

Dec 2015

POOLE MISSIONAL
communities

mission in every context

news

Community rather than charity

Chris Harwood writes about a new initiative forming community amongst those struggling with the affects of deprivation in central Poole.

Before we are to love our neighbours as ourselves we have to know who our neighbours are. Every community needs a time and place to come together. Over the summer we did a few open house events to get to know people in our community. In September we started a weekly community dinner where we have a mixture of people some of whom are homeless, recently housed, people with learning difficulties, singles, families, people of different faiths or no faith, children. All welcome. All sharing around the same table.

One of the ideas behind the community dinner is to help us to think in terms of community rather than charity. Whether we are sharing meals, offering a lift, a space out of the cold, this is about creating community and starting to think in terms of 'we' not 'me'! Thinking about what kind of community God would have us build here.

It is special to me that my whole family are involved in these meals. It means my children have the opportunity to get to know people from different backgrounds/faiths and get to know them as people not issues. As we talk about different faiths or deprivation at home, these are not nameless or faceless issues to them, instead they involve people that they regularly eat with.



Chris collecting food from Fareshare which distributes post-sell-by-date food from supermarkets.

Most of the food we use for our community dinners come from Fareshare who save good food destined for waste and send it to charities and community groups who transform it into nutritious meals for people at a cheaper price. The food is always fresh, quality and in date surplus from the food industry.

One of the comments from someone who comes along said "it's just like being back around the family table". I think he means it is not always neat and tidy, it sometimes feels slightly messy, but it is safe and fun and is helping us to work out how to be in community with one another and share lives.

I am also hugely grateful to an amazing group of people who enable these dinners to happen!

PMC Future

Some of you may remember when we launched PMC with Bishops Graham Cray and Graham Kings in March 2011. At that launch we signed a Bishop's Mission Order (BMO) which gave a license from the Bishop of Salisbury for the pioneer ministry of PMC to develop.

The 5-year term of that BMO is now drawing to an end. At the same time a significant piece of funding which pays for Paul Bradbury, the leader of PMC, also comes to an end.

Consequently we are talking and drawing up proposals for what the future of PMC might look like.

The project was started in response to the rapid change taking place in central Poole. This change hasn't stopped. Indeed a huge amount of change will take place around the area of the two bridges in the next 5—10 years. How might the church respond to this? And what might PMC's role be in this?

These are all questions we are exploring at the moment as part of an ongoing process to decide the future for PMC. A decision about the future should be made by Easter 2016. In the meantime we would value your prayers as we discern God's leading and guidance.

Launch of Pioneer Learning Community

Across the country people are responding to God's call and pioneering mission and new ways of being church beyond the structures of traditional church. What is really interesting is that more than half of these people are not ordained or licensed in any way, they are just being obedient to God's call and doing it!

When we ran the Mission Shaped Ministry course last year we were joined by a number of teams of people from projects just like that, led by lay people with a heart to explore mission on the fringes. We believe that PMC's vision of 'mission in every context' can be served by supporting and encouraging these teams. So we've now invited those teams to become part of a learning community which will provide ongoing input and learning as their mission develops. So it was really exciting to see those teams come together last month for the first gathering of the pioneer learning community.

The teams come from Wareham, Wimborne, Poole and Bournemouth. They are leading a community café, a fresh expression of church in an indoor skatepark, a missional community, a textile art community and a creative craft outreach to local cafes. There was an incredible amount of creativity and missional imagination in that group of people. The time was spent getting to know the vision for each team, sharing challenges and drawing from the experience in the group to help tackle them, and in praying for one another. The community will now meet for a day 3 times a year. Each team leader also benefits from 1:1 missional coaching between each session.

The learning community is open to new teams joining, so if you are part of, or know another missional team who would benefit from learning with others do get in touch. paul@poolemc.org.uk



Drawing our vision at the first pioneer learning community day.

Prayer for Poole Missional Communities:

Give thanks for:

- Establishment of the community dinner
- Growth in size and depth of Reconnect
- The great start to the pioneer learning community

Please pray for:

- Forthcoming decisions regarding the ongoing funding of PMC, in particular a meeting in the New Year when a vision and proposal for ongoing ministry will be presented.
- For God to continue to raise up people with a passion for reaching out to unchurched people

