

*“To act justly and to love tenderly”*

## **Background**

Following the Motu Proprio, “In the service of Charity” , issued by Pope Benedict in December 2012 the Archbishop’s Council of the Archdiocese of Birmingham has both discussed and consulted on the canonical requirements set down in this document. One requirement is that a bishop needs to have oversight of and be responsible for all the social action that takes place in the name of the Church in his Diocese. In order to have this oversight the Archbishop’s Council has decided on the creation of a Caritas structure, to which all Catholic social action initiatives in the Archdiocese will be invited to belong. At the same time it was clear to the Archbishop’s Council that there are many more agencies in the Archdiocese that have been originally inspired by or influenced by the Gospel and Catholic social teaching: groups, organisations or individuals which started as, or which now are partnership projects involving other Christian denominations, other faiths, charities or statutory agencies. There are also many members of the Catholic Church who inspired by their faith are involved in Social Action work

## **Vision**

That “Caritas - Archdiocese of Birmingham” will bring together all those who serve their neighbour in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham in the name of the Gospel; by coming together all its members will draw strength and guidance from the Gospel and Catholic social teaching, be nourished and nurtured by a rich spirituality, and share practice with each other to enrich the quality and effectiveness of their work, and be able to express and communicate in a clear voice what the needs of the most vulnerable are and how they can be responded to.

## **Values**

Gospel values and the values underpinning Catholic Social teaching are the basis for this work. Bearing in mind the particular nature and expression of the work in the Archdiocese the following are important:

For the small organisations to be of equal value to the large – for all voices to be listened to with equal attention and all views to be sought with equal determination.

For financially poor agencies in the network to be able to have as much influence as wealthier ones

For professionals and volunteers to bring their respective expertise and experience to Caritas and for all contributions to be valued

## **Aims**

For all Charities, agencies, projects, services, groups (defined as having at least a simple structure and organisation) that are involved in social action or social care in the RC Archdiocese of Birmingham, whose work originated from or is still inspired by the Gospel and Catholic social teaching to meet together on a regular basis to have the opportunity to :

- Share practice
- To seek to arrange joint training where this is appropriate/requested
- To arrange on-going Biblical and Catholic social teaching formation, the underpinning of the work
- To nurture the spiritual basis of the work
- To reflect on the Catholic nature of the work
- To identify areas of need and to discuss how best to work to satisfy those needs
- To encourage and promote Social Action wherever possible
- Enable opportunities for two or several members to seek, if desired, to partner on one or several joint project/s
- To encourage the use of the spiritual, human and material resources of the parish, deanery and Diocese in the service of the poor
- To encourage the development of and to support good social care practice
- To provide a stronger and coherent voice on important social issues and policies for the Archdiocese that the Archbishop's Council can avail of
- To provide a fuller picture for the Archdiocese of all the Social Action that goes on in the name of the Church in the communities and areas of this Archdiocese
- To discuss informally through a closed online forum general matters related to social care/action and to seek advice on any matters from fellow members

## Membership

All applications for full membership shall be approved by the Archbishop.

**Full Membership** is for those organisations (including parishes) which have Episcopal approval to carry out social action or care in the name of the Catholic Church in this Archdiocese.

**Associate membership** is for those organisations which have originated from or been inspired by the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching from a Catholic parish or organisation, Catholic Schools or Catholic individual/s or group/s and which do not require the approval of the Archbishop for their work. Associate membership is available to Christian or Faith organisations involved in Social Action.

**Friends of Caritas membership** is for organisations or individuals who are attracted to the Caritas vision of Social care and wish to share in this in some way.

## Members

May be:

1. Appointed by Archbishop's Council
2. Religious
3. Organisational
4. Parish representative
5. Individual

### 1. Appointed by the Archbishop's Council

**Moral theologian** – shall be appointed by the Archbishop's Council as a consultant for the Caritas network. This consultant can be approached by the Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretariat directly or be asked to respond to a written request that has been submitted by an Officer with the approval of the executive committee of the network. S/he may attend meetings but is not required to.

**Pastoral theologian**- appointed by the Archbishop's Council – who shall support the officers in ensuring that the Catholic social teaching and the Spirituality aspects/objectives of the network remain priorities and plans are in place to implement these.

**President** – The Archbishop or Auxiliary Bishop of the Birmingham Archdiocese

**Chair** –the Network shall be chaired by a member of Caritas - Archdiocese of Birmingham, whose appointment shall be made by or approved by the Archbishop

**Secretariat** – agency that is appointed to the network by the Archbishop's Council for 3 years (renewable) to provide secretarial services and membership administration and to act as online forum moderator – Father Hudson's Society shall be the first Secretariat organisation

The following organisations shall have membership representation as of right (maximum of 2 reps for each organisation):

- Father Hudson's Society - the Social Care Agency of the Archdiocese & member of CSAN
  - Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Birmingham
  - Newman University
  - St Mary's College Oscott ( one staff member and one student member)
  - Maryvale Institute
  - SVP
  - Kenelm Youth Trust
2. **Organisational Members** - Must be appointed by their Chief Officer. (maximum of 2 reps for each organisation)
  3. **Religious** - Must be appointed by the Superior for the Order with authority for communities in the Archdiocese. (maximum of 2 reps for each Religious congregation)
  4. **Parish Representative** - Must be approved by their own Parish Priest. Their role is to represent all social action in the parish not the group or organisation to which they may belong. (maximum of 2 reps for each parish )
  5. **Individuals** - Most probably "friends of Caritas"

## **Executive Committee**

- To consist of up to nine people
- All to be appointed by the Archbishop initially, and thereafter to be nominated by the full members with approval by the Archbishop
- The Office of Chair to be appointed by the Archbishop initially, thereafter to be approved by him
- The Secretary to be appointed by the Secretariat
- Vice Chair and Treasurer to be chosen by the Committee
- The Archbishop may appoint other members as required who have particular expertise
- All E.C members to serve on the committee for three years initially

## **Secretariat**

The secretary will through the secretariat arrange for the plans of the Executive Committee to be effected and will also manage the website and moderate the online forum.

All communications of Caritas Birmingham will be via email and through a closed ( i.e. accessible to registered members only) online chat forum, which will allow informal open (i.e. visible to all members of the forum) discussion between members to enable sharing of experiences, expertise, advice etc. on matters of social care/action. This forum will be moderated by the secretary to ensure that its focus and content remains appropriate.

## AGM

- Shall receive report and accounts from Executive Committee
- Decide on rotation of Members of Executive Committee as and when required
- Be an opportunity for debate by members

One member - one vote at the annual meeting. Any member supported by two sponsoring members may propose a motion (to be submitted prior to the meeting) for debate and vote at the annual meeting. Proxy voting will be accepted. Decisions will be carried by a simple majority of those voting. Friends of Caritas are not eligible for voting. The organisation is the member, regardless of the number of representatives.

Any motion passed, which in the opinion of the Archbishop, is contrary to Catholic teaching shall be automatically overturned.

## Meetings

The Executive Committee shall keep in mind when planning that the Archdiocese is very large geographically and it can be very difficult to meet together on a regular basis. It is also clear that there is great diversity in the Archdiocese. One central meeting could not possibly satisfy the needs of the members. There is a strong commitment to Area based gatherings. Central meetings shall take place only as and when necessary

The proposal is therefore that there be a mix of Central, area and themed groups in the year and that the dates and venues for these are set for the year and that the timetable be linked in some manner to the Archbishop's Council timetable

## Funding

### Membership fee

*This will be set by the Executive Committee and will need to be sufficient to maintain the network, dependent on any other funding that can be secured. The Executive Committee shall agree with the Archbishop the budget for each year*

The norm is that all events are to be priced at cost and paid for by those attending. Any other costs incurred by officers or events sanctioned by the network will be met by Caritas Archdiocese of Birmingham in consultation with the Archbishop

### Venue costs for meetings.

If the Grimshaw room is used a charge shall be made. Members may be able to offer convenient suitable meeting rooms free of charge.

It is hoped that meetings in other areas of the Archdiocese could be held in parish facilities at nominal or no charge.