



Churches Together in Herefordshire's Update – May 2024 – November 2024

This report sets out the key areas of work for Churches Together in Herefordshire over the past six months. Emma Wright, the County Ecumenical Officer (the CEO) is employed by CTiH for 45 hours per month.

Churches Together Groups

Churches Together in Ross-on-Wye and District

CTRD have been co-ordinating Light Up a Life services with other Churches.

The CEO attended the induction of Rev Ian Olliver in September and welcomed him on behalf of CTiH. Rev Ian has previously worked with Churches Together in Telford so when he is settled, the CEO will contact him to discuss ecumenical work and hear about the work that has taken place in Telford.

CTRD also hosted a prayer event at the beginning of September and are organising an ecumenical Light Up A Life service in December. There was an ecumenical harvest lunch at the end of September. They also hosted a CTRD quiz night in October to raise money for Tearfund.

Christians Together in Ewyas Harold and District

CTEH have been looking at different elements of ecumenism at their meetings, starting off with the origins of

Taizé. There has been an increase in the amount of donations given to Christian Aid. Members of Open the Book recently came to discuss their work with the group. CTEH regularly advertise their local Taizé prayer.

Churches Together in Kington and District

Following on from the success of the past Pentecost Praise event, CTK have decided to organise a praise event three times a year; rotating between the Churches. They are also planning a CTK activity week for Summer 2025.

Churches Together in Weobley

Since the end of September, CTiW have managed to support the work of DEC which supports those living in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Ukraine. They also supported the building of a skate park and is funding a holiday club during the school holidays.

Churches Together in Hereford

There have supported many City Praise events.

CTH are organising carol singing, meeting with church leaders and will be holding prayer events in Jan 2025. The group have contacted Saltmine Theatre Group to come to the Cathedral in addition to organising a march of witness.



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The CEO have been invited to speak at CTH's next AGM on my role and ecumenism.

Christians Together in Orleton

Orleton's Messy Church is continuing to take place fortnightly with 15 children in attendance. They organised a Harvest service with a Messy Church followed by a Harvest lunch. Perishable goods were auctioned off to "Mary's Meals" and "We Are Farming Minds." CTiO will be represented on Remembrance Day. There will also be an Advent Study Group. There will also be carol singing at the local pub. They will publicise other events at their Christingle services and are looking to collaborate with other Church leaders across the County to help organise events. CTiO are interested in setting up their own Café Church. The Primary School in Orleton wants to restart Eco Church again in the form of an after-school club.

Churches Together in Leominster

Money gained from organising Lent lunches was donated to Christian Aid and CAFOD. CTL celebrated 50 years of ecumenical worship between Luston Methodist Church and Eye Church. There was an evening of praise that took place where Christians came together to worship and have fellowship. They have hosted bring and share meals and organised prayer walks. At CTL's AGM, which was

attended by 20 people, Beverly Ramsden from St Michael's Hospice came and gave a presentation about A Light Up a Life service to see which Churches might want to host these services.

Groups With Whom CTiH Works With

Churches Working Together in Ledbury

Churches across Ledbury came together to organise a Harvest tea. There were games, interactive songs for children and good food that allowed people to reflect on the significance of Harvest and join together in fellowship.

Vennture



There is Street Safeguarding and Vennture Street Safety that takes place three times a year. There are Street Pastors also based in Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. They want to recruit fifty volunteers over the next five months. Vennture continues to support families and can assess children on behalf of children's

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services. They are also helping to mentor military families and support young families with children by providing them with temporary accommodation. There are flats that are ready to open next summer to families that have multiple children. Alongside this, they want sixteen volunteers to work for sixteen families to provide support for those healing from trauma. Vennture also celebrated the work of their Street Presence team with an exhibition of the work that they carried out.

Church Leaders Together Hereford

A group of Church Leaders come together for prayer and fellowship every first Tuesday of the month. They also come together for a prayer breakfast on a weekly basis.

Other Ecumenical Activity

Intercultural Course



SPSJ are offering an intercultural course to all denominations which is funded by Herefordshire Council. SPSJ have partnered with over “250 refugees and their sponsors” to create a free intercultural course. This short

and powerful session is perfect for anyone who works with diverse groups, especially those interacting with parents and students. You can contact SPSJ to sign up now.

Ecumenical Meetings

The CEO had a meeting to discuss the work that was going across the two counties with Robert Mountford, CEO for Birmingham, Staffordshire and the Black Country and Doral Hayes from CTE, the Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations. We encouraged each other and gave each other advice.



Community Events and Forums

South Herefordshire Hustings

The Hustings event was supported by Churches Together in Hereford. Bishop Richard chaired the event and St

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John's Methodist Church hosted the event. It was a good turnout and an opportunity to hear from all South Herefordshire's candidates.



Homelessness forum

At the Homelessness Forum meeting in September, we discussed how the amount of people sleeping rough is decreasing monthly. There was an evening at Hereford City Church where resources and hot food will be given out to vulnerable women specifically. Vennture's "Bright Path" will help support those that need mental health support and will be co-ordinating directly with Herefordshire and Worcestershire mental health services. Bright Path consists of a four-day course, certificates, first aid course and training on suicide awareness and drug abuse. The CEO mentioned that when advertising for training is ready, she can put that in the newsletter. The CEO also agreed to add Turning Point (a charity that offers support with mental health) offer of training to our newsletter as well.

Churches Together in England

The theme of this year's conference was "Thinking Globally and Acting Locally" with talks being centred around the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, how the work of World Council of Churches relates to local ecumenism, increasing diversity at an intermediate level and what can be done to be peacebuilders in our local ecumenical spaces.

The CEO also attended the Enabling Group in October. The conference consists of CTE'S AGM, talks on a particular theme. The theme was on Racial Justice. The talks and testimonials were very thought-provoking and moving.

I also attended a webinar on the young generation and climate change. They had a range of different speakers: Jake Oates from the Catholic Bishop Conference of England and Wales discussed assisting with foreign policy and advising Bishops on how we address climate change. Charles Bakolo from ClimateYES discussed Milawi's decision on banning the use of thin plastics and the journey of opposition that the organisation has faced over the years. Shilpita Matthews from Operation Noah was promoting a resource pack which helps young voters understand how their decision can affect climate change. Anya who represented the Young Quakers in Britain discussed how climate change and social challenges are interchangeable. CTE also mentioned that this round of applications for the Bill Snelson



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ecumenical grant deadline was October of this year. The CEO will advertise when the next round of applications opens.

Forum Planning Group

We had a CTE Planning meeting for Forum 2025 at CTE's main offices. We worked through a draft of the programme and which topics we might include for workshops. The CEO put forward the idea of having the charity Through The Roof run a workshop. The charity advocates for Churches to make their services more accessible for those with physical and mental disabilities. I have also agreed to help facilitate a young ecumenist workshop at Forum.

Churches Together in Herefordshire

The Standing Committee of Churches Together in Herefordshire meets 4 times a year, receives a report from the CEO and reviews her activities and initiatives.

The Committee is made up of representatives from each of the sponsoring denominations and has been chaired by Duncan MacLean who is a part of HEBA and is the Pastor of a house church in Tillington.



We have a new URC representative that has joined, Rev Roger Woodall, who used to be a minister at Hampton Park URC.

Installation of Rev Wayne Davies (St Bartholomew's)

The CEO attended the installation of Rev Wayne Davies and was part of the procession, representing CTiH. The CEO have contacted Rev Wayne to discuss the ecumenical scene of Herefordshire.

Diocese Synod

The CEO has been invited to speak at the next Diocesan Synod about my work and the activity we do as CTiH later this month.

CTiH's AGM 2024

Churches Together in Herefordshire holds two Open Meetings a year – May and November. At our AGM in May, Gordan Campbell from KICK, came to discuss the importance of exploring the Bible through the mediums of sport and dance to engage the younger generation.



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