



February 2007

AbbeyField Community Project

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Here is an update on the work at the "AbbeyField Community Project". For those who are not familiar with the project, it is an initiative of six local churches seeking to be an influence in this new and exciting housing development area here on the AbbeyField.

So far the URC have purchased a 'Community House' which is being used for some small community activities. The Methodist church have provided Jane Mason, the Community Worker for Marlborough Place, whilst Colchester Evangelical Church (now renamed 'AbbeyField Community Church') have provided me as the Community worker for Churchill Gate.

At the moment we are seeking to do an effective needs analysis with the local residents (through a questionnaire which is delivered into every home along with our welcome pack). This will mean that our future work meets the needs of the people, as opposed to us coming in with our own perceived needs and then running events that are not what the community need or want.

I feel it is important to emphasise that my role is not to get 'people on seats' at church on Sundays, instead my role is to create a healthy and functioning community where everyone has a sense of safety and belonging whilst being equipped to excel in every area of life. Obviously as any Christian in the work place, I seek to be a good example;

however 'community worker' does not equate to 'evangelist'. Having the backing of the corporate local church is a fantastic testimony to the concern we the church have for the holistic person not just the spiritual side of their lives. Our commitment to this community is not dependant upon the people's response to the gospel message. This approach along with our ecumenical foundation really sets the project apart from many other Christian community projects.

We would really value your prayers as we seek to become established in the local community.

1. Pray that a suitable building will become available soon for the AbbeyField Community Centre. (We are in discussion with the local relevant people. One building in particular would be ideal but there is lots of red tape to overcome first!).

2. Pray for Jane and me, that as we oversee the hands on community work we would gain a strong and positive reputation amongst the local residents.

3. Pray for the churches that are supporting this project, that they will gain a sense of ownership for the work that is going on here.

Thank you so much reading this. For more information on the project you can visit www.abbeyfieldcommunity.com and if we can help you in any way then please get in touch. It is an honour and privilege to be serving God here in this town with you.

Much Love
Dave Stevens
AbbeyField Community Project:
Community Worker for Churchill Gate

"We live in a universe and in a history where God is working before anything else. Work is an activity of God. The work of God is defined and described in the pages of Scripture... One of the reasons that Christians read Scripture repeatedly and carefully is to find out just how God works in Jesus Christ so that we can work in the name of Jesus Christ".
Eugene Peterson

Colchester Business

We continue to pray for business and commerce within our town. In the past Colchester 2020 have focussed their attention on the business sector and 'The Strategy for Business' highlighted the following concerns. We hope you find that these stimulate prayer.

1. Is Colchester really open for business? The study found that there is a low level of prevailing business in Colchester because demand is parochial.
2. People are afraid to raise their head above the parapet and challenge the status quo.
3. People insist that everything is okay here when really there are huge challenges facing future generations!
4. Is the business community thinking about opportunities

such as the Olympics?

5. Is it too diverse/ too many partnerships without cohesion?
6. Does Colchester have a true business identity? (Sense that it doesn't)
7. Where will extra jobs come from to support the regeneration projects?
8. People live here but don't work here with London so near (effect on community)
9. We offer a huge amount but hide our light under a bushell!

Please pray for:

- Church influence in the sphere of business.
- Christian leaders in our town as they stand in places of influence. As they network together, pray and advance the

Kingdom of God.

- Permanent, lasting change. Many of these concerns could be expressed about any part of our town. I.e. Identity issues.
- God's wisdom in these long term problem areas, and for Gods voice to be heard in every sphere of society
- The work of Work Dynamics, and the town chaplain's work
- For courage and focus for those called to lead, for long term strategy and establishment of Godly values
- For fresh energy and vision for those in leadership

Ninety jobs have been lost at Benham Goodhead Print (BGP) in the last month. We pray for those families affected by this.

An Open Door

Over the last two years we have been focussing prayer for the town from Revelation 3:8

"I know your deeds. See I have placed before you and open door that no-one can shut"

This month we focus on sight. We give thanks for all we have seen of the activity of God in our lives and our town.

We pray for fresh sight:

- In our relationship with God. Proverbs 29:18 says *"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint"*. We ask God for His perspective in every area of our lives
- Jesus said *"I only do what I see the Father doing"* John 5:19. We pray for grace to live the Jesus way
- To see the activity of God in

our communities. To see the opportunities (doors) open to us, faith and courage to walk through those doors.

- For those leading our town, council leaders, those leading in business, media, arts etc
- That releases God's creativity within Colchester
- For Colchester 2020 who are charged with setting a vision for our town
- For church leaders to lead the church with fresh vision and Godly wisdom
- For those working with young people to see the God given potential within each child
- Into all areas of pain and hopelessness, disappointment, and stubborn situations
- To see the identity and role of

our town in new ways

- To see where we have been limited and held back as a town and trust God for change
- Within the context of our warfare. As Elisha did (2 Kings 6) we want to see the angels of heaven, and see afresh that greater are those that are for us than against us
- For unbelievers to see the light of the gospel. *"For the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel..." 2 Cor. 4:4*
- To see those God is wanting us to reach with His love and His goodness
- To energise us for kingdom work!

Week of Accompanied Prayer

"All associated with Colchester Prayernet will surely be people of prayer. However, our world can be noisy and uncaring; with the best will in the world, we can find life crowding out our prayer times. A Week of Accompanied Prayer invites you to:

- find a space each day for quiet reflection
- meet with a prayer companion
- refresh your normal prayer practice or find new

inspiration

This ecumenical week begins with an introductory group session at **St James the Less, Priory Street at 3pm on Sunday 25th February.**

Participants will then meet for half an hour each weekday, on an individual basis, with their prayer companion. The experienced prayer companions will accompany you in the shared experiences of the week, using scripture or other material to bring everyday prayer to life and to help you to

look more deeply at what prayer means to you.

The week will close with a final group meeting at 3pm on Saturday 4th March 2007. The daily meetings will be arranged at a time convenient to you, using a variety of meeting spaces in Priory Street.

For more information please speak to Sister Angela or Sister Stephanie, (telephone 867296) or Valerie Quinlivan on 560935" *Valerie*

Fairtrade Fortnight

Colchester is one of around 210 towns in the UK with Fairtrade status.

Change Today, Choose Fairtrade, is an urgent call to people in the UK to engage with the Fairtrade Foundation's vision of an even bigger movement for positive change on unfair trade, including making the switch to buying Fairtrade.

This is the theme of **Fairtrade Fortnight (26th February – 11th March)**, the annual promotional campaign of the Fairtrade Foundation which encourages people to buy products carrying the FAIRTRADE Mark. Fairtrade sales increase by around 40% every year in the UK, giving hundreds of thousands of producers in developing countries the chance to build a better future and to compete in cut-throat global markets.

Here's what the local branch of Fairtrade needs:

- Volunteers to contact local retailers, encouraging them to stock and sell Fairtrade products.
- People to ask for Fairtrade products in restaurants and

cafes.

- Pupils and teachers in schools to promote Fairtrade in canteens
- People to talk about Fairtrade to their employers and push for the use of Fairtrade products in canteens.
- Help in raising public awareness of Fairtrade through media work and publicity events
- People to talk with their friends and help them see the benefits of Fairtrade products.
- People to come to campaign meetings and get involved
- You to buy Fairtrade goods and make the difference.
- Modest amounts of money to cover the costs of literature and the direct expenses of running the Colchester Fairtrade campaign.

Ideas for raising money painlessly

- Set aside 10p for each meal that includes Fairtrade ingredients
- Fine yourself £1 for each meal that includes no Fairtrade ingredients
- Donate 10p for each cup of

excellent Fairtrade tea or coffee

- Keep a collection box alongside your recycled loo-rolls
- Donate the price of one Fairtrade snack bar per packet bought
- Donate 50p each time you see media reports of poverty and hunger

For more information go to www.fairtradecolchester.com

Prayer for MPs. If you would like to pray for your local MP. We have prayer groups for Bernard Jenkin (Colchester North) and Bob Russell (Colchester Town). If you would like to be involved please contact CPn with your postal address, church affiliation and the name of your minister.

To contact Teresa Lasky: email: admin@colchesterprayernet.co.uk or Tel: 01206 242235

To contribute to next month's prayer guide contact Marie Morris at: info@colchesterprayernet.co.uk

The contributors' views are their own, and do not necessarily express those of the editors.

University of Essex

Friends International

Thank God:

- That OVER 200 students attended the Carols accompanied by the Salvation army band on square 3 before Christmas. Many invitations and 350 mince pies were given out in the morning prior to the concert! The Jesus is Alive Fellowship sung two African carols during the concert.
- For the Christmas meals in two churches, and in many homes was enjoyed by the international students who attended.

Anglican Chaplaincy. Please pray that the right person will be selected at interview on **Friday 2nd February**

From 5th -10th February the Christian Union, together with other Christian groups on the university campus, is putting on a week of events, under the title of 'One Way', in order to make Jesus Christ known to students at the university. Events include lunch cafés, with talks on apologetic issues, a quiz-a-Christian event in the bar, and a series of talks from the gospel of John.

Please pray for:

- Publicity, in order that everyone will hear about what is going on
- Speakers, that they would clearly proclaim the gospel message
- Unity among Christian groups on campus as we work together to share our faith

- People to hear and respond to the message of the week
- A Christianity Explored course which we hope to start at the end of the week, running until the end of term

Please pray for the CU and the relationship with the Students Union at this time as they have been asked to revise their constitution.

In the light of the **Christianity Awareness week**, the Christians on campus will be fasting and praying over a period of 7 days finishing with the **prayer breakfast in the chaplaincy on Saturday 3rd February**, from 8.30am - 10a.m. If anybody would like to be involved in the week of prayer and fasting for the university please contact Joan Davies jdavies@essex.ac.uk Tel 862070.

Boiler Room 24/7 prayer

On the week before Christmas 2006 over 50 people from more than 14 different congregations prayed in the 24/7 prayer room at Colchester Baptist church, Eld Lane.

"Thank you to all who gave time at this busy time of year to support the prayer room. A big thanks to Lyndsey and Rod, and all the church at Eld Lane who gave us a home when we had "no room at the inn".

The prayer room was a base for mission and action, with present wrapping for shoppers during late night shopping. Also, 6 people from 5 different congregations prayer walked and gave hospitality to late night revellers on Friday night/Saturday morning. This included a chance to pray with un-churched people who were considering their future.

We were not able to run the prayer room continuously during the whole week. This was because there were not enough people offering to take on time slots, especially the late night/early morning slots.

I felt frustrated that a town centre shop front venue was not available, despite many empty shop front units in the town centre. I will be praying for an opportunity and a way to do a shop front prayer room this year, because I think it will give many un-churched people the chance to pray to and meet with Jesus. And because I think that we can do it, given the unity in the church in Colchester, and the desire to pray"

Richard Smith

Colchester Boiler Room

Community plans to organise the following 24/7 prayer weeks;

Sunday 25th February to Sunday 4th March, incorporating Shockwaves - Prayer for the persecuted church

Sunday 18th March to Sunday 25th March, incorporating Stop the Traffik - campaign against human trafficking on the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery.

Venues are needed for these prayer rooms!

Please consider if your church, or organisation could host a prayer room during these weeks and let Richard know on 01206 522781 r_g_smith@hotmail.com

Feedback, town news + CYO

Please continue to pray for Alison Finch the town centre chaplain. As you may be aware Alison has been off work with a suspected brain tumour. Alison wants to thank everyone for the overwhelming support she has received since her symptoms began. We thank God that doctors have now ruled out a brain tumour, they still don't know what is causing the problems. Please pray for accurate diagnosis and full recovery.

We give thanks that although there is a new and dangerous drug within the drug community, crystal meth has not had impact on our town. We want to continue to pray God's protection over the people of this town. We are sad however, that so far this year four people in Colchester are suspected to have died from drug-related overdoses, most likely from heroin. Crack cocaine and cannabis are also used in this area. We pray for all those seeking to end substance misuse, both users and those providing drug therapy, and the Police Force.

Friday Focus is inviting Christians across the UK to pray on Fridays throughout 2007, preparing the way for Hope 2008. An invitation to take part in Hope 2008 has been extended to every Christian church and denomination. The aim is to see the entire church mobilised during 2008 to take the good news of Jesus Christ into villages, towns and cities, through word and action underpinned by prayer. We hope to be involved in these initiatives. More next month!

For more information
www.worldprayer.org.uk
www.hope08.com

Unity. "We continue to thank God for all expressions of Christian unity within this town. We thank

Him for the recent leaders gathering (Seeking Gods Blessing for Colchester) which focussed on prayer for Christian unity. Richard from Colchester Boiler Room (CBRC) provided some focus with prayer stations and prayer themes. At a recent international prayer day, it became apparent to me that God has done so much in the town through united prayer and we continue to thank Him, acknowledge His work and seek Him for His will and purpose to be done in Colchester". Teresa

National Marriage Week, 7th—14th February. As the nation celebrates marriage this week, let us remember God's purpose for marriage and ask Him to strengthen the institution of marriage and the family unit in our country. We pray for those we know who are working to maintain and strengthen Godly values and within our society.

CYO and Schools News

We welcome Tom Haward. He joins CYO as the new Youth and Schools Worker. He comes from West Mersea and is a member of West Mersea Free Church where he helps lead the "Causeway" young adults congregation and is involved in some of the youth and children's work. Tom joined the team on 15th January.

The Rt Revd Christopher Morgan, Bishop of Colchester says: "As patron of CYO, I am delighted to hear of the appointment of Tom Haward as our new Schools Worker Please support this appointment both prayerfully and practically".

Welcome also to **Laura**, the new member of Collective. Collective are already planning for missions in Dunmow, Tiptree and Harwich later this term, as well as various follow-up events.

This term we are doing lessons on

sex and relationships with young people aged 14-15 at **Alderman Blaxill School**, one day a fortnight. This lesson encourages young people to wait before starting a sexual relationship.

At the **Gilbert School** Tim and Amy are starting a CU/ discussion group for young people aged 14- 16 years old.

Philip Morant School have invited us back to take house assemblies.

At **Sir Charles Lucas School** we run a drop in club with Colchester Area Community Church at lunchtimes for young people who need talk to someone about issues they are facing.

St Benedict's Catholic College. Please pray for St Benedict's as they welcome a new head teacher, John O'Hara, after the Easter holidays. He takes over from Alan Whelan.

SMILE Puppet Ministry Mega Kids Club NEW VENUE

Friday 2nd February 7 - 8 pm
Kingsland Church Lexden
 (new building)

2 London Road, Lexden

Contact Ella Havell

01206 735925 or

EllaHavell@aol.com

Aglow. St John's and Highwoods Community Centre, Highwoods. On **Saturday 3rd February** from 1.30-4.30pm. Speaker: Georgina Danso, National Prayer Co-ordinator. Registration fee £3.50 including lunch.

Tel. 01206 520228 for more information