

BCAN Homeless Forum Caring at Christmas 14 July 2011

Open

Present

Present were Paul Hazelden (Crisis Centre Ministries), Gill Nowland (One25), Richard Drake (Julian Trust), Val Moore (Christ Church, Clifton and Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham & Redland), Rhianân Lowes (Caring at Christmas), Graham Wheeler (Bristol Soup Run Trust) and Philip McWilliams (Bristol Soup Run Trust).

Previous Meeting

The name of the Caring at Christmas manager is Kath, not Cas. There were no other changes to the notes from the previous meeting.

Matters Arising

Val was negotiating first aid training for charities helping homeless people through St John Ambulance. This can be arranged at the cost of books and registration. Courses can be tailored to suit the needs of the organisation. They can do anything from a very basic 4 hours through to a comprehensive course lasting a few days. Val can probably do some First Aid training for students on the LITE Course too.

The Salvation Army still help homeless families on a referral basis, and individuals too when necessary.

Information Share

Bristol Soup Run Trust

Graham reported on the Bristol Soup Run Trust.

Christmas was wonderful: the phone was ringing all the time with people wanting to help. It may be that the fact of the economic depression has got through to people, who want to do something to help those who are suffering as a consequence.

They normally get around 65 people at Pip 'n' Jay, and 20 at Redcliffe Warf. Many Polish people are still using the service. The people at 1B (part of Love Bristol) are now providing a team.

Squatting and sofa surfing have both increased.

They frequently tell people to go to the Compass Centre for advice on getting

accommodation, but the folk they talk to usually don't know where the Compass Centre is.

The bi-monthly meetings are continuing, but are attracting fewer people.

They hope to have a barbecue again this Autumn, possibly on 10 September, but are still looking for a venue. A band has been booked. Val suggested ask that Graham ask Nick Ball.

Graham reported that Westminster Council are proposing a ban on soup runs. Liberty and Joseph Rowntree published a recent report which confirms the necessity of soup runs.

(You can read about the proposal in the Guardian online at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2011/mar/04/homeless-victoria-london-westminster-bylaw>

And:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/mar/18/westminster-soup-run-ban-anger>

This latter article contains the following fascinating paragraph:

“Some homeless charities have lined up in support of Westminster. Maff Potts, chief executive of the Novas Scarman Group, said soup runs gave the public the erroneous message that soup solves homelessness.”

(You never knew soup could be so dangerous.)

Caring at Christmas

Rhianân reported a number of developments.

Caring at Christmas will not continue to run the Bristol Nightstop. There will be a three month break, and then Depaul will place it with another organisation.

Kelly had her baby, and plans to return in March 2012. Caring at Christmas are not in a position to get a replacement for her after all, so they need office volunteers. They are looking for people who can do at least one day a week, and who must be IT literate. Ideally, they would like someone who could start in mid September, be reliable, and keep volunteering through to Christmas. A gap year person could be suitable. They will also employ a 'store person' from November through to the end of January.

The next edition of the Survival Handbook has arrived. The next update is due in July 2012.

Caring at Christmas have an urgent need for more trustees: they only have four at present.

They are planning to meet next Thursday with Julian Trust to talk about the dates for opening over Christmas. The current thinking is that they are happy to open on Saturday 24 December and close on Monday 2 January 2012. However, it can be difficult for the Julian Trust when there is no gap after Christmas – when Caring at

Christmas close in the morning and Julian Trust open the same evening. The clients are still thinking of it as the same service they have been getting for the previous week, and have unrealistic expectations.

Caring at Christmas are still happy to accept invitations to visit groups; they have been invited to the Christ Church youth group.

(In passing, we were told that Rhianân does a show on Ujima Radio each Monday from 4-6 pm. Do listen in!)

Christ Church

Val reported that the Christ Church Breakfast Run is as busy as ever. The Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland Soup Run is also busy, and needs someone to take over the organisation – which will involve both scheduling and buying some of the food. They both take place in the Bear Pit, which the Council are currently renovating.

It was noted that there is a market stall in the Bear Pit on some days. We are not sure who runs it.

Some people from a company called 'Positive Changes' came round door to door, selling a leaflet for £3. They claim to take people away for a day out; it seems very odd, and the people who came round didn't have much by way of answers to questions about the company and their work. It is possible that they took some people on a day out a few years ago, and have been raising funds on the strength of this since then.

Val is continuing with her clinic sessions at Julian Trust with St John Ambulance. She had to register the health clinic with CQC, which was a lot of work.

Christ Church have just started to support the North West Bristol Foodbank.

One25

Gill reported on the work of One25, as several people present were not familiar with the organisation. They serve the female street sex worker of Bristol, probably helping around 250 each year. The yellow van goes out five nights a week, Monday to Friday, from 9 pm to midnight or later. The van feeds an average of 11 people a night, which is significantly down from the average of 40 they were serving a few years ago. They provide a food bag, sandwiches, cake, hot drinks, condoms and advice.

They also run a drop-in from their premises during the week. Lots of services come in, and they run art groups to provide meaningful activity.

One25 are often the first people to find out about violence and attacks. They sometimes see under-age girls. Case workers follow up individuals,

Naomi House is a drug treatment home for the women and their children, providing 24/7 care for the women. They currently run a 12 week program, but this is about to extend to 18 weeks.

The Women's Night Shelter is vital for the women: One25 are very concerned about the possibility of it closing. They tried to liaise with the Women's Night Shelter about providing volunteers, but this got nowhere.

One25 employs 25 people, 18 of them full time. There is a dedicated team of 3 fund-raisers. They also have 140 volunteers.

One25 are now focussing more on 'skilling up' the women and helping them to fill their time meaningfully. They want to extend this by employing an occupational therapist to run a life skills program.

They are just moving into the house next door to 138, to extend the working environment. They also have use of the strip of land between the two buildings.

Julian Trust

Richard reported that the main news is that the Julian Trust was closed for two nights this week: they had a lot of beds broken by the guests. 8 beds were broken – 5 on Saturday, and three more on Monday. Only 15 functioning beds were left. They closed on Tuesday and Wednesday, and opened again on Friday with 15 beds. They will be banning the people who did the damage.

Replacing the beds will be a challenge. They need to be metal, strong and easily cleaned. Most beds these days have wooden slats. Ikea do a metal framed bed, but it is probably not strong enough.

Tuesday 16 August would have been Meg's birthday. They will be holding a party at 7 pm with tea and cakes, mostly for those who couldn't make it to the funeral.

The August closure will take place from Monday 22 August for two weeks, opening again on Monday 5 September. They hope to replace the ceiling completely in that period.

Julian Trust is taking part in the Bristol 'Open Doors' on Saturday 10 September. Everyone is invited to come and have a look round.

In the last few weeks, Julian Trust have had young people who appear to be under 18 coming in as guests. They cannot allow these young people to stay. They take a name and contact social services, but Richard has never had a response from social services. We believe that if we have a vulnerable person under 16, the statutory authorities ought to jump. Also, if they are aged 16-17, the Nightstop ought to be able to respond the next day.

There seems to be a need to establish some common practice here. One suggestion is that common sense should be applied: don't put young people at risk because of the rules designed to keep them safe! We will come back to this subject at the next meeting.

The Matthew Tree Project

Report from Mark Goodway:

TMTP was launched on Sunday June 12 at Elim Jamaica Street. Councillor Gus

Hoyt of Ashley Ward and Chris Chalkley from PRSC (Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft) both accepted the invitation and attended. We also did a Radio Bristol interview with Trevor Fry on the morning of the launch. To co-inside with the launch, during the month of June the Elim church had a month of 'blessed giving' towards the renovation of the A' court Building that will be used by TMTP. Over £75,000 was given by the congregation toward this appeal.

Since the launch we have been concentrating on setting up the FoodStore and conducted our first supermarket food collection (in partnership with Fareshare) on Saturday 9th July. The stock of food is growing very fast and we have decided to contact Cabot Primary School in St Paul's, to provide support for the families that qualify for free school meals throughout the summer holiday.

We have 58 volunteers registered and of these 10 wish to be 'Outreach Support Carers'. The training for this role (CCM Vulnerable People Training Course) will commence on Thursday 28th July at Elim and will run for 10 weeks. We will then have 2 or 3 weeks off and start it again. This will be an open-ended arrangement. With the training starting on July 28th it will complete on October 13.

Apart from the private arrangement we will make with the school in St Paul's it is important that the support carer volunteers are properly prepared before we fully open and therefore we have a provisional FoodStore opening date of Sunday 16 October 2011. This will be confirmed on Monday 18th July at our next Trustee meeting.

We have also been in discussion with CAP (Christians Against Poverty) with a view of setting up a CAP centre in Bristol with a full time member of staff. This centre will service the whole of Bristol and will be a resource for all Bristol's churches, not just Stokes Croft. There are a number of challenges to make this happen but none that are insurmountable, (a) we are not a church and CAP only work with churches, (b) CAP will charge £10k per year to support the centre, and (c) the annual salary of the full time member of staff, circa £30k pa. We are determined to realise this as we feel that managing finances is one of the biggest challenges for people in vulnerable circumstances.

Through the FoodStore we will therefore provide (a) good food, (b) education on how to cook healthy meals on a budget in a fun and recreational way, (c) personal support, care and love through the Outreach Support Carers, and (d) help, support and education on how to manage finances.

In response to a question, Paul said that the aim was to feed families who are referred to the project through recognised routes: it was not a self-referral or 'just turn up at the door' system.

Crisis Centre Ministries – Wild Goose

Report from Alan Goddard:

Not a lot has changed with our clients. We are due to open a wet clinic one afternoon a week, starting sometime in August, on a three month pilot. We also plan to open a ladies night shelter if Novas closes theirs.

The East Bristol Foodbank has opened, operating out of St Marks Baptist Church. They are getting some from from Sainsbury's, via the '5K Partnership'.

The Chapel Room is near completion at long last.

Open Space

There will be another Open Space meeting on Friday 16 September at the Whole Baked Café, from 10 am – 12 noon, looking at fundraising. Everyone is welcome.

Notified Business

Survey

There is no problem we know of with the proposed dates of 17-23 October 2011, so this was confirmed.

Please let Paul know about any changes to the questions from last time, before the next meeting.

Also, please ask your people if you will need extra help during this week.

Close

Any Other Business

Graham had a phone call today from a social worker about a 14 year old girl. It seems that several groups have had contact with her and her family.

A question was asked about the Bristol Hospitality Network. They provide accommodation to destitute asylum seekers. It seems to be essentially a Nightstop for asylum seekers. Paul will contact Naomi Millner and invite her to the next BHF.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 8 September, from 7.30 to 9.30 pm. We will be back at the Caring at Christmas office in Little Bishop Street.

Copyright © 2011 Crisis Centre Ministries
Web site: <http://www.crisis-centre.org.uk>
Author: Paul Hazelden
Last updated: 12:36 on 7 September 2011
Location: /home/paul/Dropbox/BHF/BHF_Meeting_110714_Notes.odt