

BCAN
Homeless Forum
Candle Community Centre
13 November 2008

Open

Introduction

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting, and everybody introduced themselves. Tracey outlined some of the regular activities taking place at the Candle Community Centre.

Those Present

Present at the meeting were Patrick Benham (Julian Trust), Sister Bernadette (St Nicholas of Tolentino), Debbie Green (Bristol Methodist Centre), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Christian Maenzanise (Alabaré), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton; Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland; and St. John Ambulance), Tracey Mountford (Salvation Army, Ashley Road), Tony Richmond (Alabaré), Betty Wear (St Nicholas of Tolentino) and Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust).

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Alan Goddard (Crisis Centre Ministries), Ailsa McWilliam (Caring at Christmas), Ian Mountford (Salvation Army, Ashley Road) and Dave Perry (Bristol Emmaus).

Matters Arising From Previous Meeting

Paul apologised for the lateness of the previous meeting notes. The apologies for that meeting had not been recorded, so apologies for that as well. Tony Richmond noted that he had sent his apologies to the meeting.

Information Share

Caring at Christmas

From Ailsa: I won't make tonight so apologies for that. Loads going on. The new Survival Handbook is now available. Ian has resigned due to ill health, so chaos as usual!

Bristol Emmaus

From Dave Perry: sorry but I won't be able to make the meeting again this time. I was on holiday last week, returned on Monday and was at a 2 day meeting in Manchester on Tuesday and yesterday. I'm also out of the office from Friday week until the following Thursday so have a lot of catching up and pre-planning to do! I also have a French Trainee Community Leader visiting me next week.

In terms of news, we now have a house in Brislington for up to 4 Companions who

are ready for more independence. They will still work in the Community but if they find a job outside the house will allow them to have a much more gentle move from Community life to life in the big bad world. Our business is doing very well, taking between £5,500 and £6,500 per week over our 2 shops (Midland Road & Bedminster).

We are getting very few local referrals at the moment through the Pathways Pilot so we have to take people from outside the city which causes the Pathways staff to get a bit upset.

Our sailing club is going well. We have a sailing dinghy in the city docks with several Companions trained to sail and when the weather is good they will be out on the briny! Our model flying club is going well too. 2 Companions have radio controlled aircraft (1 helicopter, 1 fixed wing) and again when the weather is good they go out to enjoy themselves.

I hope things will calm down again soon and I will be able to get back to the meetings.

Bristol Soup Run Trust

There have been two recent difficulties.

Firstly, Hanham Baptist pulled out from Sunday nights. Two new helpers, Dean and Woz from Novas are due to replace them. Dean, a volunteer at Novas who used to be homeless, wants to go out with the soup runs. Graham has been invited to Novas to meet Woz, who will help Dean set up.

Secondly, also on Sunday nights, a long-standing arrangement has broken down: Woodlands were doing two teams a month, but now can only do one. Graham hopes to fill that gap with a team from Fishponds Baptist Church.

All the other teams going well. They have around 20 teams, and 70 volunteers. Each night, they see an average of 30 people at Pip'n'Jay, and 15 people at Redcliffe Wharf. Get lots of volunteers through the web site but the problem is in placing them.

Other news can be found in the Chairman's report, which was recently circulated.

St Nicholas of Tolentino

The door ministry continues daily. Please note that they are not open in the evenings, apart from Sundays. This has been the situation for a year or so, but some agencies still send people to them on other evenings. They offer cold drinks, tea, coffee and sandwiches from 10 am to 12 noon on Monday to Saturday, and 5 pm to 7 pm each Sunday.

On the first Sunday in December St Nicholas will celebrate the first mass in their new building. It will have a sheltered area so that guests are afforded some protection from the elements when the next phase is complete, but they don't yet know when that will be.

We are invited to visit the new building when we hold our next meeting on 8 January 2009. Go in through the main entrance off Lawfords Gate. We can park in the nearby school in Pennywell Road, but will have to walk all round the site in order to get to the entrance.

Alabaré

Not much is new. The future of Supporting People funding is still in doubt. Funding for The Well has already been reduced on the basis that the residents don't need as much support as they have been getting! Alabaré have therefore launched an appeal for £100,000 and are already halfway to that target. They have a recent newsletter, which can be viewed on www.alabare.co.uk.

Christian Maenzanise's post was only funded for a year, to the end of November 2008. This has now been extended to the end of March 2009, but there is general uncertainty over funding between April and October. Bristol City Council will be inviting tenders for a single provider to run the Compass Centre from the end of October 2009, but it is probably worth noting that previous targets relating to the Compass Centre have not been met.

Alabaré are keen to recruit someone with a good working knowledge of the criminal justice system as a trustee.

The Compass Centre has a Polish lady working on Tuesdays, 10 am to 12 noon, giving lessons in English as a foreign language to Poles. Tracey mentioned that the Assistant Manager at the Salvation Army charity shop is Polish and would be able to help with translation.

Julian Trust

Patrick Benham confirmed that the operation of the Night Shelter was accurately described in the minutes of the previous meeting, and that things continue as before.

The AGM was held a week ago. Funding is giving considerable cause for concern, with contributions from Business and Churches markedly down on previous years. The Friends of Julian Trust was launched in September 2008, but unfortunately the launch coincided with a festival in the neighbourhood, with many streets closed, so attendance was poor. However some progress has been made.

Patrick handed round copies of a recently produced leaflet which describes the work of the Trust. Of the 15 guests on Monday, 5 were Polish. They have recently bought a new dryer for nearly £1,000.

Graham Jackson has had to stand down as a trustee owing to his wife's illness, but there is one new trustee.

Crisis Centre Ministries

Paul Hazelden reported that Trudie had retired at the end of October, and that her skills, experience and insight will be greatly missed. The past few weeks have been frantic due to sickness and holidays, but things are calmer now.

They had a well-attended AGM in October, with the staff talking about their work, and they have several new trustees.

The Christmas Party will be held at City Church (Elim on Jamaica Street) on 17 December from 12 noon to 2 pm. The Wild Goose will be closed from 24 December to 30 December, during the period that Caring at Christmas is open.

They are currently serving some 250 meals per day, down from 300 earlier in the year. The LITE Course continues to run with 8 to 10 students on average.

Bristol Methodist Centre

The new cook is doing well. Kevin, a new volunteer, is working two days a week. They will possibly look for another support worker in the new year.

They hold a service once a month, and in the new year there will also be a communion service every 6 weeks.

They will be distributing Christmas gifts during the week before Christmas week, and will be closed from 24 December to 30 December, during the period that Caring at Christmas is open.

Deliveries from FareShare should start in new year. (FareShare in Bristol is a local franchise of a national charity which distributes food which would otherwise go to landfill – often from supermarkets, and often because the packaging is incorrect or out of date.)

Salvation Army

The Candle Community Centre is doing well for volunteers, but they need a duty officer present so it has been closed twice recently. They currently have around 90 guests (up from the previous average of 80) between 2 pm and 4 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They also provide a Sunday lunch on the first four Sundays of each month (not week 5 when there is one).

They have recently been joined by two students from Trinity, who will be with them until February.

The state of the community centre building is giving some cause for concern: it is a Victorian construction, 128 years old, and a recent survey showed that the roof is subsiding, causing the walls to slope outwards. There is no immediate danger, but remedial work will be required if the building is to last another 128 years. A second structural engineer's report is due in a couple of months. They are looking at the way forward. Something will be done in next few years. Homeless provision will probably continue in the church during the building work, whatever they do.

Love Bristol is a group connected to Woodlands church. They have a local prayer ministry on Wednesday mornings, and are looking at the derelict site on the corner for an arts venue.

Logos House use the facilities at the community centre on Wednesdays from 10 am to 12 noon for a rehab group. It is open to anyone considering rehab: you can come and sit in for that session. It is particularly helpful for anyone who thinks they might want to get off drugs, but is frightened of what it may involve. They also hold cookery classes.

Christ Church, Clifton

The Breakfast Run and Lunch Run both had increased numbers in September, and the increased numbers have been maintained since then.

Eight main charities are being supported, collections for them being taken at the two carol services (at 5:30 pm and 8:30 pm) each Sunday through December.

Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland

Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland will hold a service to celebrate Homelessness Sunday, but as usual this will be on a different date to the national event. The precise date is still to be arranged.

St John Ambulance

The new commander of the local St John Ambulance wants to expand their work and do more for the homeless people in Bristol.

The Brighton St John Ambulance do lots of work with the homeless. Val will visit them the week after next. The plan is for her to come back with ideas about what St John Ambulance can do in Bristol.

Notified Business

Sleep-out

The background is that a few years ago, the major in Salisbury suggested to Alabaré that they should organise a sleep-out at the cathedral. In 2007 they did it in conjunction with Homelessness Sunday, which was tricky because of the proximity to Christmas. Last year they did six smaller ones, including one with Crisis Centre Ministries in Clifton Cathedral, Bristol.

The plan is to hold another sleep-out in February 2009 to help raise funds and generate publicity for the homelessness groups working in the old Avon region. It will be co-branded with the BCAN Homeless Forum and each individual organisation taking part. Churches and other groups can take part and donate their sponsorship. The Julian Trust and Caring at Christmas both want to be involved. It is possible that St John Ambulance may be involved in sleeping as well as providing First Aid.

The target number is to get 150 people sleeping on the site overnight. Do we want to identify a main issue to raise in the publicity? If so, it might be the need for more alcohol treatment locally.

It was agreed that Richard Daly, Tony Richmond, Val Moore and Paul Hazelden would act as a coordinating group. Other people are welcome to join in and help.

Paul will post a list of participating groups on the BCAN web site.

The initial invitation will be to get 20 people from each participating group. Once we get a better feel for the numbers, groups should be able to sign up more sleepers on a first come, first served basis.

Answering a question about risk, Tony said that Alabaré have been running sleep-outs for 7 years, some 240 people have taken part to date, and there has only been one recorded accident: a cut finger when someone tried trimming their finger nail in the dark!

Road Map

We have been talking for years about producing a 'Road Map' of services for homeless people in Bristol. The Survival Handbook is wonderful, but it quickly gets out of date, and cannot contain all the information we would like to know.

Paul would like some volunteers to help him start working on a first draft, to see what it might look like in reality. We will look at the subject in more detail at the next meeting in January.

Close

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.alabare.co.uk
- www.bcan.org.uk
- www.bristolsoupruntrust.org.uk
- www.caringinbristol.org
- www.crisis-centre.org.uk
- www.juliantrust.org.uk

Future Meetings

Details of the next few meetings 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 2009 at St Nicholas of Tolentino, using the main entrance off Lawfords Gate. We can park in the nearby school in Pennywell Road, but will have to walk all round the site in order to get to the entrance.
- 12 March 2009
- 14 May 2009
- 9 July 2009
- 10 September 2009
- 12 November 2009