

## **Churches of Croxley Green Parish Nurse Project**

The Parish Nurse project is an exciting initiative of the Churches in Croxley Green. Its main aim is to meet the needs of those in Croxley who are lonely, isolated and vulnerable. It is expected that most of these people will *not* be part of the existing congregations, although occasions may arise where church members access the service too. On no account will the Parish Nurse become a private nursing service for those in the church whose needs can already be met by existing pastoral and NHS services. The key selling point of this service is that it is open to anyone of any faith, or none, and the 'Parish' part of the title refers to it being provided *by* the churches *for* the people of Croxley Green.

Initially we plan to employ a Parish Nurse for a limited number of hours a week. As the project develops, we hope to provide additional hours of paid Parish Nursing time.

We anticipate that there will be a considerable response to this service, and so great care will be taken to ensure that the nurse is well trained and supported in prioritizing needs. A key part of this role is the recruitment and training of volunteers to support the Parish Nurse in some areas of work. We will not be replicating anything that is provided by the NHS, who currently provide a wide range of specialist nurses, and therefore cannot be drawn in to providing actual nursing care. What we can do is provide medical advice, referrals back into the NHS system and advocacy within that system, as well as groups and social integration where health education and exercise is part of what is offered, along with spiritual and emotional support. This is something that the local churches feel would benefit the people of Croxley Green and therefore two of the churches have indicated that they are prepared to support this project financially for at least the next three years. We have also been given a grant for the first year to cover some set up and running costs from Three Rives District Council. In other Parish Nurse projects around the country, where the service has become known in the community, fund raising has been very successful and a natural response to the benefit people feel they have received. We anticipate the same will happen here.

We are already members of Parish Nursing Ministries UK (PNMUK) and as a result they provide advice in the preliminary stages, as well as excellent training and support for the nurse once in situ. Safeguarding training will be part of that, but the churches where the nurse will be based will also cover this. Record keeping is covered in that training and is held to the same standard as any community based nurse. We will provide a computer, a locked filing cabinet and office space to comply with national standards in this area.

We hope very much to appoint this autumn, but are quite clear that getting the right person or people is much more important than meeting that deadline. We have already had people express an interest and feel very hopeful that the momentum and enthusiasm for this project amongst the churches will ensure that word spreads and the right nurse or nurses will be found. We are in the process of applying to the charity commission to register as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which will be the legal body responsible for employing the Parish Nurse, and we hope this will provide a legal platform for other community projects that Churches Together undertake, such as the existing food bank.

We are very aware that we live in a comparably well resourced area, but as ministers we are also aware that increasingly people are falling through the net of an over stretched health and social care service. We have met with senior nurses at the hospital, and contacted local GPs who are all most supportive and anxious that we get this service up and running as soon as we can. They have already indicated that they can see very clearly how this service will work well with what they already provide.

We do hope that Croxley Green Parish Council will consider this to be a worthwhile and valuable service for the people of this community and will be willing to support it financially.

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