



## Annual Report 2017-18

The [West Midlands Churches' Further Education Council](#) exists to:

- Support colleges in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students and the training and resourcing of staff in matters of faith and spirituality
- Support churches in valuing further education and lifelong learning as part of their wider involvement in education, and providing resources and training to partner colleges in their work.

The Council is composed of representatives from across different Christian churches represented in the West Midlands region, including individuals with years of experience working within the FE and lifelong learning sectors (see p. 4). Though rooted in the Christian tradition, the Council takes an open and positive approach to working with people of any faith and none.

The Council initiates projects, organises training and networking events, and networks chaplains and other FE staff in the West Midlands region. It can also assist in brokering partnerships between colleges, churches and other faith communities.

West Midlands Churches' FE Council was founded in 1987 and is currently the only regionally-based, ecumenically-owned organisation which supports Christian engagement in the further education sector and offering support to colleges. A great deal of valuable project work has taken place over the years, and the Council is seeking to build upon this.

## The Year in Brief

### [New West Midlands FE Chaplaincy Ambassador](#)



In late 2017 we were pleased to announce the appointment of a new FE Chaplaincy Ambassador for the West Midlands – the first ecumenically funded appointment of its kind in Britain for some years. Phil Metcalf, who began work in January 2018, supports colleges and local churches/fairth communities in brokering new chaplaincy arrangements where none currently exist, and supporting and strengthening existing chaplaincy teams. Phil has a strong track record in education, having been Diocesan Director of Education for Gloucester and, most recently, Chaplain at Hartpury College.

The three-year part-time role is jointly funded by four local denominational bodies - the Anglican dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield, the Heart of England Baptist Association, and the West Midlands Synod on the United Reformed Church – and by St Peter's Saltley Trust. West Midlands Churches' Further Education Council played a significant role in assisting sponsor denominations in scoping the post, and members of WM Churches' FE Council form part of the advisory group for Phil's work. The work is in its early days, but the signs are encouraging, with 9 colleges currently exploring either a new chaplaincy arrangement, strengthening existing chaplaincy provision or replacing a recently departed chaplain.

West Midlands Churches' FE Council would like to express continued thanks to funders for their commitment to developing chaplaincy in further education through this project.

## Plumbing the Depths: A Reflective CPD Resource for FE Chaplains



*Plumbing the Depths* is a new reflective resource designed to facilitate reflection on experiences of calling and ministry in Further Education, based on themes from the Book of Jonah. For use in large group, small group and one-to-one settings, it has been developed by West Midlands Churches' FE Council, written by former WMC FEC members Sarah Brush and Toni Coulton, with additional material by Chris Polhill and 24 specially-commissioned illustrations by Si Smith. The resource comes in electronic form and includes worksheets, facilitators' guides for large group, small group and one-to-one use, PowerPoint presentations and more. The resource is available for a suggested donation of £9 from [info@wmcfec.org.uk](mailto:info@wmcfec.org.uk). Further work will be undertaken to publicise the resource in 2018-19.

## ROUNDED: SMSC Resources for 16-19s in Further Education

Currently in development, this resource aims to provide quality resources for colleges to encourage the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their students. Many colleges recognise this as important, but many teaching staff also say they lack the resources and confidence to do this well. ROUNDED aims to be a suite of themed resources around different topics with clear relevance to SMSC, focused around a central, interactive element, with a menu of supporting activities and material.



Above: Artwork from 'The New Lad', part of resource on 'Cultivating Identity, Inclusion and Belonging' being developed by Simeon Whiting

The prototype session – on ‘cultivating identity, inclusion and belonging’ was commissioned by WMC FEC from local resource writer Simeon Whiting in 2015 and has been trialled in three colleges. Some difficulty in arranging trials illustrates the pressures facing the FE sector at present, but where the resource has been trialled, feedback from students has been good. Final trialling is currently underway, and it is hoped to commission further sessions (up to a planned 6-8) over the course of this year.

WMC FEC is grateful to funders of this project for their support: Dare2Engage, the St Christopher’s Educational Trust, St Peter’s Saltley Trust and the Friends Hall Farm Street Trust.

## Hope for FE - Consultation

For chaplaincy and other faith-related work within the Further Education sector, these are times of both challenge and opportunity, as the sector faces many competing demands, scarce resources, but also through it great commitment to improving the life chances of students.

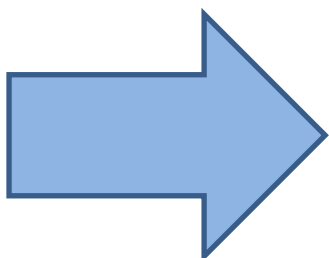
To reflect on the prospects for chaplaincy and related work in further education, and identify priorities for future work, the WMC FEC invited friends and colleagues from colleges and other organisations to a consultation held at Birmingham Metropolitan College’s Matthew Boulton campus on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017. The consultation was facilitated by Garry Neave, the Church of England’s national adviser for Further Education.

The infographic below summarises key discussion and reflection points from the day (a larger version is available on request). WMC FEC are grateful to all those who took part in a stimulating afternoon.



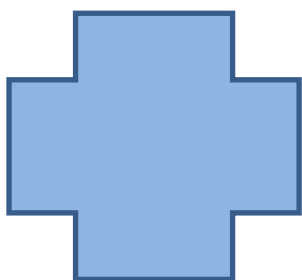
## Plans for 2018-19

Our *Hope for FE* consultation has identified several potential areas of work for the future. These were considered further at the Council's May 2018 AGM, with the following results:



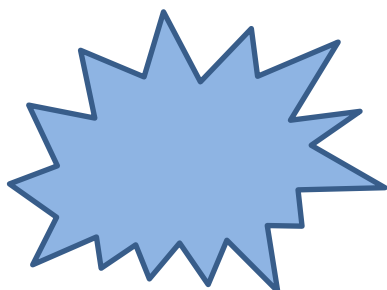
Continued commitment to ongoing project work:

- Development of ROUNDED, the suite of SMSC resources for 16-19s, with the aim of having a full set of sessions written by end of 2018
- Support for Phil Metcalf's work as WM FE Chaplaincy Ambassador
- Publicising the existence of the Plumbing the Depths resource



A stronger and more intentional focus on communications, including:

- Work to raise the profile of Further Education as a sphere of prayer and action within the region's churches
- Collecting and sharing case studies on innovative and effective models of chaplaincy/engagement with FE colleges
- Making Comms/Marketing a standing agenda item for WMCFEC



Development of new areas of project work from 2018. A final decision will be made following further consultation with participants from FE colleges in the region at Chaplaincy Central's conference in June 2018. Possible priority areas include:

- Seeking to benefit students' mental health in ways which complement the work of existing college support services, addressing an acute contemporary need
- Creation of a series of short films on faith literacy for college staff, addressing a current confidence/skill gap in this area [Council already has funding earmarked for project work in this area]
- Mentoring as a model of engagement with colleges

In addition to developing new work, WMCFEC will continue to:

- Involve new people in the work of the Council, filling gaps in denominational representation and inviting more active participation from those working in further education colleges.
- Build good relationships with other organisations working to benefit the further education sector and supporting the churches' work in education.

# People

In 2017-18 the following served as members of the Council:

Revd Stephen Blyth	Co-opted, N. Warks and Hinckley College
Katy Broomfield (+)	Co-opted, Burton and South Derbyshire College
Pete Carrington	Festive (FE and Sixth Form Initiative)
Sue Davis (Treasurer)	West Midlands Synod of the URC
Revd Neil Dunlop	Anglican Diocese of Hereford
Jean Feely (*)	Co-opted, Burton & S. Derbyshire College
Rt Revd Clive Gregory, Bishop of Wolverhampton (Chair)	WM Church Leaders
Andy Haynes	W'ton and Shrewsbury Methodist District
Simon Hill	Anglican Diocese of Worcester
Ian Jones (Hon. Sec.)	St Peter's Saltley Trust
Canon Phil Metcalf (+)	Co-opted, WM FE Chaplaincy Ambassador
Revd Naomi Nixon (*)	Anglican Diocese of Coventry
Jill Saunders	Anglican Diocese of Birmingham
Hilary Topp	Student Christian Movement/CE Quakers

(\* = finishing; + = beginning)

At the end of this year there were vacancies for representatives of: the Anglican Dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield, the Birmingham Methodist District, Chester and Stoke Methodist District, the Heart of England Baptist Association, the Council of Black-Led Churches, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, and up to two further co-opted members.

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