

Food handouts and the Bearpit notes of meeting on Friday 13th February 2015

Present

Bearpit Improvement Group (BIG):

- Alan Morris (Chair of BIG),

Voluntary providers of food handouts in the Bearpit:

- Jackie Stephenson, Dougie Burnett (Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland - CTCCR)

Other voluntary organisations:

- Paul Hazelden (Bristol Christian Action Network)
- Jonnie Angel (Wildgoose Drop-in Centre, part of Crisis Centre Ministries)
- Steve Jones (Bristol Soup Run Trust)
- Lindsey Jones (Caring in Bristol - Bristol Nightstop, Christmas and New Year night shelter. Also volunteers with Bristol Methodist Centre on Midland Road, and Bristol Soup Run Trust)

Apologies and others not present

Bearpit Improvement Group (BIG): Sara Venn, Miriam Delogu, Chris Carley

Providers of food handouts in the Bearpit:

- Jackie Harvey (Jackie's Feed Programme),
- Jamuna Fisher (Hare Krishna Food for All)

Other voluntary organisations:

- Richard Townsend (Streetlife and Edge Church, Aztec West)
- Jenny Riley (St Mungo's Broadway - Outreach Manager, Compass Centre)

Bristol City Council

- Richard Hawkridge (Streetwise)
- Hywel Caddy (Senior Commissioning Officer, Strategic Housing)
- (note: Helen Riddell of Avon & Somerset police, who came to the January meeting, has been seconded for some policy work for 12 months, so no longer has this in her portfolio.)

1 Update on food handouts in January

The CTCCR handouts have gone well in January. Numbers were fewer to start with and in the last week it became busy again.

2 CTCCR and moving Bearpit handouts

All parties within CTCCR have agreed the move from the Bearpit to St James Park. Jackie S and Dougie have visited St James Park to look at the best way of using the space. They plan to use the larger half of the park (on the left as you come from the bus station towards St James Park), as it has two exits, and so as not to disturb any people sleeping rough in the other part of the park at the time the food handouts take place.

Alma Church is on the CTCCR rota for February, and the Cathedral in March and April. Both churches will be briefed on their role in the transition.

Jonnie offered to attend the CTCCR food handout on any Saturday, if and when invited by Jackie S.

3 The move generally

At previous meetings, there had been a proposal to move handouts from the Bearpit to St James Park. The consensus amongst those at the meeting responsible for food handouts continues to be that St James's Park is the best venue. The Bearpit is a busy thoroughfare, and St James Park is a quiet, safe and accessible venue.

Richard Hawkrige has heard back from the Parks department. They are not raising any objections about using St James Park for food handouts although they do have concerns, which Richard has allayed by explaining that it will be closely monitored and that efforts are being made to share good practice with regard to better managing the hand-outs. They also asked to ensure that no litter is left behind after the food handouts.

The plan agreed at the previous meeting was confirmed: that the last handout in the Bearpit will be on Saturday 14th March, and the first in St James Park will be on Saturday 21st March. The communication flyer will be available by Saturday 28th February, giving 3 weeks' notice.

Alan will make final attempts to contact other providers before the public communication of the move.

Richard H will ask the police Beat Team to be available on the first Saturday 21st March.

4 Communications

Jackie has prepared a flyer for CTCCR to hand out to clients, which all approved. **Jonnie** offered to print off copies for CTCCR.

There will also be a flyer and a poster which explains the general move of food handouts from the Bearpit to St James Park. An agreed version was drafted during the meeting – **Jackie** to circulate. **Miriam** will get it produced and copied, and displayed in the Bearpit. **Richard H** will take copies to Compass Centre, Wildgoose Drop-in Centre and the Methodist Centre. The posters will remain on display for say 8 weeks after the move, ie until mid-May.

The generic leaflet will give the enquiries@bearpitimprovementgroup email address as the route for seeking more information. **Alan** will draft Q&As for reactive use if needed, and circulate for comment. If and when questions are received, Alan will either deal with them direct, or seek advice/help from the group by email. Jonnie offered to help with responding to any questions, explaining the process for arriving at the decision. There will be no proactive press announcement.

5 Mentoring and training

Jackie has yet to take up the offer of the course run by Paul on “Helping vulnerable people”, but will do so. The course runs on one Saturday a month except for August and December.

6 Developing the proposal of a weekend premises

As said previously, **Jonnie** will be in contact with everyone on the meeting's distribution list about the proposal of a weekend premises. This will be a separate initiative from the Bearpit food handouts.

7 Next meeting

No further meetings are planned before the move to St James Park unless a need for a meeting arises, in which case Alan will set it up. The move will be reviewed in a few months' time to check it is working OK.