

BCAN
Homeless Forum
City Road Baptist Church
17 July 2003

Introduction

Steve Abbott welcomed everyone.

Those Present

Steve Abbott (BCAN), Pippa Chappell (elim@bristol), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Alisa McWilliam (Caring at Christmas), Val Moore (Christchurch, Clifton), Barry Penn (Bristol Methodist Centre) and Kevin Stone (Candle Project, Salvation Army).

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Anni Davey (Crisis Centre Ministries), Mark Stonham (Redland Parish Church) and Paul Tipler (Aspire).

Previous Meeting

Paul distributed the notes of the previous meeting, and apologised again for their late production. The notes were approved without change. Paul promised to post notes to participants before the next meeting is held.

Matters Arising

The BCAN half-day consultation on the 'Rehabilitation of Offenders' proved to be an excellent event.

Sadly, the First Aid training was not carried out as planned. Too few people had registered at the point when a decision was required whether to proceed, and then (after the decision to cancel had been taken) several more said they were intending to come.

Information Share

General

Val Moore has met Pat Reynolds: apparently Clifton and Redland are experiencing difficulty in obtaining volunteers for Saturday lunchtimes.

Bristol Vineyard held an enjoyable event in the Bear Pit. It would be good to publicise such events more widely in the future: the Methodist Centre would then be able to decide whether it was worth staying open.

Pippa asked if anyone was in need of a microwave, as elim@bristol were about to clear one out.

Barry Penn's new email address is: methodistcentre2001@yahoo.co.uk.

Kevin Stone described what the Salvation Army Candle Project does, and will let Paul have details to circulate with the meeting notes.

Alisa reported that the new, updated Survival Guide is now out. The Caring at Christmas summer bulletin has also just been printed. Caring at Christmas have a problem of drug use in their toilet. Does anyone have any suggestions of ways to stop or discourage this?

The leaders at Christchurch, Clifton are trying to implement a policy of discouraging cash being given to homeless people. Meal vouchers are being made available to give instead.

Summer Closure

The Wild Goose will be closed for 3 weeks in August. A 'static soup run' should be operating from 34 City Road, just down the road from the shop. It is intended to operate from this location during usual opening hours from Thursday 7 August onwards, so the service will only be closed on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5.

As reported at the previous meeting, the Methodist Centre will be closed from Monday 18 August to Friday 22, opening again on Tuesday 26 after the Bank Holiday.

It was reported that the Cyrenians may be closed in August. Barry Penn will check this and let Paul know. *[It turns out the Cyrenians were not closed in August after all.]*

Alisa will confirm whether the Julian Trust are planning to close during August.

Kevin reported that the Candle project is to be closed from 1 August to 2 September.

It was reported that the Sisters of the Church will not be providing food during August.

It was agreed that it was too late to be collating this information, and that next year we should make an effort to do this earlier, and perhaps explore whether the Summer closures could be staggered a bit more.

Bristol Methodist Centre

The people at the Bristol Methodist Centre are investigating a new partnership, which may result in a significant improvement in working methods and output. After looking at several possibilities, it is thought that the most suitable one might be with St Nicholas of Tolentino. St Nicholas are planning to develop their site at Lawfords Gate. A working party is in place to explore the partnership possibilities. Barry preached at St Nicholas church last Sunday, and they worshipped together at the Methodist Centre in the evening. However, nothing is decided and there are many details that still need to be explored.

Elim@bristol

Elim@bristol are about to start redevelopment of their site. This phase of the work is due to be completed by Christmas. They are also looking at ways to use the Lifestyle Centre – their new building – and are considering a food bank (emergency food supplies), a counselling service, a gym and a coffee shop; there is also the possibility of using an upper-storey flat for resettlement purposes.

One problem they have encountered has been illegal drug use at the rear of the church building, which is fairly secluded, but used by children during the week.

This started an interesting conversation around our responsibilities concerning illegal drug use. Two points were made.

- If you take illegal drugs off someone (or just find them), the police should be phoned immediately. If you plan to take the drugs in to a Police Station, you must tell them this is what you are going to do, and then go straight to the station. Do not stop on the way! This should enable you to avoid any possible charges for possession.
- It was also said that allowing people to use drugs on your premises is not, in itself, illegal. They are breaking the law by possessing these substances, but you are not breaking the law merely by knowing that they possess them. You should make clear the fact that you disapprove of what they are doing, and make the health risks known.

Email List

Paul talked about the new BHF email list, which will be implemented shortly.

The basic difference is that the list will be maintained by a program, and not manually. People will be able to subscribe to the list and unsubscribe from it by sending an email, which should mean greater reliability and less work. Further details will be posted on the BCAN page of the CCM web site.

Training

Volunteer Training

There was a general discussion about the volunteer training programme. It was agreed to run the programme again with the same basic format as last year, but this time we would encourage people to sign up for and pay for the whole series, and budget for the cost of sending out reminders each month. People would, of course, still be able to attend single sessions.

First Aid

It was agreed to run the first part of the First Aid training on the afternoons of November 8 (after 'Reaching Out' in the morning) and 15. Only the workbook (costing £2) will be needed for these two sessions. The 'Lifesaver Plus' course we plan to run next year will require participants to purchase the full £15 text book.

Other Business

Communities of Practice

Paul explained that he has been trying to write an introduction to the BHF, to give to new and prospective members. As part of this activity, he had come across an article describing the concept of 'communities of practice,' which seems to describe the BHF rather well.

Paul circulated copies of the article, and asked people to read it and let him know whether

they think the description fits what we are doing and seeking to do in this group. Feedback before the next meeting, please.

BEAT

The discussion concerning 'Helping the Homeless' at the previous meeting had prompted Paul Tipler, Paul Hazelden and Andy Luxford of CCM to meet and discuss ways in which we can help people not only gain employment, but keep it as well.

Their thoughts about a possible scheme have been put down in another document: BEAT – short for 'Bristol Employment Action Team.' This is very much a provisional name, and any alternative suggestions would be welcomed.

The basic idea is to encourage ex-homeless people who get a job to retain the support network and training provision they enjoyed while they were unemployed, and in partnership with the new employer to provide a structure to actively support them through the difficulties that inevitably come with employment.

Again, Paul asked people to read the document and let him know any thoughts and responses to it before the next meeting.

Shared Documents

The usual set of documents were made available for people to look at and pick up:

- [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
- [Official Numbers of Homeless People in Bristol](#) – 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 (www.crisis-centre.org.uk).

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 18 September 2003, 13 November 2003 and 15 January 2004: all at City Road Baptist Church between 7:30 and 9:00 pm.

Close

Steve ended the meeting with prayer.