

**BCAN**  
**Homeless Forum**  
Bristol Methodist Centre  
14 May 2009

## **Open**

### ***Introduction***

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting, and everybody introduced themselves.

### ***Those Present***

Present at the meeting were Alan Goddard (Crisis Centre Ministries, Wild Goose), Sister Bernadette (St Nicholas of Tolentino & Bristol Methodist Centre), Debbie Green (Bristol Methodist Centre), Dush (Julian Trust), Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust), Ian Mountford (Salvation Army Candle Community Centre), Ian Webb (Bristol Methodist Centre), Jemma Noakes (Alabaré Area Manager), Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries) and Tony Richmond (Alabaré).

### ***Apologies Received***

Apologies had been received from Patrick Benham (Julian Trust), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton CALME Committee and Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland) and David Perry (Emmaus Bristol).

### ***Matters Arising From Previous Meeting***

Tony confirmed that Alabaré are planning their next Sleep Out in Salisbury on Friday 26 February 2010, so that is the date we will work towards for the next Sleep Out in Bristol.

## **Information Share**

### ***Emmaus***

There was a message from Dave Perry:

I'm afraid I can't make the meeting again, I am in London at a conference.

A brief update. Referrals are not very forthcoming at the moment, particularly from the "Pathways" programme (they seem to have a few totally inappropriate referrals but nothing else).

We have 3 vacancies. Our house in Brislington is going well with established Companions enjoying more independence while still being part of the Emmaus Community. Business, both in Barton Manor and our Bedminster shop is still doing well with no apparent down-turn at the moment, although we are monitoring closely.

Our sailing club is back on the water again after the winter. Several Companions were trained and are now qualified to sail our Wayfarer dinghy, the "Abbe Pierre 2".

On a sad note, a Companion died unexpectedly and suddenly recently. He had been with us for one year and was much loved by all. We will miss him. It knocks a community back when something like this happens but we are bouncing back and will carry on supporting each other and making a real difference to people's lives.

## ***Crisis Centre Ministries***

The Coffee Shop is going very well at present, but everyone is getting frustrated by the lack of space. There has been an influx of young squatters recently. It is operating at full capacity most days, serving around 300 people a day. FareShare and other places have been helping to provide food.

CCM is still looking at various possible new buildings. Of the three that were being considered two months ago, two have been discounted but one is still a strong possibility, and there is now another possibility closer to City Road.

The Wild Goose is currently open 5 days a week, Monday to Friday, and aim to open 7 days a week by September. Before they start to open at the weekend, they will check when other services are open and try to open at different times.

When the Coffee Shop moves, CCM is considering the possibility of turning the current building into a wet centre. This would clearly not be a trivial undertaking, but it is possible to establish a service in stages as suitable volunteers are found.

CCM is campaigning for more and more appropriate provision of residential alcohol treatment in Bristol. Alan and Paul have met our MP, Stephen Williams, and Sue Bancroft from Safer Bristol, to talk about it. They are also pressing for the Salvation Army to be given more funding to provide rehabilitation.

They are also pressing for more residential drug treatment funding to go out of Bristol. Safer Bristol funded 152 people for treatment last year, almost all of them in this area. Some people need to make a fresh start. It's all about the funding: Safer Bristol purchase block bookings for treatment beds from local providers, so they are getting the treatment provided more cheaply as a result.

Alan has been taking a survey round all the hostels, asking people where they live, what drugs they use, and their preferences. The trend he has found is that many addicts are moving from heroin to methadone and then on to alcohol. Alan will email the figures round after the meeting. The figures sent round will not specify the hostels, but Alan can supply figures for individual hostel if requested. Details have been provided by 47 homeless people.

At present, Alan and the team are getting 6 or 7 people off the street each week. They continue to support people through their treatment, and help to move them round the country, wherever they are most likely to succeed.

In response to a question, Alan said that CCM does not operate with staggered meals. Instead, people queue at the door and wait for a place or eat standing up.

CCM is currently advertising for two jobs: the Office Manager and the Volunteer Support Coordinator. Details of both these positions are on the CCM web site.

Alan will be visiting Yeldall Manor next week on Thursday 21 May, and has a space in the car if anyone would like to visit and see what they do.

### ***Julian Trust***

The Julian Trust is currently working on refurbishing their showers and toilets. They are struggling to get enough overnight volunteers: they need two each night, from 10:30 pm to 7:30 am.

The web site is their main source of volunteers, but this needs to be updated since it was built by someone who no longer wants to maintain it.

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

The Bristol Methodist Centre have recently redecorated hall, landing and stairs. They have removed the stair lift, which was no longer safe. It dated from around 1988 but was probably second hand even then. They will probably try to get a grant for something to replace it on the other staircase.

Four computers are now installed, ready to be used for training or in some other relevant way. A couple of contacts at the college might arrange something that makes use of the computers.

Some worship services have been held on Palm Sunday and other occasions. This was the first Holy Communion for several years. Generally 5-7 'members' come – people who use the centre. They often fear that people are anti-faith, but in fact they are often very open and waiting to be invited. The spiritual life is a part of the whole person, and needs to be cared for just like the other parts.

Several people have died recently, so they have been helping people get to the services. They arranged a service at the crematorium for one.

People from the Salvation Army Bridge Program have visited several times. This looks like a good scheme which should continue.

The Outreach Team are not attending their scheduled sessions at the Bristol Methodist Centre and the Wild Goose. Ian complained and the sessions started again last week, but did not happen this week. The Hub refers people to where Outreach are scheduled to be, which often creates problems when they don't turn up.

The number of people being fed are still comparatively high, with 50-60 meals being served each day when they are open.

### ***Salvation Army Candle Community Centre***

The Candle Community Centre is very busy at present with 100+ attending each session, three times a week. They are having difficulty with the Sunday opening because two teams have dropped out over the past year.

However, the Candle Community Centre is one part of a wider strategy, the Salvation Army are following in Bristol. The plan is that by some time in 2010 it will be a children's centre. The work with homeless people will probably move to Dean Lane in Bedminster. In Ashley they are planning to do far more work with children and preventative work.

Another charity shop (or 'community shop' as they prefer to call them) has been opened in Knowle West, which makes a total of five in Bristol. Each is owned and run by the local people. See [www.salvationarmycharityshops.org.uk](http://www.salvationarmycharityshops.org.uk) for more details. The aim is to recycle goods and money within the local community, ensuring that the profits go back to the local community.

Some volunteers from RBS are working at Ashley Road, doing some hands-on stuff in the drop in, and also a review of how they work.

It is 'Missing Persons' month, and flyers are available if anyone wants them. The Salvation Army are tracing 10 people a day across the country.

### ***St Nicholas of Tolentino***

The numbers have increased recently, with new faces turning up. Possibly the recession is starting to have an effect?

They hope to work more closely with Crisis Centre Ministries soon.

### ***Alabaré***

Tony reported that as an organisation Alabaré have grown considerably over past few years. Plymouth has suddenly become the second largest area of work. They have just appointed 6 area managers to ease the workload, and are in the process of defining the roles. Jemma is one of the new area managers.

A new project opened in Plymouth in February as a joint collaboration with the Royal British Legion. They are seeing lots of people coming out of the forces whose lives are falling apart. How do we support them? Alabaré have opened a house with 5 beds, and the Royal British Legion are funding the support costs. They are looking to see how effective and cost effective it is. Referrals to this project come from the British Legion. If the project grows, or the scheme can be reproduced in other places, it may provide help for people Alabaré are in contact with in other places. But as there are only 5 places at present, there is not much scope using the project in this way.

We need to be open to new ways of working, and prayerfully consider where we ought to be going. We need to identify with other groups even if they are not Christian. As part of this strategy, Alabaré are getting to know the other services in Bristol. The TREE service at the Compass Centre currently needs some music stands for a music group which meets there.

### ***Caring at Christmas***

A new manger will be starting soon: Sian is moving on shortly, as planned.

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

All nights are covered, and they also have an emergency team who will take over if any team cannot go out on their night as planned.

Fifty people came to the last BSRT meeting. They are serving 40-60 people a night, and have recently seen a secondary influx of Somalis. A nightly client count

will be done.

The last BHF meeting clashed with Dan's birthday, which is why he couldn't come in Graham's place.

The web site has been revised, especially the news section, so please visit it and let Graham know what you think.

BSRT will be making a new leaflet, which is due out in the next week or two. Various donations received, including a significant one from Pret-A Manger. Lots of cardboard cups have been donated.

A new health and safety document is being worked on. They are considering re-introducing id badges for volunteers, and introducing the use of latex gloves.

A barbecue is being planned at Pip'n'Jay on 12 September: all welcome.

## **Business**

### ***Summer Closures***

- Bristol Methodist Centre: will continue through the Summer.
- Bristol Soup Run Trust: will continue through the Summer.
- Crisis Centre Ministries: will continue through the Summer.
- Julian Trust: not confirmed yet, but usually closes for the last two weeks of August.
- Salvation Army Candle Community Centre: closed 25 July to 5 September.
- Sisters of the Church: closed 20 July, open again Sunday 6 September.
- St Nicholas of Tolentino: will continue through the Summer.

Paul will update the BCAN web site with these details and any further updates as he receives them.

### ***Compass Centre***

St Mungos have won the contract to run the Compass Centre. They have a good track record in this type of work. Alabaré and Salvation Army both looked at the contract but pulled out at the second stage.

It was reported that they plan to close the night shelter at the compass centre. If this happens, the Julian Trust's service will become even more essential. The New Street Day Centre are hoping to start providing a night centre for women soon. It is not clear whether the Cold Weather Group know this, or whether they are planning to start up a new night centre service when the Compass Centre closes.

### ***Inviting people to the BCAN Homeless Forum***

Paul will contact St Mungos and invite them to come to the BHF to meet people in Bristol before their contract starts.

It was also agreed to invite the PCSOs to this meeting. Alan will invite them from St Pauls, and Ian will invite them from this area.

### ***Treatment Options***

There was some discussion of the question of abstinence and harm reduction. Many people are questioning the current harm reduction strategy: the policy of not addressing the problems is leading to the problems increasing. Safer Bristol want people to do rehabilitation in the community. Alan doubts that it generally works, but it may sometimes be the best option available to a specific individual.

The wet centre funding will end in September. A good number of people are using it now. Olly is seeking long term funding for the service.

From Monday a zero tolerance of street drinkers will be implemented.

Finance House (otherwise known as 'Hamilton House') will be boarded up from Monday. Alan has details of their web site if anyone is interested.

### ***Sleep Out***

The next Sleep Out is being planned for Friday 26 February 2010. Jemma will be the lead person for Alabaré. We need a planning group, to start pulling this together. Jemma volunteered to take part, along with Ian and Paul. Alan will help with the publicity.

Paul will contact Mike Hill and invite him to take part, and ask Pip'n'Jay if they are happy to host the event again.

This year, we want a full list of names and contact details of the people taking part, to help with the publicity.

### ***Road Map***

Paul has found one volunteer to help with this, but more help would be appreciated.

### ***Survival Handbook***

The next edition is due in July. All copies of the previous edition have gone, and the Bristol Methodist Centre have run out. Alan gave 50 to the Police last week.

Please send any updates to Caring at Christmas as soon as possible.

### ***Practitioners Forum***

No minutes have been produced recently. The forum is struggling to get a chair.

## **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](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](http://www.alabare.co.uk)
- [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.crisis-centre.org.uk](http://www.crisis-centre.org.uk)
- [www.juliantrust.org.uk](http://www.juliantrust.org.uk)

## **Items for Next Agenda**

Please let Paul know if you would like anything on the agenda for the July meeting.

## **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **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.

- 9 July 2009 at the Greenway Centre in Southmead. Alabaré have a room there. Details of where to go will be circulated before the meeting.
- 10 September 2009
- 12 November 2009

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Web site: <http://www.crisis-centre.org.uk>

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