

**BCAN**  
**Homeless Forum**  
Candle Community Centre  
12 July 2007

## **Introduction**

Everyone present was welcomed to the meeting.

## **Those Present**

Paul H (Crisis), Ailsa McWilliam (Caring at Christmas), Barry Penn (Bristol Methodist Centre), Ian Mountford (Salvation Army)

## **Apologies Received**

Paul Tipler (Aspire), Val Moore (CCICCR), Graham Wheeler (BSRT), Steve Griffiths (Julian Trust), Julie Griffiths (Julian Trust),

## **Previous Meeting**

### **Assessment Centre**

The Night centre will be open in November and the assessment centre will be fully operational by mid December. Access to the Night centre will be on a referral basis. A café which is intended to be a satellite to the New St Day Centre will be part of the centre. The assessment centre will also be the base for the homeless medical services. Streetwise, Outreach and TREE (training, recreation, education and employment) activities. Although these services are based at the assessment centre they may not also be present due to the nature of their work. There is a commitment for somebody to be present but does not mean there will be a service, it will be a location.

It is unclear exactly what service the café will provide. Is it providing meals for people based there/open to public/for homeless people? Will service users be charged? On what basis will the centre be manned and at what times?

### **Fareshare**

The contract for the premises is looking hopeful. The question was raised of 'how long before we will get food? Paul should know more next week as he has an update meeting next Tuesday morning. At moment there is no intention for membership to be paid. It is a possibility and was raised at a steering group meeting. Distribution will be based on need. It is anticipated that initially there will be more demand than supply. It may take a while to get the logistics up and running and the volunteers in place.

**Action: Ailsa to e-mail Suzi with Ian's details.**

## Homelessness Survey

Paul hoped to have the summary of results ready for the meeting but this has not happened. He will circulate them with the individual comments.

From the results it is clear that the 'scene' has not changed over the last few years. There will be interest from the press especially on the views on asylum seekers. The main concern is that because the agencies who work with this group understand what they are going through and can see where these views come from, the press will not. When it goes to the press, we will have to explain what the figures mean.

Olly has seen this draft and does not have any issues. The 'Candle' needs to be changed to the 'Salvation Army' when going public so that people know who it is.

Do the asylum seeker comments need to go in? The context for the comments will be two pages worth of quotes in feedback – a representative sample.

One of the biggest issues seems to be the 76% who consider themselves rough sleepers. Considering the money pumped into this area and the initiatives. What it does show also is that the initiatives with health care have worked. Two of the most significant findings are how homeless people have accessed health care services.

How does the 24 hour access at Jamaica St work and how will it help rough sleepers? What difference will it make? The difference might be the direct access beds (possibly 3 dedicated beds in two hostels). What impact will it have on the services we run?

The problem is not the hostels but the move on accommodation and where it is located i.e. Easton near the dealers and old peer group. Another problem is housing and affordability. Any new development over fifteen units has a legal responsibility to create social housing and one loop hole has now closed so it must be in the housing development, and not creating ghettos.

Paul will circulate the final draft of the results. When it is sent to the press it they should be given an opportunity to meet the people/services who took part in survey. This will add validity and mean more than a lone voice and also gives us an opportunity to highlight our services and ask for help.

**Action: Ian & Paul to meet and draft letter to press.**

The possibility of holding a meeting to discuss the findings and invite a panel was discussed for October. This could include a council person responsible for housing etc. The basis for it would be a forum to discuss the findings and an opportunity to respond. If possible it would need homeless person to speak. Paul suggested we approach the Julian Trust to see if they would host it on a Thursday evening – as it is the most appropriate place. The dates of the 8<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> October were suggested.

## Information Share

### Candle Community Candle

It has been manic! Sunday lunches are seeing 125 people. It is difficult for them to get through in that time. There are volunteer teams from other Salvation Army churches

helping. On a Tuesday & Thursday it is also very busy with at least 80 people. The partnership with the Smart team is working well. At present the Candle is looking at a partnership with Tomorrow's People. They are already working with the Salvation Army in Bedminster.

The Pre-school closes permanently on 23<sup>rd</sup> July but other children's work is going very well. They are visiting families in the area and are getting more involved in preventative work. An average of 50, are now attending the Children's programme on a Sunday. There is also a Holiday Kids club this summer.

## **Soup Run**

All nights are covered. A representative from Bristol went to the second annual soup run conference. This was held in Birmingham.

## **Aspire**

They have secured an increased funding and have two brand new vans. They are therefore set up for a significant gradual expansion in numbers of ex-homeless employees over the next few months. This is subject to securing new contracts and they therefore welcome the opportunity to quote for any window cleaning (including high access now thanks to some new poles) and painting and decorating. This is an exciting and busy time for and any extra voluntary help in the office re: i) bookkeeping (can be paid) ii) support work iii) administration is very welcome.

## **Methodist Centre**

A recent visit from the food hygiene saw them, awarded four stars. Everyone was pleased with themselves and the fact it went smoothly. A new member of staff is in one day a week. It is someone who was there before last year. The Covenant Players visited the centre. It went down very well, some ignored the performance, but some were enthralled. They will be coming back in the autumn. It is all ticking over as normal. The start of the smoking ban saw fewer numbers but now back to usual numbers. People are not necessarily staying for a long time but are staying for the essential service. One or two are trying it on, but most are going outside and conforming to the ban.

The Methodist Centre will probably have to close for a bit in August due to a refurbishment of the kitchen. At the last project management meeting, Barry presented a report which will be put to a five year plan. It has a much more visionary look.

## **Caring at Christmas**

The quiz for Nightstop on 25<sup>th</sup> July is full. Thanks to high demand another night has been added on 15<sup>th</sup> August. It will be at Cosies again, 6-9pm, £5 entry including buffet. The new (6<sup>th</sup>) edition of the Survival Guide is available.

Caring in August will be running again this year. It will be held at the Candle once again for two weeks commencing August 20<sup>th</sup>. It will be for two weeks, Monday to Friday (including the bank holiday) from 2.30 - 4.30pm. All days are covered for volunteers but more are welcome. It is hoped this will cover a gap when the voluntary sector places such as the Julian Trust and the Candle will be closed.

**Action: Ailsa to talk to Alan at the Wild Goose re August opening.**

## **Crisis Centre Ministries**

Alan, the new coffee shop manager is in post and doing superb job. They are on average helping two people a week into accommodation/drug rehab. There is a Trustees meeting soon and three possible new Trustees. There is a lot happening at the moment. Several volunteers and staff are going out doing outreach work in Brunswick square. This is working very well. Plans are in place to restart the BHF training in October.

**Action: Paul to send out the training details.**

## **Homelessness review**

Homelessness services are doing a strategic review intended for early next year. They are aware that they need representatives from the voluntary sector. The review will operate under Prince2 project management. This means it will be paper work heavy. They are looking for commitment for meetings in the next six months. A representative has been requested from BHF to speak for the group and represent our views.

## **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](http://www.bcan.org.uk/bhf/12_homeless_docs.html); they are also available from the Crisis Centre Ministries office at 12 City Road.

## **Websites**

It was agreed to include details of some of the key web sites in the meeting notes.

- [www.bcan.org.uk](http://www.bcan.org.uk)
- [www.bristolsoupruntrust.org.uk](http://www.bristolsoupruntrust.org.uk)
- [www.caringinbristol.org](http://www.caringinbristol.org)
- [www.juliantrust.org.uk](http://www.juliantrust.org.uk)
- [www.aspire-bristol.co.uk](http://www.aspire-bristol.co.uk)

## **Future Meetings**

Details of the next meetings are as follows. All meetings will start at 7:30 pm and aim to finish by 9:30.

**13<sup>th</sup> September** venue: [was agreed as Candle, but now changed to] CCM offices, 12 City Road.

**8<sup>th</sup> November** venue: Caring at Christmas.