

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE CHAPLAINCY

Team members reflect on their return to the Wharf.

EDITORIAL

Over the last few months my colleagues and I have been planning for the team to all back working on the Wharf. But like many people I guess, we had our anxieties and concerns about coming back. Mainly about travel. As my colleagues have begun coming back to work in the Wharf, I have asked them to share their experiences of moving from WFH to being back in the office.

I began coming back to the office late March, and from Easter I have adopted a hybrid routine, WFH 2 days a week. Initially I found the commute a bit daunting, but actually most people on the train or tube have socially distanced and been very respectful. I have never seen trains, or the tubes look so clean!

It is great being back in the Wharf, there is a real buzz on the estate, as people return, and shops, cafes and restaurants are once again open. If you have not been in since March last year, you will notice lots of changes, outside spaces, different shops and restaurants, even a basketball court! The summer is looking good.

My colleagues and I are so looking forward to being on the estate altogether, I miss their sense of fun and the team meeting discussions which are not quite the same on Zoom. And looking forward of course to welcoming you all back!

Revd Dr Fiona Stewart-Darling

CHAT TO A CHAPLAIN – Just to remind you even if we are not always visible in Canary Wharf, we are still happy to catch up over a coffee either in person or virtually! To contact us email us at talktous@canarywharfchaplaincy.co.uk

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REFLECTION – Rabbi Dr Moshe Freedman

It has been an incredibly hard 15 months for everyone. Parent's working from home while home-schooling their children has been an especially difficult challenge for families. Many single people have found working away from the office quite isolating, while those who have had to work at Canary Wharf have missed the usual buzz of activity.

I am personally delighted to be able to return to work on the estate and meet with people face to face. It is so refreshing to have a conversation with someone without having to tell them they are "on mute" or attend meetings without worrying whether the internet will go down.

While I have been concerned about the ongoing risks, my anxiety has been mollified by the speed and efficiency of the phenomenal vaccine programme across the UK, coupled with the excellent social distancing measures which continue to operate both on the estate and over the travel networks. While I am still concerned for my health and the health of those around me, I feel very positive and profoundly grateful about the return to work.

The chaplains can still meet you online if you prefer, but if you are returning to your office and would like to meet in person for a chat, please do let us know. We would be delighted to see you.

REFLECTION - Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra

Before the onset of the pandemic, like many people I commuted to Canary Wharf, in my case it was from Leicester. Early in March there was already much talk about the virus and its spreading, I like most people, carried on with business as usual, that is until the first lockdown came in March 2020, little did I know that I would not return to the estate for another 13 months!

Like everyone else the chaplaincy moved all its activities and pastoral support online. So now I was carrying out my chaplaincy role by email, telephone, FaceTime, Teams and Zoom, although I missed face to face encounters with people.

Over the last few months as restrictions have been lifted and the vaccination programme continues, I am now preparing to return to the Wharf on my chaplaincy days. I had my first experience of returning to Canary Wharf on 12th April, the day coincided with the re-opening of shops. I was anxious and so took an off-peak train from Leicester then tube and DLR. Although it felt awkward with social distancing, the journey was fine.

Once I arrived on the estate, I saw very few people and it felt deserted, but I was delighted to see that many of the businesses were open, although concerned for those that were unable to open yet. I am so looking forward to spending my chaplaincy days back in the Wharf as people return to their offices and meet people face to face again. Most of all, I can't wait to physically be with my colleagues and our wonderful team.