

For Peace Sunday in January we produced an introduction, penitential rite and bidding prayers for use on that weekend's Masses. We also suggested bidding prayers for the anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in 1945 in August.

## **Liturgies**

We produced a penitential rite and bidding prayers for 'the Season of Creation' last September and for Peace Sunday in January.

We recommend a Rosary intention every month on a topical issue, for example - climate change, refugees, those suffering because of the pandemic, and recently the situation in Ukraine. This is published in the parish Newsletter each week and promoted on the J and P board at St Peter's

## **Stations of the Cross**

During Lent we were able to show the J and P stations of the cross in the SP Parish Centre each Monday morning after the morning mass. These stations were updated to cover issues such local poverty and homelessness, the plight of those in Afghanistan, Yemen, Sudan, Palestine, Myanmar and those affected by climate change in many ways. We were not in time to add the war in Ukraine but this was very much on our minds. The power point presentation was also accessible on Youtube.

Attendance varied but averaged around 12.

## **Cards for Prisoners of conscience**

In May 2022 we had a table at all 3 churches – with names and details of Prisoners of Conscience, which were obtained from ACAT (Action by Christians against Torture) and volunteers helped parishioners with filling in the details of an appropriate greeting and signing the cards. Over 100 cards were sent by the team to several people in different countries, China, Pakistan and Myanmar among them. This helps parishioners to engage and take a positive step to reach out to those in these terrible situations. Thanks to Diana O'Reilly for organising this.

## **Campaigning**

There have been many issues throughout the year which have been of great concern, regarding the treatment of refugees, and in particular the 'Nationalities and Borders' Bill - several members wrote to their MP's regarding this bill, which includes the 'off shoring' of refugees in Rwanda. We have followed the situation with Ukrainian refugees and a member has been involved in the scheme.

We have supported CAFOD's climate change petition.

A demonstration in support of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's release was held last year by the local group of the UN Association and this was publicised and supported.

We promote suitable campaigns from CAFOD, the Diocese or the UN association through our Google groups email.

### **Dialogue with Warwick St Mary Immaculate**

We had a joint meeting in June with friends from the J and P group at St Mary Immaculate in Warwick. We learned about their initiative to welcome a Syrian family to the area, for which they have raised money, gathered expertise and support and got ready to welcome a family. At the time of writing there is a family who arrived in the summer, living in the accommodation provided. We congratulated them on this wonderful initiative and wished them well. They also have a 'Live simply' Group and we heard how they are trying to make this well known in the church and local schools. We hope to continue dialogue.

### **Links with the diocese**

Last year the J and P assembly was held on Zoom and several attended remotely.

### **The Future**

With limited numbers of attendees we need to attract more helpers, raise awareness and decide how to engage with the younger people. It would be good to have a spread of people over the three Churches in Catholic Leamington.