

**BCAN Homeless Forum**  
Meeting Notes  
10 July 2014  
Caring in Bristol, Little Bishop Street

## Open

### Present

Paul Hazelden (Wild Goose café, Crisis Centre Ministries), Lindsey Jones (Caring at Christmas, Caring in Bristol, Bristol Nightstop, Midland Road Review Group, Strangers' Friend Society), Steve Jones (Bristol Soup Run Trust), Val Moore (St John Ambulance, Churches Together CCR, Christ Church Clifton), Val Thompson (Spring of Hope, Crisis Centre Ministries), Ahmed Muqeen (Citizens Advice Bureau).

Apologies were received from Richard Drake (Julian Trust) and Debs Perkins (Christ Church Breakfast Run).

## Previous Meeting

### Minutes

Lindsey requested that the minute concerning the Bristol Methodist Centre be amended to make it clear that the potential move to new premises is not yet certain.

### Outstanding Business

Lindsey offered to do the forum meeting notes in future. Paul will send the circulation list.

Val Moore will suggest the subject of homelessness as a subject for the next season of Churches Together Lent lectures. They are growing in popularity and we will need a high profile speaker.

The meeting agreed to host a joint event two weeks after the Caring at Christmas volunteer party in January 2015 to promote volunteering opportunities within all our groups working with homeless people throughout the year, and also encourage people to promote and participate in the sleep out. We need a 'snappy title' for this joint event. We will need to check the availability of the shelter with the JT as they now own the building.

### Matters Arising

The Soup Run is still short of volunteers on their Sunday evening shift. Val M will speak to her contacts.

## Information Share

### Bristol Soup Run Trust

The Chair has officially passed from Graham Wheeler to Steve Jones. Their marketing material is being updated including a new phone number and QR code. They are seeking storage space in a central location and are low on stocks of clothing and blankets. Numbers remain between 70-150 per run. They have been having problems with one guest who is habitually under the influence and abusive to the volunteers. Val T thinks she knows who this is and it is a cause for concern as it is out of character. He does not appear at the daytime runs. The police have been helpful.

### Citizens Advice Bureau

CAB have seen an overall increase in enquiries from homeless or potentially homeless people without a priority local authority need, partly due to discretionary housing payments coming to an end and/or private landlords becoming more aggressive with evictions. However there has been a decrease in EEA nationals, possibly reflecting a move home now that they cannot claim housing benefit unless they are working, and are only given 6 months to find a job. Also they tend to share housing which can mask the true statistics. Enquiries are increasing from people with mental health issues and CAB find it difficult to access social services for assessments. Paul asked if we could have the figures; Ahmed will ask.

### Spring of Hope

The shelter moved to its new premises on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014. The opening celebration was held on 14<sup>th</sup> June with both mayors in attendance. There is a lounge, kitchen-diner, bathrooms and 5 bedrooms spread over 3 floors, providing beds for up to 12 ladies each night. They are currently receiving up to 10 guests a night. There is a real community feel and the guests and staff are much happier. Volunteers are still applying. From 5<sup>th</sup> August the shelter will open on Tuesdays, meaning it will be open from Sunday to Thursday each week. The new office administrator is preparing new leaflets.

### Christ Church; Churches Together CCR

The guests at the lunchtime soup runs and the breakfast run are getting younger and there is an increase of people who need everything including clothes and blankets as well as food. This accords with the experience of the Bristol Soup Run Trust. Also the numbers which normally tail off in the summer have remained constant. The Bearpit is being redeveloped so a new venue may be required.

### St John Ambulance

The forum offered their congratulations to Val who has been recognised in the Queens' Birthday Honours for her work in establishing the specialist homeless team – one of only two

in the UK. She hopes this can be used to raise awareness of homelessness and help with recruitment.

## Crisis Centre Ministries

The big news from CCM is that Paul has decided to move on. He will work in the office until 18<sup>th</sup> July and then from home until the end of August when he officially steps down. He will continue running the BHF training programme for the coming year and expects that the 2015 Sleep-Out will go ahead. Paul has not yet made any long term plans and the forum wished him success in whatever he decides to do next.

## Wild Goose drop-in

The work on the storage area is almost complete; the drop-in will need to close for one day while working materials are cleared and the fridges and freezers are moved. The gents toilets are back in use. The drop-in backs onto a school playground and one of the children recently cut himself on some exposed metalwork on the back of the building which needs to be re-rendered. There was a complaint but no further action has been taken so far.

## Bristol Nightstop

Productivity in June was severely hit by the death of the project leader on 31<sup>st</sup> May. This had been a great shock to the team. The Caring in Bristol charity manager is to go from part-time to full-time and a new keyworker has been appointed from 7<sup>th</sup> August to bring the project back to capacity. A £500k application has been made to the Big Lottery for four years' funding; they will find out on 30<sup>th</sup> July if they have got through to the second stage of the application. A deposit bond scheme has been launched to lend young people the deposit or advance rent to move into private rentals. This is a pilot project with limited funding which will be monitored through August and September. Ahmed from CAB offered some helpful advice on dealing with delays in housing benefit payments.

## Caring at Christmas

Preparations for Christmas 2014 are just beginning. They have a new volunteer database with online applications and automatic shift confirmations. Val M is liaising with Ed Reed about the St John Ambulance presence and a programme of volunteer training.

## Caring in Bristol

CIB have recruited 3 new trustees; a youth social worker, an accountant and an ex-service user. It is hoped this will bring some useful experience to the Board.

## Midland Road Review Group

The Group continues its work to formulate the next 5 year plan for the work of the Bristol Methodist Centre. Their final recommendations will go to Synod in September.

## Strangers' Friend Society

Lindsey introduced the forum to the work of the Strangers' Friend Society - a small Methodist charity operating out of the New Room which offers assistance to people in distress, either directly or through the agencies working with them. The charity is not well-known and is seeking to extend both its profile and its giving. Members buy appropriate goods for the recipients, typically up to £75 in value, and are reimbursed by the charity. The Members of the forum were encouraged to think how their organisations (or individuals known to them) may benefit and ask Lindsey if they would like a donation, or to get involved. The Bristol Methodist Centre is already a member.

## Notified Business

### Forum Future

Paul will aim to continue to attend the Forum, new job permitting. He does not want to assume that he will continue to chair it: if someone else would like to take the chair, he is very happy to hand over, otherwise he is willing to continue for the time being. CCM will send someone else to represent them on the Forum, but there is no expectation that this new person will take over as the Forum chair.

### Survival Handbook

The Handbook is being paid for in 2015 by Safer Bristol (funded by BCC). It is almost ready to print though CIB are still waiting for the payment to come through. If necessary they will pay for the first run from charity funds and wait for BCC to reimburse them. Christ Church have also made a contribution.

### Sleep-Out

The provisional date of the next Sleep-Out is 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015, at Pip 'n' Jay.

### Ongoing Issues

The discussion around BS2 Lofts and public toilet facilities was deferred until Richard can be present.

## Close

### Shared documents

The shared documents on the forum's website would benefit from updating and review. Members may wish to add to the collection.

### Items for next agenda

The forum discussed information sharing about individuals which can be very helpful, but may create data protection issues. We will seek guidance from Bev Douglas (Avon & Somerset police) and add this as an agenda item at the next meeting.

### Future meetings

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 6.00 pm.

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 6.00 pm.

LJ

10.08.14