



I wouldn't have got through the last few months without the chaplains. The support they gave the staff and the patients through a very difficult time was amazing.

Nurse at Royal United Hospitals, Bath



Chaplaincy & Coronavirus

Discerning Impact




DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.



Before, and after, lockdown... school chaplaincy in Cheddar. The chaplain , Ruth Motion, with Bishop Ruth, before her commissioning, and with students in a different time



 Most chaplains have no churches, or chapels, to either open or close. At the start of the lockdown the Archbishops of Canterbury and York wrote to us that ministry would be more defined by pastoral care and prayer and less by Sunday worship. That sums up chaplaincy.

Throughout this time when church buildings are closed, chaplains, like ministers in parishes, have continued to serve. They have been there with the sick and bereaved, the hungry and lonely, they have prayed and cared and lived and shared faith. This has been most obvious through the amazing work of health care chaplains. However, chaplains in education, the police and industry have also learned how to serve vulnerable and dispersed communities and done so with enormous skill and grace.

A small part of that story, and the difference it makes, is contained within this booklet. I commend it to you as, together, we continue to live and tell the story of God's love in our world.




Rt Revd Ruth Worsley
Bishop of Taunton




A nurse said: 'The chaplains have got this knack of finding you, this inner sense of where you are and when you need them to visit.'

Making a Difference?

 There are over 300 chaplains in Somerset; serving in health care, education, industry, leisure and beyond. So what? What difference do they make? This booklet will begin to answer those questions, through telling the stories of chaplains and especially through the words of those who they work with, students, nurses, construction workers and others.

It is important to note that the staff and students quoted in this booklet do not form a 'representative sample' of their hospitals, schools or businesses. However, they do speak from the heart of their communities and represent people of a range of beliefs and cultures. This is a beginning of a response to the question exploring the difference that chaplaincy makes, not an end.

If you have any questions arising from this booklet, or questions about chaplaincy in general, please do get in touch. My contact details are below.



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Hospital Chaplaincy

Acute hospitals have been at the forefront of care through the Coronavirus Pandemic. Their staff, at every level, have risked their lives as they looked after patients with Covid and the range of other conditions that still make us need medical treatment.

Perhaps less noticed through the last few months, but no less important, has been the work of hospital chaplains. A small group staff at Royal United Hospitals, Bath, responded to the question: **‘What difference does chaplaincy make, what is its impact?’**

“ I wouldn’t have got through the last few months without the chaplains. The support they gave the staff and the patients through a very difficult time was amazing. They’ve got this knack of finding you, this inner sense of where you are and when you need them to visit. You can be of any faith or none.

“ On a cancer ward, we don’t always have the time we need. But the chaplain was visiting regularly, supporting patients with us and talking with each staff member, asking how we were. Chaplaincy was there for us. We rely on it 24/7.

“ We were all scared of Covid, but the chaplains weren’t scared to go onto our wards. They gave us the time we needed, listened to us and supported us. I’m very grateful. It was only the chaplains who came down to our ward to see if we were OK.

“ I’ve had more to do with chaplaincy through Covid than before. The chaplains equipped us to speak to patients of any faith or none and meet their spiritual needs.

“ We know we can contact the chaplains at any time. They will always be there. A patient was very agitated and wanted to see the chaplain in the middle of the night. As soon as the chaplain arrived the patient was calm and we were able to continue to treat him and support him.



The chaplaincy gift of time and listening is as important as sterile conditions in a hospital operating theatre. Time is their infection control measure.

NHS Doctor

Acute hospitals are very hot, busy places. It's a challenge to meet the targets and offer therapeutic care. Chaplains are essential. They are present in every part of the hospital, offering spiritual and psychological care.

Without them, who else is there, offering that level of contact and comfort? Without the chaplaincy we would continue to focus on the bio-

medical data but we would be at real risk of losing touch with the real, lived experience of patients.

Medics are under pressure to be concise and knowing. At the heart of chaplaincy is uncertainty, unknowing, journeying with people.

Chaplains have an overview of the whole hospital and an independence. They speak truth to power in a helpful and constructive way. They offer intimate support to patients and are a critical friend to the organisation. They both 'rise above it' and get mucky and involved.

The chaplain's main therapeutic 'weapon' was powerlessness..



If chaplaincy didn't exist, you'd have to invent it pretty fast.

From a chaplain's perspective...

It is a privilege to do the things we do on a daily basis, to be working with everyone through the joys and sorrows and hope. We have some wonderful moments of laughing as well. It's a heart response. The staff have stepped up extraordinarily to the demands of Covid and we have tried to reach out to them. Thank you for trusting us.

Funeral Ministry at Weston Hospicecare

Karen Murphy, Chaplain and Spiritual Lead, Weston Hospicecare and President Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains

🗨️ One of the most noticeable differences for those of us taking funerals during the past months has been the small number of people able to attend a service. This has been difficult and distressing for those looking for support and comfort from family and friends gathering to say goodbye to loved ones.

Here are a few observations I have noticed.

Firstly, having just a small number of people present has allowed people to feel less pressure to 'be brave' for a large crowd. Emotions have been raw and real. Some families have said that it felt better to have immediate family present only rather than a bigger group that could feel overwhelming.

Secondly, technology has come to the fore with webcasting of services to help keep a connection. I have led a totally virtual funeral from my home with everyone on Zoom. The deceased was cremated at a time arranged by the funeral director, but the actual service connected over 20 households to say goodbye.


Thirdly, I have noticed community responses to death expressed in some lovely ways. A whole street came out to wave and cheer as the hearse left a person's house. They couldn't attend as usual but this was their mark of respect. This has happened several times and is very moving to witness. In time we will return to a more recognisable way of saying goodbye at a funeral, but these incidents may have allowed people to think about how to do things in the future rather differently.



Chaplaincy at Hinkley Point C

The construction site of Hinkley Point C is a community which, pre-lockdown, had around about 5,000 people within it. It is estimated that 25,000 job opportunities will be available throughout the construction of the new power station. As with all major construction projects, the majority of the workforce is male. It is younger and more multi-cultural than the demographic of the surrounding areas on the Somerset coast. A chaplain, Ewen Huffman, started work in January 2020.


A small group of staff responded to the question: **‘What difference does chaplaincy make? What is its impact?’**


 From my experience, I was extremely sceptical. My assumption was that the chaplain was there for people of Christian faith to talk to. Ewen is someone who people trust. Anyone can talk to him, of all faiths and none. When there is an incident, Ewen is there and people talk to him and trust him. The title, ‘chaplain’, means something, he isn’t a senior leader, he is there for everyone.

I was extremely
sceptical.



Someone who
people trust.

 There are two aspects to the essential value that Ewen brings to the site. An opportunity to bring faith into the workplace. His role is similar to an army Padre, a religious, friendship and personal support role. He is ‘the Bish’ and he is a valued part of the team. There is no rank, he relates equally to everyone on site within a large, diverse and pressured workforce. In the past, the dog-collar put folk off. Ewen doesn’t force faith onto you, it’s never in your face. It’s about the practice of faith rather than the persuader of faith. The faith is the driver rather than the imposition. There is pastoral care and great wisdom.

 It depends on the audience. Ewen is a huge part of the team in the office. On the ground Ewen has embraced the diversity of the workforce and he is seen as someone who will get involved. There are many different

nationalities and different beliefs and cultures and Ewen embodies those. Ewen is the chaplain to the site, representative and supportive of us all, with faith driving him. The initial scepticism and nervousness have gone. Chaplaincy is about visible spiritual leadership.

“ When there an incident on site, a chaplain is there. A person who you know and trust who is there for you. An independent voice of reason.

“ There are day to day things we achieve and do that we would never have made much of if Ewen hadn't been there. We wouldn't have blessed new building projects or had an Easter service or an Eid meal. These events bring to life our values and make the difference.

It's about visible spiritual leadership; the practice of faith, rather than the persuader of faith.



Can you rate the impact of chaplaincy at Hinkley Point C? [1 is terrible and 10 is brilliant]

“ 10: Very helpful professionally and personally [coming from a place of extreme scepticism]. The chaplain draws together a people together across boundaries. The impact can't be described in numbers.

“ Huge impact by drawing people together, through presence and prayer and in many other ways.

“ What do you call chaplaincy in this context, an industrial site? If the goal is to convert people, it's not working. If it's the chaplain's presence, doing faith based and socially based work, driven by love, its been extraordinarily successful. The scepticism was there right across site. It's gone. It's 10/10.

Police Chaplaincy

A citation for Andy Paget, Lead Chaplain to Avon and Somerset Police, by Chief Constable Andy Marsh at the 2018 Bristol Multi-Faith Forum 'Love Your Neighbour' awards for promoting community cohesion & inclusiveness and making Bristol a better place to live.



Andy is central to the support and outcomes from the team of force chaplains. The service offered by the team is a 24/7 and is available right across the force area. The background of the team is primarily a faith one, but their service is available regardless of the faith or no faith of the person being supported, and the service is an enormous contribution to the overall well-being of the police family in this part of the United Kingdom.

Supporting our 6,000 staff and officers as they face some of the most challenging human situations is essential to the well-being of those staff but also is key to the public. Our staff and officers face numerous tragedies and emotional challenges as part of their work and helping them cope in turn helps them support the public better.

As leader of the team Andy secures the support of volunteer chaplains and co-ordinates their work. Beyond that, Andy is a tireless counsel to the force. Our role in the heart of communities often places the force and its work-force in dilemmas as to how best we can serve and support that community.




Andy is central to the support and outcomes from the team of force chaplains.

Andy's wise and experienced outlook is often called upon to add a different view and bring in views through his community engagement into the choices and judgements that have to be made. Andy's personal qualities are many but amongst those that come to life through his work are his willingness to speak the truth but also to step back from judgement. Supporting, coaching, counselling and advising anytime anywhere without judging people are such unique skills and rarely found in our busy world.

Chaplaincy at Avonmouth Port

Jeremy Hellier, Mission to Seafarers Chaplain [pictured on the front cover]

 During lockdown, 239 seafarers were stuck aboard a cruise ship. They were not allowed ashore and there was no possibility of repatriation. I visited weekly, was in email contact with some of their families, and provided care packages as required which were left at the foot of the gangway.

After some weeks it also transpired the crew were not being paid and the ship was arrested and detained by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency [MCA]. The Chaplaincy, the MCA and the International Transport Federation co-ordinated dealings with the company that owns the ship. As a result, 200 seafarers were repatriated at a cost of 500,000 euros to the company.

This kind of advocacy is very much what our chaplaincy is about, seeking justice for all. It expresses our Christian care as Christ expressed his concern for the poor.

37 seafarers are left aboard, the minimum number to keep the ship operational. Unfortunately, the company has now gone into administration, and this means the ship no longer has a Shipping Agent to arrange essential supplies.

I have activated my access to the Samaritan Fund held by Mission to Seafarers which will help. Together with the Port Health Officer and other agencies we will ensure that the crew are looked after. Local churches have supplied me with books and games to help keep the crew entertained and I have supplied bibles and offered spiritual care as requested.



This kind of advocacy is very much
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seeking justice for all...

Community & Primary School Chaplaincy

Rockwell Green is a large village on the edge of Wellington. Alongside areas of affluence there are issues of rural isolation and significant estates with high levels of multiple deprivation. There is a chaplain to the primary school and to the community. Members of a number of households spoke about the impact of chaplaincy in the community.

“ Chaplaincy saves the NHS money. It’s good for people’s health. It offers interconnectedness and pastoral care. Without having a chaplain to call on and talk things over with on repeated occasions, things would have been much worse. The difference in this sort of role is that you see the person around, just going by, and you wave, and it is all very normal, not like someone turning up for an appointment in a vehicle with a brand-name on the side. It needs to be normal like that, and that makes a difference too.



The chaplain is a God-send; valuable in so many ways.

“ The chaplain is a friendly face, a listening ear, someone to talk to, to come alongside people, knowledgeable but not biased, someone who cares.

“ The chaplain offers care, quality time, a helping hand in hard times with visits in the garden or by the front door and contact via social media or text.

“ The chaplain shows that the church bothers and the church cares.



Village Chaplaincy

West Buckland is a village with a population of 1000, just off the M5. It is part of a large team ministry and the village chaplain [who is also a Church Warden] is a key leader of the local church. People who were not members of the church, people who were, and people who were exploring faith all responded to the question, **‘What difference does chaplaincy make?’**

- “ We need chaplains, a friend coming into your lives, knowing the challenges.
- “ Wonderful
Non-judgemental
- “ The chaplain opens doors to faith and church. The chaplain enables us to be more in touch with the church, even though we don’t go.
- “ The chaplain has opened the door and got the congregation going again.
- “ The chaplain is on the ground, giving time, giving love.
- “ A leader in the church and the village who is known by many.




Faith is coming back slowly and I’m becoming part of the church family, because of the chaplain.



Lockdown at St Michael's, Church of England Junior School, Twerton, Bath.

Gwen Kearley, Chaplain

 During lockdown, as well as activities with an educational focus, staff have been sharing activities for the children to do with their adults at home, to help them with their mental and physical well-being. Throughout there has been frequent contact with parents through social media and regular telephone calls.

We have been producing worship for the children to engage with and continued to keep links with the Care Home opposite the school. Key worker children made bunting for the home to celebrate VE day, and have drawn pictures with positive messages for the residents to hang on their walls. Frequent food packs and resources have been available for the families of the school. **We have tried to help the children's mental and physical well-being at the centre of all we have been doing.**

Within the chaplaincy role, I have spent quite a bit of time 'socially distance listening' to staff who have come into school together for the first time in many weeks. A few of these have spoken about how good it is to be able to talk things through. It has made me realise how important it is to give staff the time to be able to do this; helping to get things back into perspective. While there are plenty of resources being sent around [all of which have their place and are incredibly useful] for staff well-being, my tip would be to make sure that there is adequate time given for people to talk things out. Working within new constraints of Covid is a challenge for everyone and the responsibility that headteachers and senior leadership bear is huge, they need support and encouragement.



The Impact of Secondary School Chaplaincy

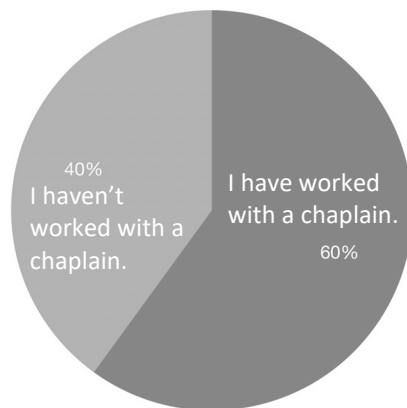
A tutor group from each year were asked if they had worked with the chaplain, or if the chaplain had helped them. 60% said yes, 40% said no. They were also asked about chaplaincy.

What is the most important job of a school chaplain?

- To be there for students and listen to us.
- To make sure students are safe.
- To listen, guide and support.
- To make school a more peaceful and relaxed place.
- Bullying [hopefully this meant 'anti-bullying'].
- I'm not sure, I don't know.
- Organising things.
- Being helpful.
- Leading assemblies.

Haygrove School Chaplaincy

The chaplain has contributed so much to our community as a non-church school. I suspect that there have been benefits for us, that we had perhaps not expected. He has earned huge respect in our community and has added a calming and reflective element to our culture, which is noticeable when he is with us.



What difference has school chaplaincy made?

- A positive one.
- It helps me though life.
- It makes school safer.
- We don't need a chaplain, but the chaplain is awesome.
- Made my friend feel safe.
- Helped us learn about respect.
- Nothing.
- Makes me happier.
- Someone to talk to and give support.



Karen Canham

CEO of Quantock Education Trust, which includes Haygrove School.

Walking for well-being

Ann Fulton, Spiritual Care
Co-ordinator, St Margaret's Hospice.



At the beginning of lockdown I set myself the challenge of walking 20 miles a week for 3 months - both for my own well-being and, through raising much needed funds for St Margaret's, for the well-being of our patients and families. I started on 20 March and on 21 June I completed 250 miles. Here are some of my walks.

20 March: Great start to my challenge. Porlock Weir to Culbone Church with my sister.

28 March: Walking near home now and savouring scents and smells: a local farmyard and newly mown grass by day; spicy currys and yummy chips by evening.

4 April: Later evening walks free of traffic with the soundspace filled with birdsong as they nestle down for the night; and the sky illumined with glorious sunsets.

19 April: Dandelion clocks abound - symbols of fragility, as is life and health for so many.

26 April: The horse chestnut trees are ablaze with flowers. As a child I called them candles, today I call them candles of hope.

17 May: The trees display their magnificent canopy of foliage above and cast their gentle healing shadows below.

21 June: Celebration Walk with my sister from Porlock Weir to Culbone Church; the last church I entered before lockdown and now the first church I enter afterwards. 250 miles completed!



Peripheral Chaplaincy Reflections

Kate Fox Robinson

“ One of my chaplain friends says chaplaincy is regarded as either pivotal or peripheral within healthcare. Chaplaincy also sits out there on the edges of what matters to the church. A cousin of mine who runs an Ignatian retreat place in Portugal is a firm believer in permaculture which recognises that the most fertile ground is at the edges, and is also the best place for cross pollination. Chaplaincy is often at the periphery of the NHS and also of faith groups. I was in a multi-faith training session for paediatric chaplains and someone stated that chaplains almost have their own emerging community of values as they are so often pushed out of their sending places of worship and work so closely with one another toward a common goal.

You may not be a chaplain, but perhaps your vocation is also one that finds you on the edges and occupying a liminal space. In recent weeks with social distancing and self isolation, we have all ended up living on the edges of what we thought was possible. The role of chaplaincy has been perceived as more pivotal when so many approach the end of their life. Others may learn things here which will serve them when they return to their pathed ways.

I just took a walk in the fields and paid attention to the edges. They are a little messy, chaotic, different species dwelling together, various plants intermingling in the same space. You would not plant a garden like this, it is not neat. Yet life and creativity thrive here. It is the same on the edge of the land, where the sea meets the coastline. Abundant diversity reigns. The space where one body of the sea meets a completely different body of the land. There are pounding waves and stones and sand ground down by the years of being at the edge.

My life is spent on the edges. It can be wearing to be in a space where different phenomena are bucking up against one another. Or in a space where no one pays that much attention because the ordered fields to be harvested are where the focus, energy and investment is. However, the edges bring their own gift to the world, connecting the edge of one space with the edge of another. You will find me on the periphery.

Pay attention to the edges, they bring their own gift to the world.

Growing Chaplaincy



Chaplaincy has continued to grow and develop, even through the Coronavirus lockdown.

One of the first Zoom commissionings was of a village chaplain. Two secondary school chaplains have started their ministry in the last few months. Twenty people are currently doing the 'Exploring Chaplaincy' course and discerning if God is calling them to be chaplains. Every chaplain has had to re-imagine and respond to constant change and challenge and they have done so with huge commitment and compassion.

Thank you to all who make chaplaincy what it is. Thank you to all who have contributed to this booklet in so many ways. Thanks be to God.

If you would like to explore chaplaincy, either for your community or organisation or for yourself, please get in touch via the contact details below.

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Thoughts from a Hospital Ward...

I'd like to tell you about what the chaplaincy has done for us.

Chaplaincy helps us support the patients. The chaplains have taught me a lot about speaking to patients, how to be calm with them. They are excellent for patients.

Chaplaincy has helped us staff as well, especially me. I am a member of the BAME community. I did struggle, I was very scared. The chaplain came and spent time and spoke to me and made me feel a bit better, made me feel that I wasn't on my own.

Commissioning

Leader: All who follow Jesus are invited to share in the work He began and that that we read about in the Bible. Through God's grace we receive gifts and opportunities to point others towards God's love for all people and for His creation. Will you the gathered people of West Buckland and the Wellington Team churches support and pray for Tracey in her ministry and mission as village chaplain?

Response by all: With God's help we will.

Leader: Those who serve as chaplains have a special responsibility and a precious opportunity to travel alongside people, within and beyond the church; in times of sadness and through the fun and laughter of times of celebration. Through this village chaplaincy ministry the love of God is expressed and heaven glimpsed.



Zoom commissioning of the village chaplain for West Buckland, Wellington



Listening chaplaincy. A chaplaincy phonenumber was established within the Avon and Somerset Police Major Emergency Plan Chaplaincy while places of worship were closed because of lockdown. Ninety volunteers were trained to offer chaplaincy over the phone.



The blessing of rainbows





Flowers, given by a village chaplain.

The chaplaincy gift
of time and
listening is
not a luxury.
It is essential.
It is as important as
sterile conditions in
a hospital
operating theatre.



You will find us on the periphery

You will find us on the periphery
In the land of the mapless unknown
You will find us at the edges
Where the wild things grow
You will find us in the liminal space
Where no one knows what to expect
You will find us where the sea meets
the shore
And no one knows what will wash
up next
You will find us among the
hedgerows
Gathering what delights are growing
there
You will find us with the bees and
butterflies
Connecting over here with over
there
You will find us on our knees
With the beetles and the ants
Living all together
Without a lot of thanks
For our humble jumbled life
And our muddy handed style
But we would invite you
To come a stay a while
In the land where the wild things are
And the place where the periphery
reigns
You may learn things here that serve
you
When you return to your pathed
way.

Kate Fox Robinson