

BCAN
Homeless Forum
Caring at Christmas
10 March 2005

Introduction

Everyone present was welcomed to the meeting.

Those Present

Tim Bainbridge (Cold Weather Group), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Ailsa McWilliam (Caring at Christmas), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton), Barry Penn (Bristol Methodist Centre), Dave Perry (Emmaus), Kevin Stone (Candle Community Centre & Salvation Army) and Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust).

Apologies Received

Anni Davey (Crisis Centre Ministries), Rhi Day (One25 Project), Clive Richards (Trinity Tabernacle), Nat Selman (Business in the Community) and Paul Tipler (Aspire).

Previous Meeting

While, strictly speaking, people attending the BHF are not representing organisations, it was agreed to change the record to indicate that Tim Bainbridge is 'from' the Cold Weather Group rather than the Julian Trust Night Shelter.

Under the *Caring at Christmas* section near the top of page 3, there was an incorrect "although" which should be deleted.

Apart from these points, the notes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Paul had failed to bring to the meeting the list of "trigger offences" from John Atkinson at Streetwise. He offered to make the list available.

[The information supplied by John Atkinson was as follows. The ten basic trigger offences are: begging; theft; robbery; burglary; aggravated burglary; taking a motor vehicle or other conveyance without authority; aggravated vehicle taking; obtaining property by deception; going equipped to steal; and handling stolen goods. Attempts to commit the above offences are also trigger offences, as is the possession and supply of class A drugs. With trigger offences, adult offenders arrested and charged are subject to a mandatory drugs test and have the automatic right to seek help from an independent Drug Arrest Referral Worker who will offer confidential advice and support.]

It is understood that the new 24 hour Contact and Assessment Centre is likely to be run by English Churches and based at the Jamaica Street Hostel, and not at the Novas building in New Street. It is not clear what the implications of this will be for the Cold Weather Group: they have a meeting on Monday 14 March 2005, and it is expected that more information will be supplied then.

The Bristol Methodist Centre have also experienced the same problem with inappropriate and mislabelled presents and gifts, as discussed last meeting. It was suggested that a set of guidelines should be prepared for all groups who receive presents to help those who want to give in this way.

Information Share

Christchurch

The breakfast run is still continuing on a Saturday morning and no problems have been reported. People in the church now understand that they shouldn't give cash to people who beg outside church, and instead they give through the 'brown bag' appeals. The current brown bag appeal is for the Wild Goose Coffee Shop; the previous one was for the Sisters of the Church.

Bristol Soup Run Trust

Each night of the week is covered except when people are ill and they cannot go out and help. Food is now generally delivered in bags, which has made a big difference: there isn't such a mad scramble for tins, etc. They do not meet many clients at the Whiteladies Road stop, despite being advised to deliver here.

They have a lot of volunteers phoning up through Volunteering Bristol. Recent additions have included both barristers and single mums. Graham's main difficulty is getting them trained, when he is out on the soup run himself so often.

They are also looking for a new Treasurer as their current Treasurer suffers from Parkinson's and will have to leave soon. If you are interested please contact Graham Wheeler.

Caring at Christmas

The next edition of the Survival Handbook is coming out soon and there has been a good response with the entry forms that were sent out. It was noted that St Mary on the Quay have a drop in centre and details of this should be included in the Handbook. It would be helpful to have copies of the new edition available at the public launch next month, so time is of the essence!

The idea for Caring in August is coming together although it is still early days yet. Forms have been sent out to other organisations to see who is open in August and what is going on - whether groups are able to supply volunteers etc. It might be the case that it simply starts as a drop in centre over August so that there is cover when other places are shut. It is intended to be a multi-agency effort, so the more places that want to be involved the better.

Candle Community Centre

Maureen Baxter has now resigned and they are looking to recruit. This may mean that the drop in centre opening times will be reduced slightly until they have enough staff, but they are doing their best to avoid this.

They are closed over Easter from Palm Sunday through to Easter Monday.

They now have a contact at UWE who is happy to provide them with unwanted domestic bedding which has been left behind by students. They are also going to set up an area where all furniture left can be collected. Other groups should be able to benefit from this. If you are

interested, please speak to Kevin Stone.

Bristol Methodist Centre

They have been relatively quiet since January 2005 although there was a few days when they had problems with a few difficult people.

They will also be closed over Easter, but have just appointed a new cook who has settled in really well.

They have been liaising with *Second Step* who have been helping them deal with problems that arise with people who have mental health difficulties. *Second Step* have been coming in for 3 half days a week and they hope to work with them more in the future if funds allow. They have been very complimentary about the centre.

The planned merger with St Nicholas is still on the cards. It is complicated and they are still working towards a tailor made day centre on the St Nicholas site, but a lot more time and energy is needed. The whole site is expected to be redeveloped: this will provide housing, which will in turn pay for the refurbishment of the church and presbytery which will be used as an office. The grass area by the Presbytery and Pennywell Road will become a day centre and residential accommodation, and other organisations could share its use. It would be an integrated centre for people who are socially excluded and vulnerable. As the proposed new 24 hour contact and assessment centre is now planned to be located at Jamaica Street rather than New Street, it will not impact this development.

Things have generally been going well, apart from one difficult day when there was a frenzy of activity that was also noted by the other centres. It might have been connected with drugs, as there seemed to be a lot of new faces around at that time.

Emmaus

They now have a dog in their community who is being spoilt! They still have 12 companions although it is a slightly different 12 from the ones in January. They have 3 or 4 more lined up and hope they will join next month.

The shop's opening hours have now been extended: they are open Monday to Saturday from 10 am – 5 pm. They also have extended the retail area so can sell more items.

Cold Weather Group

This is going quite well. At the end of January 2005 they had 109 users and nearly half of them have been moved on to more stable accommodation. The system seems to be working well. They are still fairly full overnight with about 15 people staying on average. It looks as though they will be closing at the end of March, due to sufficient staff not being available to work continually through March, but as it is still cold they would like to keep it open longer.

It is reported that clients feel safer at the Cold Weather Group Centre than they do at the Julian Trust night shelter. The Cold Weather Centre is understood to have a 'better atmosphere'. They also endeavour to help the people who stay there by giving the Outreach Team a list of names, and they then follow these people up and help them. They try to support all of the people who come through their door in areas such as drugs, alcohol, and mental and physical health. The Cold Weather Group supplies the volunteers and English Churches supply the actual staff.

They are looking for finance 'guru' and if anyone is interested please contact Tim

Bainbridge for further details. They have also been working on their web site, which can be found at <http://www.coldweathergroup.org.uk>.

They now have a fundraising person working with them who has been extremely fruitful in his work and they now have their funding sorted for the year. He has applied for funds through a number of Trusts and has been extremely successful.

Crisis Centre Ministries

They went through a period when a few difficult people were causing upsets. There was a discussion around the practical problems of obtaining an ASBO on one of their clients. If an ASBO is obtained, it is important that the scope of any banning order is carefully considered so that the client is not prevented from obtaining help from other centres.

It was noted that an ASBO banning a client from a centre constrains the organisation in effect as much as it does the client: they cannot help the client at the centre without a breach of the order. The client can, of course, be helped by people from the centre if this is done somewhere outside the area they are banned from.

CCM has appointed an external fundraising company to help them generate more income, and hope that that will be successful. On this note, NCVO are having a conference soon on planning, fund raising and earning: if anyone is interested in going, please speak to Paul.

The volunteer training sessions are going ahead and advertising in the VOSCUR email newsletter is bringing in new people. Voluntary sector organisations can also advertise for free in this newsletter – details on the BCAN web site, on the Links page.

Clifton and Cotham Churches

The Homelessness Service was well attended and there was a good amount of prayer, reflection and praise. There was a presentation by NCH Nightstop, who help homeless children under the age of 18 years old. They are in desperate need however of host families who will put children up for 3 nights in a row and any help is gratefully received.

The Clifton and Cotham Churches have just celebrated the 10th Anniversary of their Saturday lunchtime soup run. It is hoped that John Atkinson will attend their next meeting.

General News

Membership

The BHF membership documents, previously circulated, were reviewed.

Manifesto. It was agreed to move point three from the Commitments Section to the Aspirations Section.

Application Form. This needs to say who cheques should be made payable to.

Constitution. It was agreed that there should be no Statement of Faith, as membership is open to all. It was considered that BCAN appointing a chairperson is sufficient to enable the Christian ethos to be maintained without a Statement of Faith. It is already a part of the constitution that members are to respect the beliefs of all involved.

It was decided that only full members would be able to vote, thereby distinguishing more clearly between the two categories of members.

The documents, with these amendments, were then all formally adopted.

The Steering Group

At the moment there is an ad hoc Steering Group which anyone can attend. You can join the email list and hence find out when the group will be meeting by registering on the Yahoo website: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/bhf-steering>.

The new Steering Group, consisting of 5 members, will be elected at the AGM on the 12 May 2005 when, it is anticipated, all the willing representatives will be present.

FareShare

FareShare is an organisation which distributes food to charities working with vulnerable people.

It has now received a Lottery Grant for extending its activities and Bristol is a city which they would like to expand into. They would like to establish a Bristol FareShare project within the next year. We understand that this would operate as a franchise. There is some money available to set up the project in Bristol, but it would then need to be viable in its own right.

Supermarkets often give their unwanted food away as to Marks and Spencers. The main reason supermarkets donate their food is because it is cheaper to pay someone like FareShare to take it away rather than paying to put it in landfill.

Elim@Bristol, the church in Jamaica Street, are planning another food distribution scheme: they wish to distribute food to families in crisis. One idea is that the warehousing and distribution could be handled by Blytheswood. There may be some potential for these two food distribution schemes to work together.

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

The next meeting, the first BHF AGM, will be held on 12 May 2005 at the Candle Community Centre at the corner of Ashley Road and Brigstocke Road, 7:30 – 9:30 pm.