

BCAN
Homeless Forum
Crisis Centre Ministries
18 November 2004

Introduction

Everyone present was welcomed to the meeting.

Those Present

Tim Bainbridge (Julian Trust), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Rachel Hirstwood (Julian Trust), Ailsa McWilliam (Caring at Christmas), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton), Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust) and Steve Williams (Christ Church, Clifton). James Preston (Crisis Centre Ministries) also dropped in briefly.

Apologies Received

John Atkinson (Bristol City Council), Ann Banks (BCF), Peter Bruce (Easton Salvation Army), Anni Davey (Crisis Centre Ministries), Susanna Misson (Hope Centre & Christ Church), David Perry (Emmaus Bristol), Clive Richards (Trinity Tabernacle), Nat Selman (BITC), Kevin Stone (Candle Community Centre, Salvation Army) and Sue Strickland (Bristol City Council).

Previous Meeting

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record.

Matters Arising

There was a question about the ‘Matters Arising’ from the meeting before last: Paul had reported that he had received the minutes of a meeting, but the minutes had not given the name of the meeting or the identity of the organisations represented. Upon investigation, it turned out to be a meeting that James Preston from Crisis Centre Ministries had attended, but his name had been left off the minutes by mistake.

Concerning the cost of reprinting the Survival Guide, Paul had obtained information from a company that enables people to self-publish. You pay a comparatively small amount up front and then you can order as many copies as you like online. Many companies provide this service these days. For the example given, if the author orders 2000 copies they get a 65% discount. There was a concern about the format, as it is not possible with this company to produce something pocket sized.

The ‘new meeting’ of the city centre churches that clashed with the previous BHF turned out to be a meeting of *Churches Together in Bristol*. Paul would like to talk to *Churches Together in Bristol* about the work of BCAN and the Homeless Forum, so if anyone has some contact details, can they send them to Paul please.

Action: Everyone

The ‘Seeing is Believing’ visit organised by *Business in the Community* happened as planned on 28 September 2004. The attendance was not quite as high as had been anticipated, but there were a number of very positive experiences. *Business in the Community* will follow

up the people on the visit and help them find ways to support work among homeless people in Bristol.

Information Share

General News

John Atkinson (0117 916 5155) is the new Streetwise co-ordinator, and Matt Clement (07812 967 422) is the Police Liaison Officer linked to Streetwise.

The Cold Weather Shelter opened 5 days ago. It had a slow start, but things are getting busier. The Contact and Assessment Team are helping to move on the people who use it. It provides a safe environment, and there are a good number of volunteers. The training of the volunteers is also going well.

A question was asked about Criminal Records Bureau ('CRB') checks. Each organisation is responsible for undertaking a check on every relevant member of staff and volunteer: if someone wants to volunteer for three organisations, they must each undertake a check. There is clearly scope for a group like BHF to undertake checks on behalf of organisations to avoid this duplication.

If organisations are running training sessions to provide food hygiene certificates and there is room for other people to be included, please let Paul know, as he and others need to get some people trained and certified.

Action: Everyone

Paul passed round a copy of *No Secrets in Bristol*. It contains guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse. There is also a short summary booklet available. Each organisation ought to have a copy of the full policy and make copies of the summary available to staff and volunteers. Copies of both are available from the Council

Bristol Soup Run Trust

The *Bristol Soup Run Trust* were recently visited by John Atkinson. There are two Saturday nights per month not yet filled up, and they would be very grateful for any offers of help for these Saturdays. If you can offer any help please call Graham on 0117 908 7936.

Caring at Christmas

Ailsa reported that there may be a sponsor for the Survival Guide in the pipeline. Val may also have found a donor for the guide. Ailsa said that the spiral binding was chosen for longevity, but the shelf life of each guide is only for one year. Another 1,000 guides are being printed.

There was a short discussion about 'Caring in August': as each organisation struggles for volunteers over August, the idea is to pool our resources over August so that something runs throughout the month. *Caring at Christmas* are willing to coordinate the scheme. The Candle Community Centre might be available as a base.

The *Caring in Bristol* web site is now receiving between 4,000 and 5,000 unique visits each month.

Caring at Christmas will open this year from 3 pm on Friday 24 December to 10 am on Friday 31 December 2004. If people going are not staying overnight they must leave by 11

pm, but they will be allowed back in at 7 am. No dogs are allowed indoors. There will be an open day for prospective volunteers on Saturday 20 November from 10 am until 1 pm.

Crisis Centre Ministries

The *Wild Goose* is having a Christmas Party at City Road Baptist Church on Friday 17 December, which will feature a puppet show. All are welcome to attend and enjoy themselves.

Julian Trust

Things seem to be a lot quieter at the moment, both in the evenings and during the night time shifts. A good number of students are coming down to help, but there were some questions about the consistency of the training provided to new volunteers.

There was talk about the *Julian Trust* opening seven nights a week: it seems that this would result in them being classified as a hostel, and many of the current rules and procedures would have to change.

If people are interested in volunteering with the Julian Trust, they should contact either Meg Grimes, the Vice Chairman, on 0117 960 6804, or Jenny Oates on 01275 852 806.

Clifton and Cotham Churches

Their lunch runs will be shut down for Christmas, and volunteers are being referred to Caring at Christmas.

The *Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland* are organising a service on 30 January 2005 to 'celebrate' National Homelessness Sunday (more details available from <http://www.homelessness-sunday.org.uk/>). The service will be held at All Saints Church, Pembroke Road, starting at 3 pm, and everyone is welcome. The question was raised as to whether we could have a stand at the back of the church, but Val thought this would not be possible. The emphasis of the service would be on homeless youth, and the theme will be 'Homelessness Hurts'.

BHF Future Plans

The future of the BCAN Homeless Forum had been raised at the previous meeting, and an initial meeting of the ad-hoc steering group met earlier in the day. The thoughts presented to the meeting were discussed, and are documented in the Steering Group notes which will be circulated with these notes, to avoid duplication.

One further idea was raised: it was suggested that member organisations could benefit from having a visit from a 'critical friend', who could identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement, in an unofficial organisational audit. With such an arrangement, the findings normally remain confidential, only known to the organisation and the reviewer.

Usual Documents

The usual documents were made available for people to look at and pick up. These are listed 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 the page at http://www.bcan.org.uk/bhf/12_homeless_docs.html; they are also available from the *Crisis Centre Ministries* office at 12 City Road.

Future Meetings

To make it easier for people to remember the meeting dates, it was agreed that future meetings would be held on the second Thursday of alternate months. As we have failed to finish by 9 pm for a number of meetings now, it was agreed that we will aim to finish future meetings by 9:30 pm.

The next meeting will be held on 13 January 2005 at the offices of Caring at Christmas. John Atkinson has indicated that he will be able to join us that evening to provide an update on the Streetwise scheme.

The following two meetings will be on 10 March, when we plan to finalise the BHF membership arrangements, and 12 May 2005.