Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour.

(Deuteronomy 15:7–11)

Sheffield Church Action had intended to host a civic Breakfast on the theme of poverty and disability in 2020 but this had to be cancelled and we hope to reschedule sometime in 2021.

However, on a National Church Action on Poverty Zoom gathering we heard from Stef Benstead about her book:

Author: Stef Benstead

Are disabled people second class citizens in modern Britain? Despite severe criticisms from the United Nations the UK Government has continued to reject claims that its austerity policies have targeted disabled people and other minority groups

Niall Cooper, Director of Church Action on Poverty: “This is a benchmark study of the treatment of disabled people under austerity. A hugely well researched and comprehensive overview, which provides both the ‘long view’ of how disabled people have fared within the social security system from the origins of the Welfare State through to the current day. It is illuminated by numerous powerful personal stories illustrating the human impact of austerity, and a devastating critique of the shift from a positive vision of social security to today’s welfare system based on a culture of blame and the myth of dependency. A must read!”
Church Action on Poverty Sunday, 21 February 2021. If we are to build a society in which everyone can live a full life, free from poverty, we must ensure the voices of people who are struggling to make ends meet are heard. Join churches around the UK in prayer, giving and action on Church Action on Poverty Sunday.

Share a vision for a society founded on compassion and justice, where all people are able to exercise dignity, agency, and power.

Free resources to reflect and pray for change, and raise funds are available on the National CAP webpage—they can be used by Churches/groups/individuals.

The Church Action on Poverty website is: www.church-poverty.org

Details of online Church services will also appear on the National Church Action on Poverty WEB PAGE shortly. Please let our secretary, Briony, know if you are planning any services

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A monthly 60-minute virtual gathering, at 2pm Tuesday as announced, organised by National CAP.

- Time for social connection with others from around the country
- Inspiring, challenging/informative speakers
- Ideas for action/campaigning

Each month a different theme is explored, with speakers and contributors who have relevant expertise. The dates for upcoming Gatherings are:

- 26 January
- 23 February

Contact Felicity Guite at National Church Action on Poverty for further information/Zoom Link

felicity@church-poverty.org.uk

Please let your contacts know of these gatherings. Also, if you are unable to be available at the time, previous gatherings can be viewed on the National Church Action on Poverty Facebook page and the Sheffield Church Action on Poverty Facebook page. (once again please direct people to these.)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 16 December 2020

Normally, we hold our AGM in the late Spring, but, because of the pandemic, it was delayed until December and held on Zoom, with around 20 people participating.

Our keynote speaker was Niall Cooper, Director of Church Action on Poverty nationally. He spoke about the developing thinking about Church Action on Poverty’s long-term vision of a UK free from poverty, and a 10-year strategy to work towards this.

The priorities were: dignity, agency, and power. He referred to Pope Francis’ call to place the poorest and marginalised at the centre. Churches were chary of power but to achieve change we had to be powerful. We also needed to take more seriously issues of race, class, gender and disability.

In the subsequent question time, Niall spoke among other things about the powerful authenticity of Marcus Rashford’s campaigning for those in poverty.

Joe Forde, in his Chair’s Report, said that the group’s activities had been unavoidably curtailed by the pandemic. Good plans had been made for the Civic Breakfast in March, but it had to be abandoned. The homelessness night shelter initiative in Sheffield had been put on hold. We could not hold our normal pilgrimage in October, but Bob Rae devised a very effective ‘virtual pilgrimage’ using YouTube and Zoom. The link to the pilgrimage videos is, (where they can still be accessed) https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLu1-JjA4QOtPcyKVeb3q5QfadWVgbSkC

Challenges for the coming year were to find new members and a new venue for meetings as the Jesus Centre had closed. David Price spoke briefly about Universal Credit and the danger of mass unemployment after the pandemic. There was discussion about the need for the group to renew itself and to invite non committee members to regular meetings and events. Robert Carrack as outgoing Treasurer reported on the healthy financial situation of the group and was thanked for his contribution over several years.

David Price

Sheffield Church Action on Poverty: Membership

If you’d like to join the group or renew your membership, please email our secretary, Briony, for details: briony.broome@hotmail.co.uk

Remember that Sheffield Church Action on Poverty has its own Facebook page.