

Faith Leadership Workshops in Enniskillen and Omagh



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Free!**

EXPLORING CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN CHANGING TIMES IN FERMANAGH AND OMAGH

This workshop series, funded through Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's good relations programme includes a series of four workshops which will be held in both Omagh and Enniskillen for local church leaders and community volunteers.

The workshops will explore:

- The cost-of-living crisis impact and the churches community response post covid
- The unique challenges for women in church leadership roles
- Current challenges and lived experiences of supporting the health and wellbeing for busy church leaders
- Recognising and growing community relationships and networks to understand the value and contribution local Churches bring to wider society

WORKSHOP DATES
10, 17, 24, 31 January 2023

Places are limited, sign up today!
Email bridget.enslin@bluzebra.co.uk
or call us on 07879612133

Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

T:buc
Changing for the better, together

Summary Report January 2023

Delivered by Blu Zebra

Introduction

In January 2023, a series of Church Leadership workshops were held thanks to funding from the Good Relations section of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. This report provides an outline which may be of interest to all leaders in the faith sector in the area. It presents some future opportunities which, if supported by faith leaders, could impact positively on many outcomes within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area, for Community Planning, Good Relations, and Peace. The activities included:

- Four workshops were delivered in Omagh (Strule Arts Centre) & Enniskillen (Castle, Enniskillen)
- Speakers included, Rev Hazel Hicks (Kilmore Diocese, Fermanagh), Rev. Ruth Craig, Rev Alan Craig, Julie Hoey, Yvette Wilkinson (Lisburn Church and Faith Forum), Rev. Brian Anderson (East Belfast Mission), Grace Davin (Virtual- Compassion Video), Tracy McVea (Well Fed Virtual Tour)
- Workshops included, journeys, stories, the evolution of the local church, development of communities, self-compassion, food & fuel security, networking, collaboration, forums, community planning, awareness raising, leadership, friendship, fun and forums.

Who attended?

- A total of 33 different Church Leaders attended the workshops during the series.
- 14 Church Leaders were from Omagh.
- 19 Church Leaders were from Enniskillen.
- 13 different faith denominations attended.
- 7 different community and church related organisations were represented from across urban and rural areas in Fermanagh and Omagh.
- Churches attending included Church leaders from Life Triumphant Church, Christ of Latter-day Saints, Sacred Heart Church, First Omagh Presbyterian Church, Omagh Community Church, Omagh Methodist Church, Church of Ireland, The Lakes Vineyard Church, Elim Pentecostal Church, FCF Lithuanian/Russian Group, Fermanagh Christian Fellowship, Enniskillen Methodist Church, St Joseph's RC Church.
- Related organisations who attended included Omagh Churches Forum, Enniskillen Salvation Army, Christians Against Poverty, Reach Foodbank (Omagh), Enniskillen Foodbank, Storehouse Foodbank (Enniskillen), Fermanagh & Omagh DC- Anti-Poverty Officer, Good Relations Officer.
- Some Church leaders' quotes included,
 - *"Thank you for all the background work you've done to make these workshops so worthwhile"; "I got so much out of today's session"; "Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Church and Leadership Workshop I enjoyed the project immensely".*



Omagh Workshops



Enniskillen Workshops

Challenges in attending?

- While overall participants attending the full series (4/4 workshops) was not as high as expected, given the quality, some sessions were very specific to interests around food security or women in leadership which may not have attracted a full audiences expectation from all denominations.
- A total 7 other Church Leaders were also registered and did not attend.
- January on reflection and a week-on-week series can be challenging for Church Leaders - excuses at late notice included funerals, illness, lack of support resources, prior commitments to courses and urgent matters within congregations.
- Changes in the weather, however, did not keep Church Leaders away on days when the snow came to fall in Omagh and Enniskillen, such was the appetite for the workshops.

Two pictures taken a week apart on the days of the workshops. Clear and crisp, and snow falling on the other. This did not affect attendance!



Workshops & summary outcomes

Date/Time	Venue	Workshop content & summary outcomes	Speakers
10th January 2023 1-3pm, Omagh And 5-7pm Enniskillen	Strule Arts Centre and Enniskillen Castle	<p>The cost-of-living crisis, food, heat and building communities around essential services and a sense of belonging, including a social supermarket model.</p> <p>Outcomes of workshops: There is a growing need for support around food and fuel security in the district. The Council Anti-Poverty Officer has a new scheme of support in place working with 5 partners in the area and some funding. Faith based organisations have a key role to play. A social supermarket model with wrap around services could work and link to existing food banks in the district. Faith based organisations are serving the community in urban and rural areas, but greater collaboration across the faith sector could advance the cause.</p> <p>https://www.icloud.com/photos/#00cY2wOpKeTlckJ5-RYbEZeqw (Well Fed)</p>	Jude Bailey (Well Fed, Newtownards)- speaker fell ill- Bruce Hogg delivered & facilitated the session which included the SSM model including virtual tours from Well Fed, Tracy McVea
17th January 2023 1-3pm, Omagh And	Strule Arts Centre and	<p>The unique challenges for women in church leadership roles</p> <p>Outcomes of the workshops:</p>	Revd. Hazel Hicks (Teemore, Co Fermanagh)

<p>5-7pm Enniskillen</p>	<p>Enniskillen Castle</p>	<p>The church and its leadership have been on a journey of change during the past thirty year. Its attitudinal change has become one which is more inclusive of women progressing within the structures of the church. A local leader living on the border with Ireland and her impactful stories of no borders, change, acceptance and progression in the church has allowed it to become richer and more diverse, even when number are shrinking in attendance. The roles of woman in leadership are growing and provides a greater ability to deal, share and understand lived experiences for all who belong to a community. Hazels stories also highlighted the rural parish challenges of dwindling numbers & church leader resources, many church buildings, associated graveyards and the needs in communities to adapt, join congregations and look at alternate uses of church buildings for their communities.</p>	
<p>24th January 2023 1-3pm, Omagh And 5-7pm Enniskillen</p>	<p>Strule Arts Centre and Enniskillen Castle</p>	<p>The formation of a Churches and Faith Forum which has impacted on all leaders and the wider community with links to community planning And Essential wellbeing and self-care for Church leaders in their busy lives</p> <p>Outcomes of the workshops: Four Lisburn and Castlereagh Church and Faith Forum members shared their stories of coming together within a wider context of 30 active (60 churches on the fridge/ 120 total looking in/observing change) in Lisburn and Castlereagh area. A self-compassion session was gifted to all attending too.</p> <p>There is an identified need to enable more friendship development opportunities, fun, networking and collaboration within churches across the district of Fermanagh and Omagh. Most churches understand their numbers are shrinking and that together they can serve the community needs more effectively by working together. None however wants the burden of additional leadership duties but are content to work in a more informal group to drive things forward. There is a sense of exhaustion for all. A refreshing look at how to move forward is required. This could be supported by projects which enable time out, best practice visits and further engagement with outward looking community engagement models through food & fuel, mental health, self-compassion and community planning outcomes which demonstrate a wider collective, collaborative and asset and activity-based outcomes.</p> <p>https://www.icloud.com/photos/#01d0nabn6WBuaVQnInWqRAtGw (Grace Davin, Self-Care)</p>	<p>Yvette Wilkinson, Julie Hoey, Rev. Ruth Craig and Rev. Alan Craig (Lisburn Church and Faith Forum)</p>
<p>31st January 2023 1-3pm, Omagh And 5-7pm Enniskillen</p>	<p>Strule Arts Centre and Enniskillen Castle</p>	<p>Outwards looking churches connected to the community to grow, develop, and sustain those most in need.</p> <p>Outcomes of the workshops: A vision was shared of how a church which dwindled in numbers had increased attendance because of positive economic changes for individuals, hence leaving the area, in what is a socially deprived area with multiple deprivation outcomes</p>	<p>Rev Brian Anderson (East Belfast Mission)</p>

		<p>can reimagine, employ, access funding, connect to government outcomes/schemes/funds and create a multi-faceted social enterprise which links to enabling and improving outcomes for residents in the area.</p> <p>East Belfast Mission shares a great story of progress, cross community, antipoverty, sheltered accommodation, food & fuel security, education, community wealth building, language diversity & cultural pride and sense of belonging, a hub for agencies and a small church, real people, employed, volunteering and offering services which change lives.</p> <p>The examples enable a vision for collective, collaborative, cross community work to help address disadvantage in the area and build community strength, peace, reconciliation and good relations.</p>	
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Workshop summary and future potential

The workshops offered an impactful series of current, best practice examples and stories from Church Leaders actively working with communities in different ways. It offered time out away from routines, a scene change in everyday vocation for church leaders, many who are exhausted and lack resources and support. The workshops inspired and awoke ideas, engaged, and introduced challenges which may help refresh approaches to working together for a greater purpose between churches and local community organisations in different ways. A key driver for urgency within the needs of communities is the current cost of living crisis, food and fuel security, isolation, and many post covid influences which are impacting on individuals of all age's mental health and well-being.

Future opportunities to progress a faith-based community led approaches under Good Relations or future PEACEPLUS projects are options under discussion with Good Relations, Peace and Anti-Poverty Officers. Phase 2 consultation of PEACE PLUS begins the week commencing 20th February.

Building support networks for everyday work which church and faith-based organisations do could be shared collaboratively with others and enhance and lighten the burden for many leaders, while building cohesive communities. Making sure the hard-to-reach churches are included in activities and attracted to the forums, especially those on the fringes observing but not participating is a key consideration for future programmes.

There is a greater need to educate more Church and faith leaders around Community Planning and their outcomes and how they can contribute in a manner which enables employment and volunteering opportunities, promotes social enterprise development and allows access to funding.

Addressing the community's attitudes to "blow ins" and making Fermanagh and Omagh more welcoming to community contributors/volunteers through friendship, fun, network collaboration and common interests which serve cross community peace and good relations efforts need to be promoted in future programmes.

Lisburn and Castlereagh Church and Faith Forum, East Belfast Mission and Well Fed, social supermarket has offered an opportunity to do a best practice visit to their premises, if and when a chance presents itself. All would be welcome.

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