

<< PRESS RELEASE >>

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, PORTSMOUTH

RELEASE IMMEDIATE

Date of release: 15 January 2008

STARTS

MPS TO HEAR STORIES OF POVERTY AT CHURCH EVENT

TWO MPs will hear stories of poverty and homelessness in Portsmouth at an event organised by churches.

Havant MP David Willetts and Portsmouth South MP Mike Hancock will join key-decision-makers at the 'Opening Doors, Opening Hearts' event. It will be held between 3.30pm and 5.30pm on February 1, at the Discovery Centre in St John's RC Cathedral.

The event has been organised by city churches of all denominations as part of National Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, which lasts from January 26 until February 3.

Shadow Cabinet member David Willetts will give the keynote speech, after which there will be discussion groups about the issues of poverty and homelessness in the Portsmouth area. Local agencies that deal with asylum seekers and the homeless will share the experiences of such individuals.

The event will conclude with questions to a panel of decision-makers in the city, which will help to identify how churches and other partners can raise awareness and tackle these issues.

Mr Willetts said: "Poverty is one of the most important issues facing Britain today. We see it blighting the lives of people in Havant and Portsmouth. It is a very valuable initiative to bring people together to confront this difficult and urgent question."

Anyone can come. The event is free, and there is no need to book in advance. For more information, contact Mr Finch on 07751-351903.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Reporters, photographers and film-crews are welcome to attend the event, between 3.30pm and 5.30pm at the Discovery Centre, St John's RC Cathedral, Edinburgh Road, Portsmouth. Refreshments served from 3.15pm. Car parking available on site.

For more information, contact:

Bruce Finch, chairman, "Opening Doors, Opening Hearts" event, Portsmouth (07751-351903 or bfinch@cafod.org.uk)

Canon Bob White, chairman, Churches Homeless Action and vicar, St Mary's Church, Fratton (023-9282 2687)

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