

Chairman's Report for CTiSD 2017

Greetings from Croatia and apologies for missing the AGM yet again, but I really do need a break after that Acton Art Exhibition.

As I sat down to reflect on my first year of chairman of Churches Together in Sudbury and District it struck me that we are truly blessed to be able to work together, in so many ways, as Christians in this area. It has been a truly busy year!

Our regular activities which are part of our yearly calendar have continued to provide a strong foundation of prayer and worship. The weekly prayer breakfasts are a wonderful opportunity to share fellowship and as we come together to pray for the needs of our area and the wider world.

Our united worship brings us together to praise God and to be challenged and it is always a privilege to join with Christians across the world in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year was particularly significant as over 170 church leaders and members signed the covenant that commits us to our continuing work together. We also enjoyed an additional opportunity for united worship at Pentecost Praise, where we received a particularly thought provoking message from Bishop Martin.

Although our forums are not always as well attended as we would like, they have also offered much food for thought this year, with a wide range of speakers. Please do encourage members of your churches to attend these open meetings.

In terms of ministry and outreach, Kettle and Fish continues to provide a welcoming space for visitors and Sudbury residents, offering excellent refreshments, companionship and prayer on most Thursdays. Ken and Christine who work so hard with the team in running Kettle and Fish were nominated for a community award in the Spring, a sign of the wide appreciation of their work. They are retiring at the end of the year and will be much missed. Discussions are in progress to form a team who will be able to take on management of Kettle and Fish. Please continue to pray for positive outcomes for this process.

It is a joy to work with so many different Christian organisations in the town, including; Town Pastors, Future Vision, Eden's, Fellowship Football and Snooker,

Christian Aid and Storehouse - so many different ministries are sharing God's love in word and action. This year we have also supported A Rocha as they opened their new nature reserve at Foxearth, well worth a visit!

We have also taken the Christian message into the wider community through a number of special events. The Advent Art Trail encouraged local schools and artists to present their own portrayals of the Nativity and local shops and businesses were supportive in displaying these.

The two winning entries have been reproduced as Christmas cards and these will be on sale this year with the proceeds supporting Future Vision.

At Easter, we again ran I-Spy Easter and welcomed over 60 families to the events in St Peter's Church. We also participated in the Suffolk Walking Festival, running a guided walk around churches in Sudbury and had a stall at Sudbury on Show.

A busy year indeed! All of this work takes many hard workers and I would like to thank all church reps and members of the Enabling Group and Steering committee for all that you do in His service. We look forward to following God as He leads us into the next year and I pray that we will have the courage and grace to listen carefully and step out courageously wherever He calls.

I offer Blessings to you all in Christ's name.

Gerry Higginson