

BCAN
Homeless Forum
City Road Baptist Church
16 January 2003

Introduction

Richard Reddrop opened the meeting with prayer. Steve Abbott welcomed everyone and chaired the meeting.

Those Present

Steve Abbott (BCAN), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), John Knuckey (Carmel Christian Centre), Val Moore (Christchurch, Clifton), Richard Reddrop (Emmaus Bristol), Dorothy Richie (Christchurch Breakfast Run), Steve Rodd (Christchurch Breakfast Run), Mark Stonham (Redland Parish Church) and Paul Tipler (Aspire).

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Emma Dobson (NCH Bristol Nightstop), Medina Johnson (Caring at Christmas), Clive Richards (Trinity Tabernacle) and Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust).

Previous Meeting

Paul Tipler had given his apologies to the previous meeting.

Peter Halsey does not run the ICCC as reported.

Matters Arising

University stall: There had been no feedback from Aspire concerning the university stall because Aspire had not run a stall after all: they had been invited, but did not have the resources to take up the invitation.

ICCC: Bill Peters (also, like Peter Halsey, from BCF) is a director, and should be sending us some details. It was noted that while ICCC may only have a small membership, they have a larger mailing list which could be useful.

Information Share

Aspire: Paul Tipler reported that he now has a new telephone number: 0117 954 0861.

Soup run: the Clifton, Cotham and Redland churches do a soup run each Saturday, offering a substantial lunch. Pat Reynolds is the contact person.

Volunteer Training: some feedback was given about the training session on the previous Saturday.

First Aid

Some further details were provided concerning the training that could be made available.

The *Lifesaver* course requires 8 hours, and offers a certificate of attendance.

The *Lifesaver Plus* course would require a further 8 hours on top of the Lifesaver course, and requires a £5 registration fee.

People who go on either of these two courses would need to purchase a workbook and course book, which would cost £15 per course.

It appears that the suggested date of 17 May will be the Cup Final, which may reduce the number of people willing to sign up for the training. It was agreed to change the date to 7 June if Trinity Tabernacle is available then.

Publicity

Several items of publicity were circulated and discussed. Several of the examples suffered from a lack of focus: they aimed to inform current supporters, encourage new supporters and provide relevant information to volunteers. However, small organisations like us do not have the resources to produce lots of carefully targeted publicity, so producing one general-purpose item reasonably frequently is probably the best option. Which is why the shared and more specific publication we have been talking about is of interest.

Several different possible groups were identified:

- people who are oblivious to the problem of homelessness, or aware but unconcerned;
- people who are concerned about homelessness, and involved in doing numerous worthwhile things;
- current supporters; and
- current volunteers.

The key point from the discussion was the importance of personal stories: readers can relate to these, and understand aspects of the work in a much more immediate and concrete way when the abstract principles are fleshed out in the experiences of a real person.

This leads to the question of morality: when we talk about a person and use their story, we need to check that they are happy for their story to be used in this way. There is a moral principle that we ought to ask their permission, even if they are not identified in public: they, or people who know them, may read it and recognise who is being talked about, and doing so without permission is not ethical. It is often a good idea to use a changed name in the article.

It was noted that we should consider each time we prepare a publication what we are aiming to achieve by it. The less clarity we have in our aim and objectives, the less we are likely to achieve the best outcome. Several possible aims were identified:

To increase general awareness of homelessness and the related issues;

- to demonstrate the degree of Christian unity between the groups involved in this work;

- to show how we are responding to the needs in a ‘professional’ way – adopting responsible standards, working with statutory bodies, etc., as well as being loving, accepting and generally nice Christians; and
- to inform people about the variety there is within the Christian community’s response to homelessness, and to help people see this variety as providing complimentary services (rather than seeing it as a disagreement about the ‘right’ way to respond).

Paul H, Richard and Mark are planning to meet and talk about the possibility of producing a joint newsletter as previously discussed. They will report back to the meeting in March.

Other Business

Training

The Volunteer Training continues to go well and be highly valued by the people attending.

Paul H added contact details to the Sign-In sheet for the last session, but people did not leave their contact details, so we are no better equipped to contact them before the sessions to remind them of the training.

Shared Documents

The usual policy and other documents were made available for people to pick up. These included:

- [Volunteer Training 2002-2003](#) – BCAN and CCM
- [Outreach Work](#) – Shared Guidelines
- [Bristol Soup Run Trust Code of Practice](#) – Shared Guidelines
- [Cold Weather Group Volunteer Handbook extracts](#) – Shared Guidelines
- [Client Details](#) – Caring at Christmas
- [Feedback Form](#) – Caring at Christmas
- [Membership Form](#) – Voscur
- [Accommodation in Bristol for Homeless People](#) – CCM
- [Food in Bristol for Homeless People](#) – CCM
- [Confidentiality Policy](#) – CCM

If anyone would like a copy of one or more of these documents, they are available from the Crisis Centre office, and on the Crisis Centre web site.

Future Meetings

As we have agreed to meet on the Thursday evening following the second Saturday of every other month, the next few meetings will be 13 March, 15 May and 17 July: all at City Road Baptist Church between 7:30 and 9:00 pm.