**Volunteer with SAM!**

**Position: SAM Project Assistant**

**What is SAM?**

SAM - Social Action Mapping for Cornish Churches is a project being carried out by Churches Together in Cornwall to map social action projects organised by churches and faith groups across the county. The Cinnamon Network estimates in its 2016 National Faith Action Audit that across the UK around 1.8 million volunteers from faith groups are providing over 5 million beneficiary interactions, valuing their time at over £3billion. But FaithAction reports that “when it comes to health and social care, many outstanding initiatives are still ‘under the radar’. The mapping of these hidden gems…must be right at the top of the agenda of those involved in making social prescribing happen”. The SAM project therefore aims to make such initiatives in Cornwall better known and easily accessible to social prescribers and others in the community who may wish to refer people to them.

In the first instance, we will contact local Churches Together groups to gather details of projects they organise or support. This may include food banks, street pastors, community cafes, debt counselling, homelessness alleviation, dementia support, mentoring of young people, bereavement support etc. Although many involve churches working together, many more are organised by individual churches. We will ask local Churches Together groups to assist us in contacting their individual members churches. After this initial trawl, we will review results to establish if there are projects we have not heard from in an area and contact them directly if necessary.

The gathered data will be made available to public databases including Cornwall Link [www.cornwall-link.co.uk](http://www.cornwall-link.co.uk) and others as appropriate. The data will also be available through Churches Together in Cornwall’s infoHub [www.ctcinfohub.org](http://www.ctcinfohub.org). We hope to complete the first phase of the project by summer 2020. In the second phase we will attempt to identify gaps in provision and explore ways they might be filled, and seek funding and partnerships to provide long-term sustainability and continuous updating.

**What is Churches Together in Cornwall?**

Churches Together in Cornwall co-ordinates the work of around 50 local Churches Together groups and ecumenical projects around Cornwall. Its role is not to manage but to encourage co-operation and connect those working in similar areas in different locations. It offers a weekly email news and events bulletin and the infoHub web site, and is represented on many community bodies around the county. The CTC Executive comprises church leaders and their ecumenical officers together with representatives of community organisations; it is co-ordinated by the CTC Missioner, Roger Mills, who leads the SAM project team.

**Voluntary Role Description**

As a member of the SAM Project Team you will:

* Contact local Churches Together groups, using an existing mailing list, to gather requisite data on social action projects they are involved with, using a survey form
* Input the gathered data into a central database
* Research other projects in the area and contact them directly as needed
* Transfer the collected data to public websites, initially Cornwall Link
* Help refine the collection process/software in the light of experience
* Assist in designing leaflets/publications to publicise the service and highlight particular services
* If you wish, assist in phase two of the project, analysing the data to establish where gaps in provision lie and explore ways of filling them (summer-autumn 2020).

**Commitment**

Most of the work will be done online and at your own time and pace. Some data collection may be done by telephone, and there may be opportunites to join team members in giving presentations about the project to local groups, if you wish. We would hope volunteers would be able to commit a minimum of 1-2 hours per week to the project. Team meetings will be convened at regular intervals, generally on the Penryn campus, and timed to suit the convenience of particpants; at these meetings progress will be assessed, problems discussed and future plans developed. The timescale for phase 1 of the project depends on the number of volunteers involved and the quantity of data discovered, but we anticpate it will be completed by July 2020.

**What you can expect to achieve:**

* Develop research skills, locating unrecorded projects
* Work independently and as part of a team
* Support volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working in many different areas and activities
* Improve communication skills
* Learn how to record accurately, manipulate data, make it searchable and display it clearly in a variety of formats for different audiences
* Help design and develop web sites, directories and publications
* Improve your knowledge of the geography of Cornwall and its social needs
* Discover further volunteering opportunities

**Key Skills needed:**

*Essential:*

* Willingness to work independently and as part of a team
* Willingness to uphold the values of Churches Together in Cornwall
* Good interpersonal, communication and organisational skills
* To be non-judgmental and respect diversity
* To respect confidentiality
* Willingness to undertake training

*Desirable:*

* Familiarity with social media
* Experience of web design
* Experience of engaging with the public

If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please register your interest on the Student Union ‘Legends’ volunteering website <https://www.thesu.org.uk/studentopportunities/volunteering/>; we will contact you as soon as possible to arrange an informal discussion. Volunteers may join the project at any point, but we hope to begin work with an initial team in early March 2020.

For any queries please contact the CTC Missioner, Roger Mills, on ctcmissioner@gmail.com.