

Christians Together in Tunbridge Wells Winter Shelter 2013



End of Shelter Report

CTTW appointed a management committee to establish a winter shelter for the homeless during the winter of 2013.

The management committee are pleased to be able to report that the winter shelter was run successfully. Our report sets out key points about the venues, the volunteers and the guests. There is a summary of the financial details. We have included an Appendix which lists some of the feedback received during and after the shelter.

Members of the Management Committee: Pastor Cliff Allen, Mrs Jackie Nelson, Mrs Vanessa Nicholls, Majors John & Lorna Smith, Canon Jim Stewart

Summary

The Shelter ran from the evening of Monday 7th January to the morning of Sunday 10th March, providing 62 nights of provision. 12 beds were available every night; the service was taken up slowly at first, with only 2 guests on the first night, but numbers grew steadily until we were full during the last 2 weeks. On average we hosted 8.5 (!) guests every night.

Nine venues were used and a total of 250 volunteers worked with the shelter. The shelter was led by the Project Co-ordinator Mrs Lee Atwall.

The shelter received £28.6k in funding and spent £11.6K to the end of April 2013.

The management committee have made recommendations for future work with homeless and the CTTW Executive have agreed all the recommendations.

Venues

Nine venues opened their doors for the winter shelter.

Venue	St Philips	St James	NLCC	Vale Royal	URC	Baptist Church	S. Army	St Augustine's	KCM
No nights	6	4	14	9	8	9	4	4	5

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Volunteers

Around 240 volunteers came forward for the 2013 shelter, both from local churches and from the community. Volunteers from the Samaritans came on Monday to Thursday evenings and contributed both as regular volunteers and by being available for the guests to talk to. There was much feedback regarding how much the volunteers enjoyed the experience and felt privileged to be able to help. Those who had not volunteered for the previous year generally felt a little apprehensive before their first shift, but soon found their feet and became confident. Many commented on how well the Team Leaders ran the evenings.

Agencies/Partners

Housing Justice

TWCWS took on the Housing Justice franchise this year. This enabled us to use their 'Winter Shelter in a box' set of processes and procedures. For the pilot year we had used those from the Folkestone Winter shelter which were themselves based on the Housing Justice templates. So the result was a set of processes and procedures that were extremely similar to last year's.

This also gave us an invite to the monthly Housing Justice Churches Winter Shelter forums – these proved extremely useful in terms of understanding and resources available to us e.g. Homeless Link.

The other part of the franchise was that we would receive training for our volunteers from Housing Justice. This entailed a visit from Paul Reilly to our launch service at which he spoke both before and during the service, a day long workshop for all volunteers and an evening session for Team Leaders and Church Co-ordinators. .

TWBC

Partnering with TWBC has worked extremely well. The Project manager was given a desk, PC, telephone and printing facilities throughout the project as well as receiving funding from the Community Safety Unit and Housing. The desk was within the Housing Options team office so there was instant access to information held by the Council and good information sharing regarding the guests.

A desk was also made available to the Project Manager in the Gateway and the staff were very supportive in taking referrals to the shelter and making contact when rough sleepers presented. Initial referral and risk assessments took place at the Gateway which provided a safe place for the Project Manager and a recognised venue to most of the homeless of the area.

As the shelter progressed and the weather worsened, it was easy to work together to discuss SWEP provision (temporary accommodation for rough sleepers whenever the temperature was forecast to be 0 degrees or below for 3 consecutive nights). The shelter could provide that accommodation for many nights, but once full, the Project Manager could liaise with the Out of Hours Housing officer regarding

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those without a bed, and full details passed on once the shelter shut so that the Housing officer could make decisions about who to accommodate.

The Mayor and his wife attended the launch evening service and visited the Shelter one evening. Officers of the Council also visited which led to some mentoring for one of the guests prior to a job interview.

Porchlight

The link with Porchlight helped build a good working relationship and, along with attending the multi-agency meetings, this provided a powerful team in terms of move on work. Porchlight staff visited the shelter on a number of mornings to liaise with guests, take new referrals and move forward actions.

CAB

Jan Obey from the CAB came forward to work with the shelter. She had been running a rent deposit scheme during the previous year and is very well versed in housing issues

Lookahead (Colebrook Road)

The project was supported by the staff at Colebrook Rd – providing information, ideas, use of training rooms and taking 2 guests from the shelter. A large number of other guests have been interviewed and await availability.

YMCA

Andrea from the YMCA came to many of the multi-agency meetings and, with great knowledge in this area, provided extremely helpful input in possible actions to help guests move on. They took one guest in from the shelter and another who had referred but not used us. They also gave us invaluable support by helping to launder duvets.

Bridge Trust

They took one guest and were involved in another who, unfortunately disappeared before he could take up accommodation. A number of other guests were interviewed and are on the waiting list.

Chapter One

Staff attended many of the multi-agency meetings and her input and support was much appreciated. None of our guests were eligible for the Chapter One offering.

CRI (West Kent Drug and Alcohol Service)

CRI is the provider of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services in West Kent. Their local offices are base in Tonbridge. They have two main sections; one dealing with those required to attend CRI as part of probation or other court order and the other dealing with those who self-refer.

Some of our guests told us about contacts at CRI at referral and we tried to make contact to discuss plans and how we could support them.

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Probation

Links to Probation have been good. The main advantages here are that if we know when our guests have interviews at probation and/or court appearances, then we can help them to keep those appointments or get to the courts. With the majority of cases heard in Sevenoaks and no funding available to help people get there, we can provide train tickets or sometimes lifts over. We have also been able to provide some support through the court process by a volunteer who is also a magistrate. One probation officer asked to volunteer at the shelter and came to help for 3 evenings – we could build on this next year.

Richmond Fellowship (Greensands)

One of our guests was accepted into Greensands. This process was managed via Porchlight and we have not built any relationship with this agency to date.

Community Safety Unit (CSU)

Support from Terry Hughes in CSU was invaluable. Based in the Town Hall contact was easy. Risks from known individuals were highlighted. He was also a link to the local Police. The bedlist was given to the Police through every day so that the Police would know who had a bed and, if they were found out in town, bring them in to the shelter.

Town and Country

We have been given a garage at very low rent to store all the equipment. Cuts in Support Services and redevelopment of large parts of Sherwood meant that there were no opportunities for rehousing any of the guests directly.

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Guests

52 individuals were referred, or self-referred via the Gateway, to the Shelter. Of these 26 made use of the shelter for at least one night up to a maximum of 55 nights. Of those who used the shelter the average number of nights accessed was just over 20.

By Local Authority

Local Authority	Referred	Accessed Shelter	Nights in
Tunbridge Wells	29	14	229
Tonbridge & Malling	5	3	115
Maidstone	3	1	54
Wealden	3	2	50
Sevenoaks	2	1	20
East Sussex	1	1	7
Mid Sussex	1	1	4
Sheerness	1	1	9
Zimbabwe!	1	1	5
No Connection Anywhere	1	1	31
Ashford	1	0	0
Unknown	4	0	0
	52	26	524

By pre-shelter situation

Situation	Accessed Shelter	Nights in
Tenancy	7	137
Rough Sleeper	7	189
Parent's House	6	118
Partner's House	2	55
Sheltered Accom	2	18
Abroad	2	7
	26	524

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By support needs

Need	Accessed Shelter	Nights in
Substance Abuse	14	302
Mental Health	2	38
Bail Conditions	3	54
None	7	130
	26	524

Outcomes

2 guests moved into Colebrook Road (Lookahead), Supported Accom
1 guest moved into Bridge Trust, Supported Accom
1 guest moved into Greensands, Dual diagnosis rehabilitation centre
1 guest moved into the YMCA
1 guest repatriated
1 guest moved into private rental
1 guest remanded in custody
1 guest sectioned
2 remain in B&B, temp accom
3 sofa-surfing around Tunbridge Wells
4 assumed out of area
8 rough sleeping in Tunbridge Wells

Net result of Rough Sleeping in Tunbridge Wells:

- At start of shelter 9 of our guests were rough sleeping in Tunbridge Wells.
- At the end of the shelter 8 guests are rough sleeping in Tunbridge Wells.

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Finance

Some £26.8k was received in funding from various sources including Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. To the end of April only £11.6k had been spent. The balance is available to i) fund the work which is continuing through the year and ii) as a reserve towards next year's shelter.

APPENDIX Agency and Volunteer Feedback

Dear Cliff,

I was one of the laundry maids at St Augustine's (also parish secretary). There seemed to be a lovely atmosphere in the hall. I just put my nose through the door in the evening after the prayer group.

Just a SMALL point: all the towels were thrown together in the same bag for washing - some had obviously not been used as they were still folded. Because they had touched the used-up ones I felt I should wash the lot. I didn't begrudge the work and would have done more if needed. It is just not very "green", using more water, soap and electricity than strictly needed.

Maybe next year there could be more of a distinction between used and not used laundry in the mornings.

Praise God for the whole thing, it was marvellous. Christians working together.

God bless

Daniele, ST Augustine's

As I have already told you, Lee, a great deal of the Thanks should go to you and Jackie for all the time, effort and love that you have put into the project – very many thanks! You asked for feed-back – from my simple viewpoint it all ran remarkably smoothly but no doubt in the background there were many 'challenges'! It would be great if next time we could start in early December and run until the end of March (I would be happy to cover Christmas Eve/Day, New Year's Eve). It would also be good if there were not so much moving around – saves on bed changing and transport and probably better control over what items

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are running short. If New Life could be persuaded their site would be good (only one downstairs toilet is a slight drawback and no shower). Could they hold a lunchtime 'Soup Bowl' session to supplement St. James on Mondays and Commercial Road on Tuesdays? – I would be available to help serve food. More immediately, if any more help is needed in sorting the bedding, etc. please ask me! God bless! Peter Q

Thank you Lee & Jackie for enabling this project to happen; providing people with the opportunity to effect change in their lives, giving hope. Enjoyed being part of & serving this community at TWBC & St James's, so please put me down for the next one. Very best wishes & thank you! Jon Hurst

Dear Lee Both David and I think that our contribution was minimal in relation to what you, the team leaders and people like Jackie Nelson have achieved in the run up to the Shelter opening and especially during the daytime over the period it has been active. It has been heartening to hear of the achievements regarding accommodation, work, rehab, prayer chain etc etc. Phenomenal and we take our hats off to you! We will see you on Sunday at St. Mary's in Speldhurst and so very much look forward to hearing more about the successes and future plans. Warmest Wishes Sabrina

Hi Lee

Just to say that Alick and I found our experience a very positive one and were very pleased to be involved. We were especially impressed by our team leader Peter who checked out ahead of time if we were all coming, avoiding us not turning up as we had a different day! Well worth the effort. Hope we shall be available next year to help . Regards Sarah

WOW, Thank you! to you Lee. You did a terrific job. An amazing rota, fitting everyone in. Congratulations, I hear the Council have offered you a job. I look forward to reading the final report. Christine Bryan

Dear Lee Thank you for organizing the Winter Shelter so professionally. I just had to turn up and everything was in place and completely arranged. This made it so

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much easier to volunteer and more importantly I always felt safe. I knew there was always support and back up if it was needed. You must have worked so hard and invested a lot of emotional energy into the project, it could not have been organized so professionally otherwise. This year has gone so well because we only did what we could do properly. However much we do there will always be more that we would like to do. I noticed that it was sometimes difficult to fill the morning slot. I think most of the overnight volunteers would be able and happy to stay on for that extra hour or so to help clear up as long as new volunteers were there to do the breakfast. Half way through I found out that some people were receiving weekly updates. Nigel kindly forwarded them to me from then on. I think all volunteers would benefit from receiving these updates if that could be arranged next time. Again many thanks for your hard work and commitment, God bless PAUL

Thank you for your email. This is just to say how pleased I am that I was given the chance to be involved with this project.

I found the team leaders and other volunteers great to work with and particularly enjoyed meeting different people from different churches.

The communication with the office and team leaders in terms of the rota and any queries I had was really helpful.

After my first shift I received a 'thank you' text from our team leader which was so unexpected but appreciated!

I felt privileged to meet the guests and to be part of the hospitality that was offered to them.

With many thanks

Mary

Dear Lee,

From the Council's perspective, we feel the Winter Shelter has gone extremely well. It's been well organised, with referrals being risk assessed effectively and it's clear that each shelter guest has been given support to help them move on from rough sleeping. Members of the housing options team have commented on how smoothly things have run this year. They have told me that they have felt that the

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joint working between the Council and the Shelter has been excellent and they have said how easy and enjoyable it has been to work with you personally, which I would wholeheartedly agree with. I think the weekly multi agency meetings have also been a really useful way of keeping up to date with who is in the shelter and may need further assistance. I also feel that the criteria you came up with to establish who should get a space at the shelter when it was full was fair – I appreciate it is not at all easy having to turn people away, but I felt this was a very sensible way to allocate the spaces. Finally, I am aware that the Community Safety Unit are also really pleased with the positive effect the shelter has had on anti-social behaviour in the town. The Council is grateful to you and everyone who has been involved in the Shelter this year for all their hard work. Kind regards ,Jane