

VINCENTIAN NEWS



Society of St Vincent de Paul

Summer 2017 Volume 4 Number 12



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A Mass of Celebration for our Regional Senior Vice President

A portrait of Fr Perry Gildea C.M., an older man with white hair and glasses, smiling slightly. The background of the portrait is a soft, blue and purple sky over a horizon.

Spiritual Reflections

Fr Perry Gildea C.M

The Vincentian Vocation

Jesus began his public life by putting the poor at the centre of his ministry, as in the Sermon on the Mount “Blessed are the Poor in Spirit” or in St Luke’s gospel where he begins his ministry in the Synagogue quoting Isaiah’s messianic signs ending with “the poor will have good news preached to them.” As can be seen in the Acts of the Apostles, even in the earliest days of the infant Christian community concern for the balanced care of the poor was a major concern. In this context, it is useful for all members of the Vincentian family to reflect on Jesus’ warning “the poor you will always have with you”. (Mtt. 26:11). Care for the poor is a constant of the Church’s mission.

It also means that each generation of Christians needs to recommit to this ministry to the poor. In our present times, we are under two very different types of pressure. On the one hand our local political and economic situation is creating ever more cases of local poverty. Simultaneously, world strife is creating huge crises where millions are displaced, homeless, without work or education facilities for their children, not to mention an adequate diet. Furthermore, there is the tragedy of famine in many parts of Africa and elsewhere. This is one reality and source of pressure.

The other comes from Christianity itself who and what we are and are called to be. Since the 60’s of the last century and the enormously influential Vatican Council we are increasingly aware that every baptised Christian is called to continue the mission of Christ, especially his primary concern for the poor always present.

In the Society we are very privileged to have two wonderful sources of inspiration, Frederic Ozanam with his student colleagues and St Vincent de Paul whom he chose as Patron of his Society. Ozanam and his young university colleagues were inspired to realise that a Christian life without a deep concern for the poor was seriously deficient. They sought help and advice in a Paris that was in political chaos, anti-Christian and had masses sunk in squalor and poverty. They were guided to the houses of the poor and taught how to visit them with compassion, concern and an ability to offer some help. They discovered the fundamental Vincentian truth that “Christ is found in the poor”. Their inspiration was a French saint who lived two hundred years before them, also based in Paris. St Vincent de Paul after quite a few years of searching for a role in life suddenly was awakened to the dire needs of the poor and in a moment of clarity decided to dedicate his life to their service. Part of his “conversion” was to realise that God was not above the object of contemplation and adoration, but on the streets in the persons of the poor. Every poor face was the face of Christ. He loved the phrase, which Ozanam also adopted, “the poor are our lords and masters”.

In the Vincentian family and the Society, we are inheritors of this special vision and tradition. We also live in a special time in the Church. Apart from Ozanam and Vincent we also have in our time a Pope who has also placed concern for the poor at the centre of Christian thought and ministry. In his first major exhortation (Evangelii Gaudium – The Joy of the Gospel) he proclaims that we are all called to be evangelisers proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. This proclamation is not only by word but also by deed and especially deeds dedicated to the service of the poor. “Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society’s most neglected members. Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.” (EG 186-7). In all his subsequent letters and exhortations, he has returned to the same theme. In another of his exhortations about mercy he is at pains to encourage the corporal works of mercy looking after the actual needs of the poor we encounter or are introduced to. This is the compassionate face of Christ. He is also especially concerned as were Vincent and Ozanam not with simple “band aid” help, which though always necessary should be concerned with the larger issues, namely addressing whenever and wherever possible the causes of poverty. In a recent talk he also said, “the fight against poverty demands a better understanding of the reality of poverty as a human and not merely the economic phenomenon. Promoting integral human development demands dialogue and engagement with people’s needs and aspirations, listening to the poor and their daily experience of ‘multidimensional, overlapping deprivations’, and devising specific responses to concrete situations.” This is all part of our mission as Vincentians.

Welcome

by Pauline Brown, Regional Manager



A warm welcome to the latest edition of the Vincentian News

In this our latest edition of Vincentian News, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed. Please remember that this magazine is an avenue to share your good news

stories, local successes or anything of interest to fellow members. All contributions gratefully accepted! The Society provides such a wide and varied range of help and support through home visitation, shops and special works and it is great to get an update on developments and progress.

Over the past few months there have been a number of developments at Regional level. Our committees have been focussing on a range of objectives so far this year. Some of the key headlines from each committee are as follows. The Regional Finance committee have been working to ensure all annual reports and associated documentation has been submitted to National Office and is fully compliant. The Regional Overview committee have spent time working on an update policy on vetting, re-vetting and retro-spective vetting in line with National policy and procedure. A new policy was agreed by Regional Council and this is now available from your Area President. Maria Fyfe, Membership Support Officer has included the main changes within this edition of the Vincentian News. The Overview Committee has also produced a document on Quality Visitation. This guide is a reminder on how we should conduct home visits and some points to consider prior, during and ending a contact with a client. Further copies are available from your Conference or Area President or from Regional Office. The Regional Shops Committee welcomes Anne Crossan, our new Regional Retail Services Manager – further details inside! Anne will be working closely with the committee to secure the best possible outcome on a regional approach to recycling, training and quality standards.

I have been involved in a number of external events and initiatives. I recently attended a conference regarding new changes coming into effect in Northern Ireland on Data Protection. Holding records on those we visit must be protected not just securely but safely. New legislation, known as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) which will be introduced in 2018 will place more accountability and transparency on charities and public bodies. The Information Commissioner's Office will be asking us to demonstrate compliance with the Data Protection Act and asking us to show evidence of consent from our service users. We will be required to be clear with individuals what information

we hold on them and for how long we retain these records. Any individual already has the right to request what personal information an organisation has on record. But, this new legislation will go a step further. Any breach or risk of data disclosure could have serious ramifications for organisations. Financial fines, reputational risks and trust of donors to name a few. Getting it right must be a key objective for SVP.

As an organisation, we are very fortunate to have already taken steps to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Not least of these is, of course, the introduction of our electronic recording keeping system. Affectionately known as CRM, this is both compliant with current and forthcoming legislation. It is safe for us as an organisation and our clients. For anyone not familiar with this system or if you would wish to learn more about it, please get in touch with Ciarán Liggett in Regional Office. We can organise local training and support and give all our members the confidence to use it. Being competent in the use of this system will ensure we are ready for the new forthcoming legislative changes.

New volunteer roles are being developed within the Society. It will soon be possible to actively recruit new members with IT skills to assist with both the CRM and the financial Agresso systems. Perhaps you could encourage others within your conference to say "yes" to taking on a new role!

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has always been the voice for those in need. Our quest for social justice to combat poverty has always been at the heart of all we do. A new campaign to end hunger for young people during school holidays has recently been launched by one of our partner organisations, Children in Northern Ireland. The sentiment behind the campaign is to ensure that those young people who avail of school meals continue to have good quality, nourishing food throughout a long summer break. As advocates, we do have a responsibility to ensure those families we visit are not suffering from food poverty. Children need nutrition 365 days a year, not just term time. Parents often struggle during the holidays. Please be aware of the additional strain on families as the summer approaches and reach out to those that we traditionally help at Christmas just to check they are ok or to see if they do require any further assistance in providing food for their children at this time.

No matter what our role is within the Society by working together we can and do achieve so much. Developing relationships within the Society, between Conferences, Areas and Regionally will only strengthen our work. Partnerships within the Voluntary Sector among other organisations will support and promote our work. Collaboration is key to all we do, so let us all say "yes" to ensure a positive outcome for our clients, our members and our Society!

Your news in Vincentian News!

Do you have an event or a story that you would like to see featured in a future issue of Vincentian News? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Just email the details of your event and a picture if you have one to karen@dcppr.co.uk.



Celebration Mass for our Regional Senior Vice President – Cormac Wilson

Front Cover image: Cormac and Aidan Crawford, Regional President.

On Tuesday 16 May many friends, families and volunteers from Derry, as well as other members of SVP from right across Ireland, travelled to regional headquarters in Belfast for a Mass of Celebration for Cormac Wilson, our Regional Senior Vice President in recognition of his service to the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

At the service, Cormac was awarded with an international St Vincent de Paul medal which recognises members for their long-standing service to the charity. This was presented by the Regional President of SVP, Aidan Crawford, who organised the event to thank Cormac for his support during his presidency.



Cormac and Kieran Stafford, new National President elect.



Cormac with family and friends – from left: Cormac’s wife, Rosaleen; Cormac; Geoff Meagher, outgoing National President; Aidan Crawford, Regional President; Kieran Stafford, new National President elect and Aidan’s wife, Patricia.



Our best wishes to Geoff Meagher

Outgoing National President, Geoff Meagher, attended the Northern Regional Council meeting in January to thank Area Presidents for their ongoing and continued supported over the last five years. Aidan Crawford, Regional President, paid tribute to Geoff’s commitment to both the Society and sincerely acknowledged his contribution and support to our Region. On behalf of the Council, Aidan wished Geoff all best wishes and every blessing for the future.

Good News Appeal

We would love to share some good news stories of how SVP has helped turn lives around.

We are appealing for uplifting stories from across our Conference areas – have you personally been supported and helped through a difficult time by SVP or perhaps you know someone who might be willing to share their story of the difference SVP has made to their lives either today or in past years?

If so, please get in touch. Every Vincentian gives so much and to hear positive stories about the difference our organisation’s support can make would mean a lot to our members and volunteers. Thank you in advance.

Our new Regional Retail Services Manger

We welcome Anne Crossan to SVP as the Regional Retail Services Manager. Anne will be based in the Northern Regional Office in Belfast but will regularly be out and about visiting and assisting all the Vincent's shops around the Region. Any retail-related queries - Anne would love to hear from you!

What has been your career to date?

I started off in clothes design and completed a degree in Textiles and Fashion at the Art College. It had always been a dream of mine to set-up my own fashion label; so that's exactly what I did! I also opened two retail shops in Donegal to sell my own products which was a really exciting time. After a few years I moved back to my home-town of Banbridge and continued on the retail path, working in a number of shops at the Outlet, rising from supervisor to management.

I hope to oversee all the shops and support the Vincent's teams who know the shops best

When did you start with SVP?

I started officially on 19 April this year and it has been great so far. Within the first few days I already felt at home as everyone is so friendly and welcoming. I also enjoy a good laugh and quickly found that to be the same with everyone in the SVP office ... so I can see us all getting on really well!

What will your new role entail?

Everything retail-related! I recently met with Dermot McGilloway (the National Retail Development Manager) and he has some fantastic plans for 'Vincent's'. I can't wait to get involved and to help

roll these out across Northern Ireland. I will also be focusing on shop branding, as well as centralising the recycling - there's definitely enough to be getting stuck into! In the long-term, I hope to oversee all the shops and support the Vincent's teams who know the shops best to help make the most of the great facilities we have.

Is it 9-5pm?

In theory, but I have absolutely no issue working when needed. I know there may be 'out of hours' meetings or events on within our shops and I am more than happy to attend these. Having worked in retail for so long, I'm not used to a 9-5 role anyway!

How did you get into this line of work?

I absolutely LOVE retail! I really enjoy merchandising and understanding how that can influence people's buying



I'm here to help anyone with any aspect of the shops; no matter what it is

decisions. Of course it helps that I love shopping too so can see it from all angles! But most of all, I love working with people and am always up for a good chat so I think that's important when working in a shop environment.

What are some of the current and upcoming shop projects you are looking forward to becoming involved with?

First and foremost I am looking forward to getting to know everyone. I'm getting there slowly but surely as St Vincent de Paul is such a big charity with so many hard-working volunteers. My plan is to start to regularly get out around each and every shop and that will help me to get to know all the dedicated shop teams that we have.

How will you be able to support the Vincent's shops across the Region?

I think my strong retail background, especially in visual merchandising, and my health and safety expertise will be useful. However, I'm here to help anyone with any aspect of the shops; no matter what it is - I'm always just a phone call away! Tel: 028 90 750153

Having worked within retail for the last ten years I also understand how important motivating a team is so will certainly see this as a key part of my role. I know the hard work and commitment that is involved in retail so it's important that the team is recognised and appreciated.

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Do you have any specific aims and objectives for your new role?

In my previous retail roles it has all been about profit and sales, sales, sales! While maximising the revenue of Vincent's shops is obviously important to allow us to support wider SVP services in communities, Vincent's isn't just about making money and is so much more than that.

What's been the highlight of your career to date?

At each stage of my career I've always had highlights, setting myself goals and reaching them, which has been great. Successfully starting my own label and selling my own garments is a real achievement and one of which I am so proud. Though equally if it hadn't been for my retail experience, I would never have got this great opportunity with SVP so I suppose I have always been working towards this point in my career.

Vincent's isn't just about making money and is so much more than that

How would you describe yourself to someone who'd never met you?

Friendly, happy and enthusiastic but probably most of all dramatic!

How do you stay motivated?

I suppose it is just the way I am - I thrive on challenges so that certainly keeps me going. I don't like to see a problem get the better of me and I work hard to make sure it doesn't!

What is the best advice you ever received?

Be yourself! It has served me well so far.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Well with young kids, I can't say that I get much (any!) spare time to myself.

I thrive on challenges so that certainly keeps me going

I have two girls so my evenings and weekends are normally filled with tea parties, playing in the park and dancing around the house singing Frozen! I can't complain, it's great fun really... but maybe not so much for my husband!

Tell us something interesting about yourself.

Well, when I finally got on a plane for the first time (I was 18), I jumped out of it! It was a charity skydive and I jumped on my own without an instructor after half a days' training. I have to admit I did squeal all the way down but would definitely do it again... someday!

What's your favourite book?

I do love to read when I get the chance. My favourite would be the Detective Rebus series of books by Ian Rankin. I love a crime thriller - I hope that doesn't say anything about my personality!

Have you any unfulfilled ambitions?

Careerwise I am very happy. But in my personal life I would love to travel more. When I was younger I did spend a summer in the US and a year living in Australia so I definitely do have the travel bug. My dream destinations would be Cuba or South Africa and I'd love to go to Iceland and travel through South America. So yes I have just a few unfulfilled travel ambitions....!

Who has inspired you most in your life?

That would be my mum. We lived on a farm so as well as all that's involved with that she also had five kids. I know how difficult it is having just two and she did such a great job and always had a smile on her face. I know I don't have it half as hard so can't complain!

Anne can be contacted at Regional Office on 028 9075 0153 or via email anne.crossan@svpni.co.uk

Going forward – our new retail strategy

Dermot McGilloway, National Retail Development Manager and his team visited Portadown and Clare Lodge recently to meet shop volunteers and staff. Along with Anne Crossan, our new Retail Services Manager, they presented a retail strategy for the Northern Region for the future. Key priorities include a regional approach to training, branding, recycling and stock rotation. This is a really exciting time for retail.....watch this space!



Volunteers recognised

Volunteers from our Craigavon/Tullygally/Moyrafferty shops recently organised a tea party to celebrate 2017 Volunteers' Week which is an annual celebration of the fantastic contribution millions of volunteers make across the UK. In Northern Ireland it's run by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in partnership with Volunteer Now. Our fantastic SVP volunteers were delighted to receive their framed certificates.





Annual Senior Citizens' day out

St Patrick's Conference, Downpatrick hosted its Senior Citizens' day out on 18 August last year and a wonderful day was had by all. The day began with tea, coffee and scones at the Canal Court Hotel in Newry, followed by a trip to Armagh which included guided tours of the Church of Ireland and the Catholic cathedrals.

The group enjoyed a delicious lunch in the Armagh City Hotel and then a table quiz before heading home tired but happy.

Black Santa donation to Ballymoney Conference



SVP Ballymoney Conference was delighted to receive a donation of more than £2,000 from Liam Beckett, Ballymoney's very own Black Santa.

Liam raised in excess of £10,000 from his annual pre-Christmas sit out in December which he splits between five charities each year, including our Conference in Ballymoney.

Pictured at the cheque presentation are: Maura Hickey, Mayor, Causeway Coast and Glens Council; Noel Burns, Vice-President Ballymoney SVP; Eugene Wallace, President Ballymoney SVP; Liam Beckett and Liam's granddaughter.

BT's Give & Gain Day for Family Appeal



St Vincent de Paul in partnership with the Salvation Army delivered another successful Family Appeal in 2016.

By working together both organisations helped support 4093 families with 9275 children receiving toys at Christmas.

The Family Appeal would not be possible without the support of the general public and local businesses. One such business that participated in the Appeal was BT, as part of the organisation's Corporate Social Responsibility.

Staff from BT helped by donating gifts to the Appeal as well as providing a team of volunteers who helped pack toys for distribution to families in need.

BT also held a special "Give & Gain Day" recently to celebrate and thank their staff for volunteering and making a difference in the local community. BT staff volunteer for a number of charitable organisations and have a dedicated team that supports the Family Appeal each year.

In April Maria Fyfe, SVP's Membership & Information Team Lead, went along to the celebration event to personally thank the BT volunteers on behalf of SVP and the Salvation Army and delivered a presentation on the impact of volunteering and highlighted how they make such a difference to the lives of so many families in need.

Maria Fyfe joins the management and staff at BT to celebrate their Give & Gain Day.



'Big Lunch' at Clare Lodge

The Clare Lodge 5K raised a total of £639.00 and we celebrated with a "Big Lunch" for SVP volunteers. We have had a great first year and couldn't have done it without your support so what better way to celebrate than by relaxing, enjoying good food, good company and all at a fantastic location by the sea!

Summer is building up to be a busy time and we plan to ensure everyone, young and old, has a fun and memorable break. We will have a number of local volunteers on hand every week and know they will enjoy it as much as our guests.

While we all look forward to the summer season, we are continuing to develop our services and planning a few surprises for the autumn.

Watch out for our Members' Specials, Mid-week Retreats and many more.



Sneak Preview!

Mid Term Break - Family Entertainment
30th October - 1st November
Cookery, crafts, fireworks and much more!
Book early to avoid disappointment

For more information contact:

Clare Lodge Centre, 3 Castle Place, Newcastle, County Down BT33 0AB. Tel: 028 4372 2849
 (0044 if dialling from outside Northern Ireland) Email: clare.lodge@svpni.co.uk



Gordons Chemist – a great supporter of SVP

Robert Gordon (right) presents a cheque for more than £2,000 to St Vincent de Paul volunteer, Paddy Donnelly of St Colmcille's Conference, Ballyhackamore. Also pictured is Geraldine Magill, co-ordinator of charitable donations for Gordon's Chemist. The amount includes just over £1,000 raised through donations to counter boxes.

Enhanced Graphical Reports now available via Conference Portal

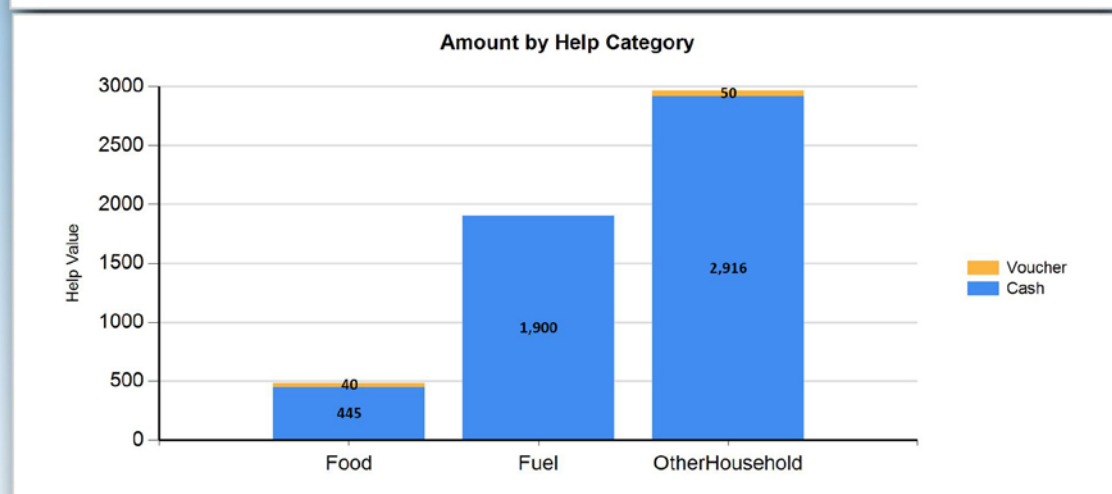
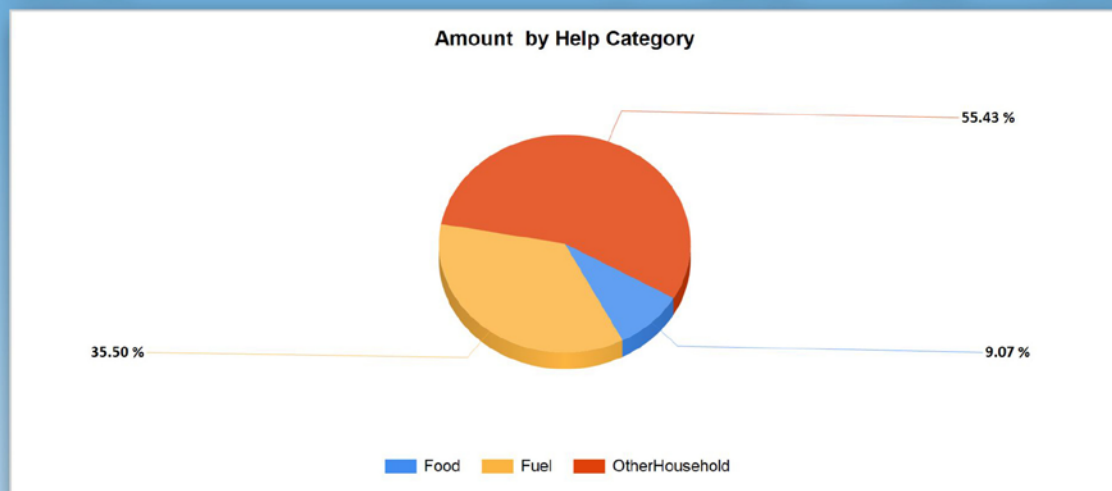
The "Conference Management Reports" area of the Conference Portal now provides conferences with useful tables and graphs detailing the breakdown of the types of help with the monetary value provided over any selected period.



Yearly Collation Report

Summary by Type of Help

Category	Cash Value	Voucher Value	Total Value
Food	445.37	40.00	485.37
Fuel	1,899.81	0.00	1,899.81
OtherHousehold	2,916.48	50.00	2,966.48
Grand Total	5,261.66	90.00	5,351.66



These reports can be printed out for distribution at your conference meeting or downloaded and emailed to every member on a regular basis. They are also available to any member with logins to the **Conference Portal** by clicking on the "Conference Management Reports" button on the main menu screen.

Struggling with home heating costs? Power NI is here to help.

Great news! Power NI is pleased to have secured the funding to help those that need support in making their home more energy efficient. This support should also help with ongoing savings each year on customers heating bills.

For many years we have been running our **Energy Saver Home** and **Free cavity wall and loft Insulation** schemes to help customers keep warm. What is on offer?

Energy saver homes will provide the eligible customer with a more efficient heating system installed in their home and where appropriate insulation will also be offered helping keep the heat in customers' homes. To enable further energy saving customers will receive four energy saving light bulbs and radiator foils.

Free cavity wall and loft insulation will ensure eligible customers homes are insulated helping them to save energy all year round. Customers will also receive; four energy saving light bulbs, radiator foils and hot water tank jacket (where appropriate).

Who's eligible?

- Domestic home owners or private renting tenants who are:
- Single person household with income / pension of less than £25,000 gross OR
- Couple or single parent family with income / pension of less than £30,000 gross OR
- Single person household / couple with an income / pension of less than £35,000 gross and over 70

To apply for our Energy Saver Homes and Free loft and cavity wall insulation schemes call us on **0800 0321 894**

These schemes are funded by NISEP (Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme) and are allocated on a first come first served basis. The schemes will close March 2018.

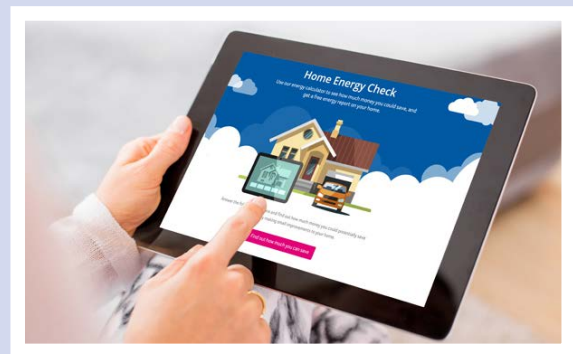


Free energy efficiency check for your home!

If you are not eligible for either of the schemes Power NI can still help. Find out how much money you could save with our new energy check. Answer some simple questions about your home and you'll also get a free energy report on how energy efficient your home is.

To take the Home energy check visit:
www.powerni.co.uk/home-energy-check

Don't forget Power NI have a range of products and services on offer to cater to your energy saving needs. Find out more: www.powerni.co.uk/energysaving



Access NI for Home Visitation members

The Northern Ireland Regional Council of St Vincent de Paul recently agreed amendments to the Access NI Policy for the Northern Region. The changes apply to members who undertake Home Visitation (Regulated Position). The new policy stipulates that:

- All members who have never been vetted as a member of St Vincent de Paul must now be subject to Retrospective Vetting (Enhanced Access NI)
- All members must be re-vetted every three years

The Membership Support Officer that covers your area will be in touch with your Area President to discuss what members this will impact and agree how best we can support your Conferences to implement the roll out of this in a user friendly way for all our members.

If you have any queries regarding this please do not hesitate to contact your dedicated MSO:

**Maria Fyfe (028 9075 0151) or
Joann Barr (028 7137 7311).**



Joe Fearon

Joe Fearon died March 9th 2017 aged 87 years and is fondly remembered and sadly missed by all fellow Vincentians in the Armagh and Craigavon Area Council and the Saint Patrick's Conference Portadown.

When it comes to being a Vincentian there are not so many who can say they have served the Society for 50 years. Joe Fearon was one of those few and he was duly honoured in a special presentation ceremony at Saint John's Church on Garvaghy Road, in June 2016 when he was presented with a special 50 Years SVP Service Medal and the Saint Patrick's Certificate of Long Service to the Church.

Joe joined the Society as a young man aged 37 years and remained an active and stalwart member until a few weeks before his sudden passing. For the life of Joe Fearon, the President and members of St Patrick's Conference give thanks. For the many challenges he met in the assistance of those in need, we give thanks. For the quiet dignity Joe brought to the lives of many families and individuals, we give thanks and know that God in his mercy will surely reward Joe's long years of service as his willing servant. Sympathy is extended to Joe's son Tony and wider extended family.

Dates for your diary

Conference Presidents' Training – Saturday 17th June 2017 (Regional Office). 9.30am to 4pm.
To book a place at the training please contact Maria Fyfe at Regional Office on 028 9075 0151

Area Presidents' Weekend – Saturday 2nd September – Sunday 3rd September 2017 (Clare Lodge)

Members' Day – Saturday 30th September 2017 (Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick)