

**BCAN**  
**Homeless Forum**  
Bristol Methodist Centre  
10 July 2008

## **Introduction**

Everyone present was welcomed to the meeting.

## ***People***

Present at the meeting were Ian Webb (Bristol Methodist Centre), Alan Slattery (Emmaus Bristol), David (Emmaus Bristol), Betty Wear (St Nicholas of Tolentino), Sister Bernadette (St Nicholas and Methodist Centre), Debbie Green (Bristol Methodist Centre), Alan Goddard (Crisis Centre Ministries), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton and Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland), Tony Richmond (Alabaré), Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Ian Mountford (Salvation Army, Candle Community Centre) and Luke Dickson (Crisis Centre Ministries).

David Perry (Emmaus Bristol) had sent his apologies.

## ***Notes of Previous Meeting***

There were no corrections to the notes of the previous meeting.

## ***Matters Arising***

The Council's new 'Preventing Homelessness Strategy' can be found by following a link from the BCAN web site.

Paul has now produced more copies of his leaflet on 'How Harmful Drugs Are', but something went wrong with the printer at work which prevented them being distributed with the meeting notes. Paul will circulate them with the notes of this meeting.

The new Survival Handbook is due to be available at the end of July.

Paul apologised that the results of the 2008 Homelessness Survey in February have still not been collated, due to pressures of work and his failure to find a volunteer to do the data entry.

## ***Summer Closures***

The Soup Run will continue as usual over the Summer.

The Wild Goose is planning to remain open all Summer, but there may be individual days when they can only provide sandwiches and drinks.

Ashley Road Salvation Army will close from 1 to 31 August.

Easton Salvation Army will be open on Mondays through August.

The Bristol Methodist Centre is generally open in August, but is now closed on Sundays until September, and will also be closed for the four days following the August Bank Holiday: 26 – 29 August.

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino will continue as usual through August.

Christ Church: the Breakfast Run will continue through August.

Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland: the Lunch Run will continue.

We understand the Julian Trust will be closing for two weeks at the end of August.

## **Information Update**

### ***Julian Trust***

The Julian Trust had a recent break-in, but not much was taken or damaged.

### ***Ashley Road Salvation Army***

A property review of Ashley Road has revealed some serious structural problems: one wall is leaning out – this is not dangerous at present but needs to be fixed. They are planning to rebuild the building on the corner of Ashley Road and Brigstocke Road.

There is currently a shortage of volunteers. They are open 3 days a week when they get 80 people, plus Sundays when they get 120-130 people. They run out of food parcels and sleeping bags.

Many more families are being referred to them. They are finding on a regular basis that the Council are not helping people they have a duty towards. The Salvation Army are regularly putting people into B&B: they helped seven people in this way in the past week.

The Salvation Army have recently published 'Seeds of Exclusion,' a book about how childhood experiences can lead to homelessness. You can order a copy or download it from <http://www1.salvationarmy.org.uk/seeds>

### ***Bristol Methodist Centre***

Sunday opening has been disrupted by staff problems. Because they need three members of staff to be present when they open, any holidays or sick leave can threaten their ability to open. They are considering the possibility of making more use of volunteers, to help them open more.

Martin Hearne has been a temporary cook and helped them to open, but has now

finished working. An ex-member is working as the new cook on a probationary basis. Recently they had several people fitting and an ambulance was called out.

They have applied to FareShare around two months ago but are still waiting to hear back – they will chase this when the new cook is in place. Ruth, the new support worker, has had some useful training through BDP. They have a broadband connection now, and have joined a recycling scheme for cans and cardboard. Debbie managed to get a very good deal on recycling – they get it free because they are registered as a recycling centre. They have recently sent out a newsletter to their supporters.

They operate from two buildings knocked together. They own one building and rent the other from the Council, and are currently negotiating the rent increase.

Ian went to the Practitioners Forum and found it useful. He also went to a forum on homelessness in older people, which turned out not to be as relevant as he had hoped.

They have had an ‘away-day’ to look at their mission statement as a Christian organisation, and Ian is excited by the possibilities. At present, the staff do not have to be Christians, just ‘sympathetic’ to the Christian faith. They will be looking further at their rules on staffing and use of volunteers, and also how to support and train the volunteers.

Alan said he might be able to point some volunteers towards the Bristol Methodist Centre.

### ***Emmaus Bristol***

Emmaus have two vacancies at present. They can take new people in quickly. They have meetings every Thursday. The Companions want to look at how they can help other organisations and are prepared to do a range of voluntary work to help others, which could include volunteering with the Soup Run.

There are vacancies in other Emmaus communities around the country, such as Gloucester. Coventry is still closed after being broken into. Three more communities should be opening soon.

### ***Saint Nicholas of Tolentino***

The door ministry continues to operate for two hours each day. The weather is not putting people off: there is still a need for it, with 25 people being fed one day despite the rain.

They are struggling to get enough volunteers: as well as ageing, many of the existing volunteers are going away or needing a break.

The building is coming along on schedule – they hope to be in the new building by Christmas, with a nice hall and more rooms. The next phase will be housing around the Church. Other groups use the place most evenings.

## ***Crisis Centre, Wild Goose***

Alan shared something of his story: he has been in recovery for 8 years now, after spending some 10 months homeless on the streets. He will be taking a young lad to Betel tomorrow; over the past year he and the team at the Wild Goose have been able to help just over 100 people off the streets. Lisa, in particular, is doing a wonderful job.

There are concerns at the Wild Goose about the number of people now being fed, with over 300 meals regularly being served each day from Monday to Friday. Also worship is busy on Saturdays, and they are now opening on Bank Holidays. The need for larger premises is increasing.

They have just been told about a problem with the opening hours: planning permission was initially only given to open until 6 pm Monday to Saturday, and not at all on Sundays. They want to open 7 days a week, so relocation seems to be even more urgent. They also need more trustees, to start in October. Please pray for them.

Alan and the other folk at the Wild Goose are helping get people off the streets daily, and occasionally will have someone to stay in the building overnight to keep them off the streets. He has banned three people recently, including Paul ('Steptoe') for a month. He wants the staff, volunteers and customers all to feel safe, so is being a lot stricter on fighting outside the shop.

Alan is now a qualified counsellor. A lot of the new volunteers are recovering from drug addiction themselves.

The LITE Course covers many aspects of looking after yourself, and much more. Many people's lives have been changed through the course.

The new LITE Course is starting in September in the Compass Centre. The next LITE Bite, a breakfast event to publicise the LITE Course, will be on Wednesday 16 July from 10 to 11 am.

Paul mentioned that CCM will be 25 years old next year. He hopes to be able to arrange some sort of celebration, possibly a festival in the Summer, which would be open to the public, and which the other BHF organisations could join in with.

## ***Christ Church, Clifton***

Christ Church are looking to set up a local support group for people who used to be homeless. There has not been much feedback from the sleep-out yet.

## ***Alabaré***

There is discussion about another move-on house with local businesses. They are trying to get the right property, to ensure people are safe, etc. Please pray.

They have a local support committee in Bristol for their trustees, which needs more people. They need to be Christian or in sympathy with the Christian faith, and ideally also need to have a knowledge of law enforcement, and be someone who knows the Bristol scene and is involved with homelessness.

## ***Caring at Christmas***

Sian is taking a Sabbatical break in Africa, working with street kids. Ailsa will be spending part of her time setting up a Nightstop in North Somerset.

Caring at Christmas are still looking for trustees. The Survival handbook should be out in under four weeks.

Bristol Nightstop is very busy. The council supports this. One girl was placed every night for three weeks.

## ***Bristol Soup Run Trust***

The numbers being fed by the Bristol Soup Run Trust have been fairly stable over the Summer, but the population being fed changes all the time.

The Bristol Soup Run Trust is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year. There is a meeting for volunteers every two months: 15 or 16 teams attend. Two teams have joined FareShare, but most provide their own food. They have plenty of people helping, and some ex-addicts are offering to join the teams.

Approximately 60 people turn up each night at Pip'n'Jay, and around 50 at Redcliffe Wharf. One team recently had flasks stolen at Pip'n'Jay, and sometimes there is violence there – one team experienced a nasty fight recently.

Finances are generally good, especially with the voluntary donations at Christmas, but the Broadmead Box scheme is getting difficult.

They have established a good body of trustees.

## ***Sleep-out***

Following the sleep-out this year, organised by Alabaré with help from Crisis Centre Ministries, there are now plans for a joint event for all the homelessness groups in Bristol for the night of Friday 27 February 2009, finishing early on the morning of Saturday 28. Paul spoke with Malcolm Widdecombe at Pip'n'Jay, and then with the Church Warden, and we have permission to start planning to hold it in the grounds at Pip'n'Jay. It was helpful to be able to say to them that we have done this before and it worked.

There is some concern about the location being used for the Soup Run. We will need to check the ground thoroughly to ensure there are no dangerous objects, such as discarded needles.

Last time there was only a small amount of media coverage. It would be good this time to have small publicity group working on the next one. It was suggested that we get the Evening Post to join in.

Paul asked everyone to take the idea back to their organisation's leadership or steering group to get their 'buy-in'. We raised some money last time, and should manage to do so again, but this should be even more valuable in raising awareness.

Anyone who is aged 18 or over is welcome to take part – to sleep out, and get

sponsorship; anyone under 18 can take part with parental consent and a responsible adult present.

All the organisations taking part will keep all the sponsorship they raise for their own organisation. The intention is to have it as a BHF event, with each organisation taking part being provided with the sponsor forms. It is not limited to church groups.

Christ Church offered to provide First Aid cover for the event.

## **Other News**

Not quite news, but a reminder from Graham: The Compass Centre is **not** open access. You have to be at the centre by 10 am to be assessed and get a place there. Ladies used to go to the Dean Street Hostel, run by Novas, but now you cannot get in until you have been assessed at the Compass Centre.

Tony talked about a recent report on violence towards women, and also about 'Lost Property'.

### ***New Report: 'Lost Property'***

*Lost Property* is a report by New Philanthropy Capital, who provide independent research and advice about charitable issues. This report on homelessness was published in June 2008. It is the best single report on homelessness Tony has seen, with information on the cost of homelessness, its causes, impact, and so on.

The typical image of a homeless person is an old man sleeping on the streets. But homelessness is not just about rough sleepers. For every known rough sleeper, there are around 100 people in hostels. Many of these people face a number of problems like family breakdown, poor mental health, and unemployment.

This report argues that the problem is about much more than not having a roof overhead. It highlights charities working to prevent people becoming homeless, as well those helping people to rebuild their lives and find a route out of homelessness. To download it, follow the link from the BCAN web site at:

[http://www.bcan.org.uk/bhf/12\\_homeless\\_reports.html](http://www.bcan.org.uk/bhf/12_homeless_reports.html)

### ***Volunteer Training***

Information and booking forms for the next Helping Vulnerable People programme were handed out. This is scheduled to run in ten sessions from September 2008 to July 2009. More forms are available as an A5 booklet from Crisis Centre Ministries, or they can be downloaded from the BCAN web site.

### ***Charitable Status***

There have been recent changes to Charity Law about the charitable status of churches. There was an opinion piece in the magazine 'Third Sector' saying that churches should only have charitable status for the explicitly charitable work they do in the wider community. Paul sent them an email which will be printed in the

magazine saying that most religions are also interested in helping folk become better people – kinder, more generous, etc. – and this also benefits society.

## ***Other Items***

Paul talked briefly about the poverty trap.

Paul has had Contact with Martin Green, who supplies food in Brunswick Square on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month. The volunteers come from Sanctuary Church and The Edge. These are possibly the people who operate the ‘Magic Bus’.

A drinking ban will shortly be enforced in Brunswick Square and Portland Square.

There is no facility at all in Bristol for treating alcohol addiction.

FareShare is currently recruiting an assistant for Suzie, and is in the process of acquiring a second van, which will enable more deliveries to be made each week.

## ***Reduced Access***

Lazarus House is possibly the best supported accommodation in Bristol, but we cannot refer people to it any longer: now the clients have to be sent to Pathways for assessment, which makes the process much longer and more difficult.

Similarly, Ian can’t refer people to Logos House, the Salvation Army facility, any longer – they have to go through the Hub. But he can still refer people directly for drug treatment at Logos House, for the detox, prep or rehab.

## ***Items for Next Agenda***

Items for the agenda of the next meeting include:

- 2008 Homelessness Survey
- Homelessness Strategy Review
- Wet Centre

## ***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)

### ***Future Meetings***

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

- **11 September 2008:** Caring at Christmas, Julian House, Little Bishop Street
- **13 November 2008:** Ashley Road Salvation Army, Candle Community Centre. Come to the entrance on the corner of Ashley Road and Brigstocke Road and ring the bell.
- **8 January 2009:** location to be decided