

BCAN
Homeless Forum
Methodist Centre
15th July 2004

Introduction

Those Present

Present at the meeting were Lee Barnes (Bristol Methodist Centre), Anni Davey (Crisis Centre Ministries), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Andrew Kellett (Salvation Army), Ailsa McWilliam (Caring at Christmas), Susanna Misson (Hope Centre & Christ Church), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton), David Perry (Emmaus Bristol), Kevin Stone (Candle Community Centre, Salvation Army), Paul Tipler (Aspire) and Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust).

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Peter Bruce (Easton Salvation Army), Helen Hill (One25 Project), Barry Penn (Bristol Methodist Centre), Clive Richards (Trinity Tabernacle) and Mark Stonham (Redland Parish Church).

Previous Meeting

Sue Strickland and Michelle Evans from the Council have offered to update us at the next meeting in September 204 on the Streetwise initiative. Sue Strickland is now working on anti-social behaviour problems, and Paul thought this would also be of interest and relevant.

Matters Arising

All the matters arising were covered under agenda items.

Items Carried Forward

Training Courses

Because a number of people have said they cannot attend the Saturday morning training sessions, the next training programme (starting in September) will have sessions running on a Wednesday evening duplicating the material of the Saturday morning.

The plan is to run the training on the second Wednesday and the second Saturday of each month, missing out December and August as before, and moving the first session to Saturday 4 September, as the following week clashes with part two of the First Aid training we did earlier this year.

Paul is trying to publicise the course more effectively this year, but asked for help with this. Suggestions for ways to advertise it included the Three Crowns, the Voscur and the Care Forum's e-bulletins, the Caring at Christmas newsletter and their website, Hope Chapel

and the Bristol prayer wall.

Paul is also looking for people who would be able to give talks at these meetings with experience in the specific topics we cover. The feedback to date has been almost entirely positive, but it always helps to have more than one person presenting.

The costs are the same as last year as Paul has had no feedback on whether they were too expensive or too cheap or whether people thought they were right. It was briefly discussed and people felt that the costs were about right. If we wanted to pay the guest speakers, we would need to charge more.

Paul also discussed the possibility of giving people a discount for early bookings in some way for example if someone was to book three sessions they could get the fourth at a discounted rate. Or alternatively if people paid the membership fee they could have a few free bookings on the training days.

First Aid

Val Moore clarified several points concerning the First Aid training. The Lifesaver course on its own will only provide you with an Attendance Certificate. The Lifesaver Plus course will give you a validated certificate, but it isn't a First Aid at Work qualification: for this, you need to do a different course. It is more relevant to the needs we are likely to meet in working with homeless people.

There was a brief discussion on whether volunteers were considered to be employees from the perspective of the numbers of people an organisation needs to have trained in first aid. The conclusion was that they probably were, and in order to fully comply with the guidelines, we should probably aim to have every volunteer qualified in first aid. This is not necessarily achievable, but we should be working towards it.

Homeless Groups

Churches Together in Bristol have a Homeless Committee where many of the churches are represented. It would be good to establish better links with this group.

As reported at the previous meeting, the *Homelessness Consortium* is a high-level meeting of the statutory agencies: it enables the Council and their partners to take a wider view of homelessness and the delivery of services to homeless people. Several people thought it would be really helpful if we were able to see the minutes of these meetings.

Paul H had recently received some notes from a meeting about homelessness, but the notes did not have any contact details, or say who organised it or where the next meeting was to be held. Paul was trying to find out more about the meeting.

We are told that The Hub has now published a new Homelessness Directory, which should be available from Richard Wadsworth on 0117 909 6000. However, on the Homelessness page of the Council's web site, there is no mention of the new directory. The most up to date information seems to be a *Directory of Direct Access Hostels* and a *Directory of Supported Housing Services*, both dated July 2002.

Bristol Housing Policy

One aspect of the current housing policy is to get people into private accommodation. There are various incentives being given to private landlords to take people from the Council list, such as deposits or the first month's rent being paid. The system is very clogged up and few, if any, appointments are being given. But we are told that if a client can find a willing landlord, these incentive arrangements can be fast-tracked.

Discussion Paper on Church Provision for Homeless People

This has been circulated to the Bishop but we have not had any feedback from him yet. Paul H will follow this up.

Action: Paul

There are a number of outstanding questions we need to think about, such as:

- How can we help churches become more inclusive?
- How can we best encourage churches to learn how to help homeless people?
- How can we help each other learn to work with this client group?

Could the Salvation Army hostel function as a church? The problem here is that people keep moving on, and when they move they would not be able to access their church.

Is including our client group in a standard type of church the best approach? Or would they benefit more from a different type of church, where people could really understand the issues being faced by the members – and be able, for example, to celebrate when someone has been clean for six months without shocking the rest of the congregation.

This is a specific example of a tension the church has always faced: it needs to be relevant to specific cultural groups but also linked with the wider Christian community. The more relevant it is to one specific culture, the more isolated it tends to become. On the other hand, if homeless people can really be a functioning part of any church, they should find it easier to move to some other church when they feel ready to do so.

So any church for homeless people needs to be seen to be part of the wider church: not a 'second best' or a 'stepping stone', but a valid church that is just as important as the more conventional churches.

Lee Barnes from the Methodist Centre has emailed people from Trinity College, and quite a few of them are looking at these issues. They have been discussing a more flexible way of doing church, which includes going out to others. A key question is: what is the focus? Do we want to set up something completely new, or just modify something that already exists? Either way, we must assist and support people through the traumas and difficulties of life.

Bridgehead Church meets every Wednesday lunchtime at the Wild Goose Coffee Shop. It would be great to encourage people from many different churches to go along and be a part of it – support the people who attend and build bridges and links.

At Christchurch there is always one welcomer aware of the needs of homeless people – someone who has relevant knowledge. There are also meals downstairs for people in need.

Woodlands is thinking about mentoring a group of clients. They are setting up an initial meeting to build relationships.

The meeting Paul H is attempting to set up to take the discussion further is, at present, with people from Woodlands, Hope Chapel, the Bristol Methodist Centre and the Salvation Army. If anyone else wishes to be a part of this meeting, they should contact Paul.

Action: Anyone

Information Share

Bristol Methodist Centre :

They are still in talks with St Nicholas of Tolentino about the possible joint development project.

Cyrenians

The Cyrenians will soon change their name, and be known as 'Novus'. This is the name of the organisation that has been running the Cyrenians for several years, so it will probably affect their marketing and publicity more than the service they provide.

Emmaus Bristol

Their business is booming and they now have 12 companions and are all very supportive of each other.

Bristol Soup Run Trust

They are still running every night and things are going well. A lot of people are volunteering, including some who have been addicts, unmarried mums and ex homeless people. They do come across problems of aggression when dealing with people.

However, the Julian Trust Nightshelter urgently needs more volunteers.

Christchurch :

They are trying to encourage the congregation to have a bigger awareness about the needs of homeless people. There is to be a Homeless Mission day; there is a permanent collection box as people have been advised not to give in the street; and Meal Vouchers are also available. The Breakfast run is continuing, but the bus station is now being revamped and they are not sure how this will affect things.

Candle Community Centre

They are having new managers in and the emphasis is changing slightly. Also the timings of meetings will be changing slightly. They are trying to reach out more to the whole of the local community.

The Salvation Army now has a part time Chaplain and Salvation Army officer based in Clevedon.

Aspire

Steve Sharples has a lot of responsibility and has been there over a year now. He has become more settled and confident and has come on leaps and bounds. It would be great if people could pray for him still. They have had another girl in from UWE on work experience, who is doing really well.

The goods recycling is going really well and a lot of the produce goes to Jamaica (BCF). They are now producing a catalogue. They are also keen to start wood recycling and there may be a grant coming in to kick start it. They anticipate the wood will mainly come from local builders.

Other Business

Business in Community

Registration for the next round of work placements is on 26 August. Following that, the Ready2Go two-day taster will be held on 8-9 September, and the two week placement will be 13-24 September 2004. This year, the 'Action Day' will be held on the last Friday rather than the following Monday, where participants will have a chance to reflect on the experience.

There is another "Seeing is Believing" visit planned for 28 September, when chief executives and senior managers from local businesses go out to meet homeless people and some of the people and projects working to help them. This could be a very significant event, so please pray for it.

Summer Closures

The Candle Community Centre's last drop-in is 29 July, and it opens again on Tuesday 7 September. The Bristol Methodist Centre is closed next week, and for the last two weeks in August. Please let Paul H know if there are other closures we should know about.

Action: Anyone

Usual Documents

The usual set of documents were made available for people to look at and pick up. These are listed, as usual, on the Homeless Forum Documents page of the BCAN web site: you can navigate from the BCAN home page (<http://www.bcan.org.uk>), or go directly to http://www.bcan.org.uk/bhf/12_homeless_docs.html; and they are also available from the Crisis Centre office.

Future Meetings

The meeting on the 16th September will be at the Caring at Christmas offices in Little Bishop Street between 7.30 pm and 9 pm.

It is proposed that the meetings next year should be held on the second Thursday of alternate months, to make it easier for people to remember the dates.