

BCAN
Homeless Forum
Caring at Christmas
11 September 2008

Introduction

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Those Present

Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Ailsa McWilliam (Caring at Christmas), Ian Webb (Bristol Methodist Centre), Val Moore (Christ Church & CTiCC&R), Patrick Benham (Julian Trust), Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust), Alan Goddard (Crisis Centre Ministries), Ian Waters (Caring at Christmas), Laura Gregory (Caring at Christmas).

Apologies Received

David Perry (Emmaus).

Matters Arising From Previous Meeting

The leaflet on 'How Harmful Drugs Are' was circulated with the minutes.

Ailsa apologised for the delay in getting the Survival Handbook out. It should be ready in 3 to 4 weeks. All feedback welcome.

The homeless survey from February has not been typed up yet. Laura offered to do the data entry.

On page 6, St Johns Ambulance offered the first aid facility, not Christ Church.

Julian Trust

There was a break-in a few months ago, but all has been okay since. They were closed for 2 weeks in August. There are 60-70 people being fed on an average night. Some nights have 15 people staying, others nights 7 people. There does not seem to be any reason as to which nights are full. The weather does not affect the numbers. It opens at 9.30 and is first come first served. In theory people can get a bed any time until they shut the door for the night (before 11), but in reality the beds tend to go straight away. The present policy is that the toiletries and showers are only for people staying overnight. There are not enough overnight volunteers or people for the cleaning teams on Mon – Wed and Fri mornings. Evenings are generally okay for numbers of volunteers. The Julian Trust is open for 5 nights each week and they very rarely have to shut

Night Centre

People going to the Night Centre at the Compass Centre have to be risk-assessed by Outreach. In an emergency, One25 or Streetwise can do the risk assessment. If someone is really vulnerable the Emergency Duty Team can place someone for a night. They cannot refer people to the Compass Centre as that has to go through Outreach. Outreach or Streetwise can be called in the evening. Gareth from Outreach will be going to Streetwise to cover John's secondment. The survival guide will have

the Outreach number.

(Note: the phone number of the Emergency Duty Team is 01454 615 165.)

Methodist Centre

They have got a new cook who started on 1 September who was previously a client. It was a long transition between him being a client and volunteer. If someone wants to volunteer in the charity shop they have to stop being a client. There can be problems with people who were clients but with the right training, supervision and encouragement it can be okay.

There was some discussion on the subject of employing people who used to be clients as volunteers or staff. There must be realistic expectations. Ex-clients have been invaluable at the Crisis Centre in terms of helping people. There is a question of integrity when organisations tell a client to get a job but are not willing to offer them one when they would seem suitable. There was a discussion in 'Drink and Drug News' on the subject: the usual practice is to wait for 1½ -2 years before a service user can volunteer. The suggestion in the article was that this is an arbitrary figure, and you should look at the specific circumstances of each case. It would be appropriate for some people sooner, and some would need longer than two years. Overall, the article was strongly encouraging organisations to employ ex-clients. Some of the current clients at the Julian trust may be ready to start volunteering. It is also possible to allow clients to help in practical ways when they offer, even if it not appropriate for them to become a formal volunteer.

Volunteers policy at the Bristol Methodist Centre is likely to expand: before, it was just paid staff who had roles in the day centre. They have had a few short term volunteers, such as a trainee minister. It is encouraging that volunteers have come in had positive experiences, and this has also been positive for the staff.

The charity shop was broken into on Sunday night. They got into the centre and caused bit of damage to the doors but didn't get much. Police got finger prints and boot marks. Most clients are disgusted. Still looking ways of being a Christian community: this may take some time to resolve. Committed to working together. Number of clients has fallen in August and most of September so far.

They are still on the list for FareShare and should hear from them soon. Will be opening on Sundays from this Sunday (14 September) 3pm – 4.45pm. They will be showing a film, helping people fill in forms etc. The telephone is in the office, so when clients need to use it, such as when they have to ring for a crisis loan, it takes a while because they have go upstairs with a member of staff.

The food store is getting low but harvest festival is coming soon.

Crisis Centre Ministries

CCM has three new people interested in becoming Trustees. They are still going Brunswick on a Monday to chat with and help the street drinkers. No-one came back to Paul about who is delivering sandwiches on a Sunday.

Bristol Soup Run Trust

The Bristol Soup Run Trust recently celebrated 21 years. They had a party at Pip'n'Jay with 150 volunteers and clients. After a busy August they are now able to

relax a bit. The nights are all being covered. They were recently on BBC radio Bristol, which was good publicity. Volunteers are coming from all backgrounds. The churches are very good, doing all the work themselves and providing the food etc. On whole Graham is pleased with the way things going. They have a good body of trustees.

Wild Goose

Not much has changed, just a bit busier on average. 360 people were fed on the August Bank Holiday Monday. August was really busy with other places closed. Got a good group of volunteers. No trouble recently: the word has got out with a few bans and closing if there is any trouble. This is important for the protection of the staff and volunteers. They also take into consideration that drunk people might forget what happened, so if someone is banned they go and see the client's key worker and send a letter. If they come near during the ban, they will be banned for longer.

If someone comes in with a bottle, it is taken off them. The staff speak with people outside the shop about noise and the neighbours. Regularly getting people off the streets. Starting go into schools to talk about drugs and alcohol. Took chance and contacted the Bristol Evening Post – got a really good front page article on alcohol and several other pages inside. The theory is that now GPS have the funds the homeless person can go to their GP and get treatment from them, but if they are on the streets it will not work.

There is a problem with the planning permission for the Wild Goose.

Caring at Christmas

Ailsa spoke about recent developments concerning staff, volunteer drivers and the Nightstop leaflet.

Nightstop has been quiet: The Hub has not referred as many people due to Ramadan. Young people are staying longer for periods especially due to a new system. Problems with people not speaking English. Lots of Arabic speakers. There may be funding because this produces indirect discrimination because people with a different ethnic and religious background are not being equally served. This may be a way to get the council to help more.

They have taken on three new trustees.

A fundraising ball is to be held on Saturday 22 November at Circomedia.

Christ Church Clifton

Increased numbers in August. Carrying on brown bag appeal – asking congregation for things that are wanted. Large number of young people went to Soul Survivor.

Churches together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland

No news, but noticed that the Sleep-out sheet says Feb 2008 to Feb 2009.

Wet Centre

This has happened and, and now has an extension for another 3 months. Open at 2-4pm at New Street day centre. Clients can drink as long as they engage with a worker. They had a list of ten people they were targeting, now have a longer list.

Preventing Homelessness Strategy

Paul will be having a meeting with Michele Tedder due to the claim in the strategy that there is no more need for emergency services, which is not the case. They are offering a meeting in the next few weeks. A Homelessness Prevention Toolkit was produced by Shelter: it is useful, but you have to be affiliated with Shelter to get it.

The DWP have published a paper, 'No One Written Off' on reforming welfare benefits. It contains some good ideas and some bad – Paul asked everyone to respond to it by 22 October.

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.

Websites

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

- www.bcan.org.uk
- www.bristolsoupruntrust.org.uk
- www.caringinbristol.org
- www.juliantrust.org.uk

Future Meetings

The next meeting will be on Thursday 13 November at the Ashley Road Salvation Army, starting at 7.30pm.

Details of the meetings in 2009 are as follows. All meetings will start at 7:30 pm and aim to finish by 9:30. Let Paul know if you would like to host one evening.

- 8 January
- 12 March
- 14 May
- 9 July
- 10 September
- 12 November