

Reports for the Forum, December 2009

The Finance Report, and the report from Future Vision, have been circulated separately.

REPORT FROM THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

A record number of people turned out on 27th November for the annual Christmas Lights Switch On and for the first time in years it was actually rain-free! Once again, Churches Together were involved in the planning of this event and the Town Council welcome their contribution which is vital - ensuring that the Christmas message of the Good News is upheld in the town's festivities. Working together in partnership with the council and other groups of people is an important aspect of outreach and this particular event is proof of its success.

The new lights that were launched last year were warmly received and this year strings of additional white lights were added across the main routes. The star atop St Peter's again shines brightly over Sudbury illustrating a town where God's activity is hard at work!

There were many activities happening during the evening however, those organised by Churches together were : The Salvation Army Band who played their traditional range of carols and were joined by the St Andrew's junior choir; Men In Christ who served non-alcoholic punch and cooked and sold sweet chestnuts (with grateful thanks to Waitrose who kindly donated the chestnuts to the Rotary Club of Sudbury). Christian mime artist Ken Wyllie, who attended Praise on Market Hill in 2008, was one of the street artists performing an excellent range of mimes and Kettle and Fish opened especially to serve teas and coffees. Men In Christ also undertook a survey entitled "*What Christmas means to me*" - the results of which may be obtained from Peter Sebbage.

Do please let me have your thoughts and comments about the Christmas Lights event as I will willingly pass your ideas onto the planning team for next year.

Lynda Sebbage
December 2009

REPORT FROM MEN IN CHRIST

The MiCS group is going from strength to strength with about 20 members and we feel especially blessed through this ministry. We meet fortnightly on a Thursday evening to share a time of men's fellowship and prayer and to encourage men to take on a greater role within their Christian life. We are also called on by other church groups from time to time to help them in a number of ways, such as running BBQs, and at this time year helping to deliver Church Christmas cards! We recently undertook a small survey whilst running the hot chestnut stall during the "*Christmas Lights Switch On*" which helped us to engage our team with the local community and talk to them about their faith. Currently we are planning on finding ways to help men who have broken away from their families, try to cope with the difficulties of fragmented family life.

Our fellowship helps support men in ways which is sometimes difficult within the framework of a standard church service and we do encourage more men to join us - ministers are also very welcome to attend our evenings together.

Peter Sebbage
December 2009

REPORT FROM THE CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

The Salvation Army very generously offered their facilities to enable the Christmas Hamper project to go ahead this year and so our grateful thanks go to Major Neville. It never ceases to amaze me how the generosity of the various congregations throughout the district, and the dedication of a small number of people to help wrap and pack the hampers, makes all this possible.

About 100 hampers were sent out to: Home Start Babergh (30) Age Concern (30) Mulberry House (6) and about 34 to the various churches for local distribution. Certainly the hampers given to Mulberry House by Living Waters will help build bridges between the people they support and the Christian community. Once again, as well as a Christmas card in every hamper, we included a '*Why Christmas?*' book by Nicky Gumbel to which we pray the recipients will respond.

Thank you to all who helped and contributed in goods, time and prayer.

Peter Sebbage
December 2009

A Thank You from Mulberry House

Hi there Peter,

Just like to take the opportunity again to say thank you so much for the effort went in and for the generosity of the Christmas hampers. They are brilliant and very well received by all our residents! It will definitely give us the opportunity to show our residents the positive contributions the community can make.

Once again thank you so much for taking Mulberry house and putting us on your Christmas hamper list. I wish you all the best and look forward to maybe working again together.

Best Wishes

The Mulberry House Team and Residents