

# CINNAMON INFLUENCE

**We believe that faith is a force for good in our society and want to build confidence in the work carried out by local churches and faith-based organisations across the UK and Ireland.**

Over the past year, Cinnamon has continued to develop resources to help churches build stronger relationships with local authorities, police and other agencies in their area.

## Civic Prayer Events

Civic Prayer Events help local church networks strengthen their relationship with civic organisations and establish a new level of prayer for, and in partnership with, our communities.

In June we held our Civic Prayer Event launch, following the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, of which Cinnamon is a partner. Around 150 people attended the envisioning event, which was held in Westminster at St Thomas's Hospital. A number of church leaders contributed to the event and shared their stories of hosting Civic Prayer Events. A new Civic Prayer Hymn was specially written by worship leaders Noel Robinson and Andy Flannagan for use at Civic Prayer Events and was debuted at the launch in London.

At the launch we published a resource booklet sharing insight and guidance to help those planning a Civic Prayer Event. Guests were also encouraged to adopt a weekly rhythm of prayer based around the seven sectors of society: Business & Finance, Education & Learning, Health & Wellbeing, Media, Arts & Entertainment, Politics & Government, Policing & Security and Family & Community.

We were delighted to have the support of a number of key partners to help us launch the initiative including: 24-7 Prayer, World Prayer Centre, Northumbria Community, Global Day of Prayer, A Call to Business, Association of Christian Teachers, Church and Media Network, Christian Police Association, Christians in Parliament and Christians in Politics.

The initiative caught the attention of the national media with *The Times* newspaper reporting, "Civic

Leaders Start Praying to Renew our Towns and Cities." The article quoted Mandy Godfrey from the Christian Police in Bedfordshire, who identified how prayer events had changed the police's attitude to working with local churches. "They noticed projects addressing anti-social behaviour in town and city centres to keep ex-offenders out of prison. My Chief Constable is now extremely enthusiastic about Civic Prayer Events," she said.

Our hope is that Civic Prayer Events will continue to draw together the different sectors of society to encourage a new level of collaboration and support.

## Prayer

Prayer remains at the centre of everything Cinnamon does. Over the last 12 months, Cinnamon has provided support to a number of very large national prayer initiatives. Our desire is to put Jesus-centred prayer at the heart of our nation, as we seek to join in with what God is doing.

In May 2016, Thy Kingdom Come saw a tremendous response to the Anglican Archbishops' call to pray in the run up to Pentecost. A number of Cathedral-based events were organised and more than 3,000 churches actively took part in the designated week.

Later in 2016, the World Prayer Centre gathered 3,000 prayers at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham to participate in a Trumpet Call to Prayer, of which Cinnamon was a partner.

In London, we joined with The Redeemed Christian Church of God as they hosted the Festival of Life at the Excel Centre, attended by an incredible 40,000 people.

# CASE STUDY PARTNERSHIP WORKING

**When Church of the Martyrs in Leicester were looking to make a difference in their local community, Community Money Advice (CMA) seemed like a natural option.**

A staggering 35% of households in Leicester struggle with unsecured debts. Whilst there are a few local programmes in place to support individuals in this situation, they are extremely oversubscribed.

In response, Church of the Martyrs set up CMA in April 2016 with the help of a Cinnamon Micro-Grant funded by Leicestershire and Rutland Police and support from a local Cinnamon Advisor. By building strong relationships with Social Services, UHL Housing Support, the National Autistic Society, the Zinithya Trust and other local churches, Church of the Martyrs has been able to reach out directly to those who are most in need of their support.

A team of 15 volunteers currently provide around 15 hours of support a week to their local community. The team visit individuals in their own home to provide debt counselling, help with budgeting and tailored support to help individuals manage their debt and become financially secure. Twenty people have benefitted from the scheme so far with some very tangible results.

## Local volunteers have provided extensive support which has included:

- preventing bailiff action just 24 hours before it was due for a client;
- renegotiating a client's magistrate's court fine, which prevented an arrest;
- helping an autistic lady when her benefits were unexpectedly reduced;
- securing a waiver of a £5,244 renewal fee for a residence permit for a family who were experiencing financial difficulty following a house fire.

One of the great benefits of working through the local church is that additional support can be provided as and when it's needed. Whilst CMA

volunteers helped the family who experienced the house fire to manage their debt and financial security, other members of the church stepped in to replace furniture and white goods. The wider church were also able to provide another client with emergency food parcels after their housing benefit was unexpectedly stopped and their Child Tax Credit was not renewed.

CMA is undoubtedly a source of vital support to many families within Leicestershire and continues to go from strength to strength.

