# Congregational Development & Community Organiser

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| **Hours:** 15 hours per week (precise hours to be negotiated)**Salary:** up to £12k p/a dependent on experience | **Based:** Milton Keynes**Contract:** initial 3 years |

# Employer: St Frideswide’s Church PCC, Water Eaton, Bletchley

St Frideswide’s Church in Water Eaton is seeking a Congregational Development and Community Organiser to help the parish pioneer community organising as a strategy with three aims:

* to grow the church’s participation in the community and the community’s participation in the church;
* to strengthen the congregation by using community organising tools to nurture disciples who are able to balance contemplation and action, anchored in and nourished by their faith while active and trained as effective leaders of change in their neighbourhood;
* to build a broad-based hyperlocal alliance (affiliated to Citizens UK) in the neighbourhood as a way for the church to act as a catalyst for social justice and the common good, and participate in the building of the kingdom of God in Water Eaton.

St Frideswide’s has recently been granted funding by the Strategic Development Fund of the Church of England, within the context of a bid from the Diocese of Oxford. The focus of the bid is for church growth, facilitated by a number of ‘resource hub’ churches. The St Frideswide’s Resource Hub is focussed around using the methodology and tools of community organising as a means to growth. Our commitment is to sharing our learning more widely in the deanery and diocese as we progress the project. Our Congregational Development and Community Organiser will therefore play a crucial role in achieving our aims and will need to couple their organising craft with a commitment to a missional agenda. They will sit on the Local Project Team of the Resource Hub Project and be accountable to Revd Catherine Butt, the Project Lead.

# What is a Congregational Development and Community Organiser?

A **Congregational Development Organiser** utilises community organising methodology to develop and strengthen a congregation. They are committed to missional priorities and developing the gifts of the people of God. They understand that each of us is ‘God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do’ (Eph 2. 10). As part of a ministry team, and in collaboration with local colleagues, they seek to keep issues of justice at the core of the church’s vision and at the heart of discipleship.

A **Community Organiser** is responsible for the day-to-day development or maintenance of a Citizens alliance or small chapter. Supported by a more experienced Organiser, they have considerable independence and responsibility for external political and media relationships. They take responsibility for financial issues and staff training, and may oversee a budget or mentor colleagues. A Community Organiser is a practitioner of the craft of broad-based community organising methodology, and focuses on the building of relational power, the recruitment and retention of dues-paying institutions, the development of leaders, the strengthening of member institutions, leader-led public actions, and the winning of systemic change.

A **Congregational Development and Community Organiser** combines both of the roles above, the internal and the external, contemplation and action, the church and the community breathing in and breathing out together.

# Partner: Citizens UK

Citizens UK organises communities to act together for power, social justice and the common good. They are the home of broad-based community organising in the UK, with 15 diverse civil society alliances across England and Wales. They build powerful alliances that develop the leadership capacity of their members so they can hold politicians and other decision-makers to account on the issues that matter to their members. Citizens UK also creates systemic change through projects such as the Living Wage Foundation and Sponsor Refugees. Please visit their website at: [www.citizensuk.org](http://www.citizensuk.org)

St Frideswide’s is a member of Thames Valley Citizens, which is a chapter of Citizens UK, and of local alliance Citizens MK, which has a ten-year track record of community organising in the city. The new hyperlocal Citizens alliance in Water Eaton will be affiliated to Citizens UK.

This pioneering staff role of Congregational Development and Community Organiser is being recruited and developed in partnership with Citizens UK, who will help provide project design, training and mentoring, and with initial funding from the Church of England’s Strategic Development Fund via the Diocese of Oxford.

You would be expected to attend Citizens UK [6-day residential training 27th March – 1st April 2022](https://citizens-uk.teachable.com/p/citizens-uk-national-community-leadership-march22).

# Main Responsibilities

Working as a Congregational Development and Community Organiser in Water Eaton, you will help to implement the aims of the Resource Hub Project Plan overseen by the Local Project Team and the Vicar of St Frideswide’s, as Project Lead. The Project Lead will line manage this role, supported by Citizens UK who will provide training and mentoring in the craft of Community Organising.

Your main responsibilities will be:

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| **Utilise the techniques of community organising to grow and strengthen the congregation of St Frideswide’s**  | * Working closely with the Vicar of St Frideswide’s, further embedding community organising methodology in the everyday life and processes of the church
* Designing and delivering congregational development material - locally and more widely as interest grows (Water Eaton Church Centre, MK Deanery, Diocese of Oxford)
* Helping the leadership and congregation of St Frideswide’s to integrate the methodology and tools of community organising with their missional aspirations
* Connecting community organising activities and contacts made through them into the wider mission strategy of Water Eaton Church Centre
* Attending and contributing to Sunday worship services as negotiated with the Vicar.
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| **Build a broad-based hyperlocal Citizens alliance in the community around the church**  | * Working closely with partners from Citizens UK, identify and engage local organisations to form a civil society alliance in Water Eaton.
* Working closely with Christian partners at Water Eaton Church Centre (Spurgeon Baptist Church) and in Bletchley to strengthen those institutions and offer a way into engaging at an appropriate pace with community organising as a means to advancing the kingdom of God
* Building relationships with other local institutions (secondary school, local primary schools, community groups and local businesses) to engage them in the alliance.
* Building on positive relationships with local statutory agencies, and enabling local people to relate to these organisations more effectively.
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| **Build relational power to further the goals of Citizens UK and the goals of the project** | * Develop a comprehensive power analysis for Water Eaton
* Develop and grow a substantial network of key influencers at a local level; taking the initiative to establish new relationships as required
* Conduct at least six one-to-one meetings a week in order to develop relationships with leaders; ensuring a deep understanding of their concerns
* Tell a wide range of Community Organising stories in order to inspire others and achieve the goals of this project.
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| **Identify and develop relational leaders prepared to act with others for the common good** | * Identify and discern actual and potential leaders with the passion and ability to drive change
* Achieve significant development of primary and secondary leaders; nominate new leaders for training on the core taster curriculum and for National Citizens Training
* Successfully lead training on the core taster curriculum at a local level.
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| **As the hyperlocal alliance is developed, strengthen institutions and develop broad-based organisations** | * Ensure good understanding of the basic interests and traditions of typical member institutions
* Organise the local alliance and potential strategic partners to work together on shared issues, including building a Leadership Team for the local alliance
* Develop core teams to provide leadership for multi-institutional campaigns
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| **Support leaders through the Cycle of Action in order to create change** | * Take the staff lead on major actions and campaigns at a local level; aiming to achieve multiple large local wins
* Develop and facilitate action planning teams at local level
* Develop strategies for significant local impact; with comprehensive plans & tactics
* Organise and support local actions, ensuring publicity, and facilitating negotiations
* Evaluate the effectiveness of actions; demonstrating ability to incorporate lessons learned into future actions
* Reflect theologically on the theory and practice of the Cycle of Action and help others to do so
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| **Contribute to financial viability through effective fundraising & financial management**  | * Recruit new institutions to the Water Eaton Citizens alliance; negotiating annual membership fees and ‘letters of understanding’ as required
* Contribute to fundraising from any suitable grant-making bodies in order to secure future funding for the project
* Ensure membership dues are collected in a timely manner
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| **Contribute to effective teamwork within and beyond the project** | * Be proactive concerning personal professional development and wellbeing; for instance, by reading widely, developing a healthy work-life balance, receiving feedback and demonstrating the ability to reflect on your own organising craft
* Demonstrate ability to work effectively with colleagues and participate in a team; be part of the staff team of St Frideswide’s and be available in a professional capacity to the leadership and congregation of Spurgeon Baptist Church; make a contribution to the learning of other Organisers in the Citizens network
* Lead and support others in a manner that supports high performance by providing clear expectations and providing proactive support, encouragement and mentorship
* Produce any required reports on time and to the required standards
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| **Play an active role in our partnership with Citizens UK, participating in the development of the craft of Community Organising and playing a role in the Guild of Community Organisers** | * Schedule an average of at least three 1-1 relational meetings into your daily schedule as a core part of your professional practice
* Commit 10 working days per annum (pro rata for part-time staff) to the preparation, delivery and evaluation of Citizens UK National Community Leadership Training – details to be negotiated in the light of professional experience
* Participate in a Guild Team and help it develop as a Community of Practice that enables Organisers across the UK to develop their skills and experience.
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# Person Specification

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| **REQUIREMENTS** |  | **ESSENTIAL** | **DESIRABLE** |
| **QUALIFICATIONS** | Bachelor’s degree in any subject |  | **✓** |
| Evidence of further and continuing study including a possible professional qualification |  | **✓** |
| **EXPERIENCE** | Experience of being an active member of a Christian community | **✓** |  |
| At least one-year track record of successful participation in working for social change | **✓** |  |
| Experience of leading a project involving volunteers in the community | **✓** |  |
| Experience of building relationships with a diverse range of people | **✓** |  |
| Experience of successful fundraising  |  | **✓** |
| Experience of setting up a new or consolidating an existing project |  | **✓** |
| Clear evidence of campaigns won and people developed |  | **✓** |
| Particular experience of community organising in a Christian context |  | **✓** |
| **KEY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE** | Ability to inspire, motivate and lead (particularly people who are different than you) | **✓** |  |
| Ability to organise yourself and others and to work responsibly in an unstructured environment | **✓** |  |
| Ability to use imaginative strategies to help improve disadvantaged communities | **✓** |  |
| Ability to plan and organise under pressure | **✓** |  |
| Ability to work with and relate to all types of people | **✓** |  |
| Ability to teach and run workshops | **✓** |  |
| Ability to develop the potential of others | **✓** |  |
| Ability to communicate well verbally and in writing | **✓** |  |
| Readiness and ability to reflect theologically and pastorally on your own practise and experience, and to help others do so | **✓** |  |
| **PERSONAL QUALITIES & VALUES** | Committed to living out your Christian faith | **✓** |  |
| A passion for justice and community organising | **✓** |  |
| A good sense of humour | **✓** |  |
| A positive enthusiasm for working with faith congregations, residents’ groups, schools and other community organisations | **✓** |  |
| An interest in and experience of politics and public life | **✓** |  |
| Able to work in a team | **✓** |  |
| Willingness to work within accountable relationships | **✓** |  |
| Self-motivated and adaptable | **✓** |  |