



Report on St Luke's Winter Night Shelter - 2015/16

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This report provides a summary of the Night Shelter project that was hosted at St Luke's church in the parish of Clay Hill during the winter of 2015/16.

1. Background

Clay Hill Parish has a proactive strategy for using the church buildings as much as possible for the benefit of the local community. This includes the community café, a monthly craft fair, the very successful weekly community singing project, and sponsoring a scout group.

It was proposed about three years ago for a Winter Night Shelter project to be started in the borough of Enfield, and Clay Hill Parish was keen to be involved. The Christian charity All People All Places (APAP) had been running a winter night shelter scheme with churches in Haringey since 2009, and it was proposed they run a similar scheme in Enfield starting in 2014/15.

For various reasons it was not possible to get a separate Enfield scheme up and running, so it was a joint Haringey and Enfield scheme for the 2014/15 winter, with about nine churches involved across the two boroughs, including three from Enfield (St Luke's, St Alpheges Edmonton and Enfield Baptist Church). At St Luke's we provided a night shelter for the first six weeks on Friday nights from 2 January to 6 February 2015.

For 2015/16, a separate scheme in Enfield was started with APAP running both schemes in Haringey and Enfield. It was originally intended to start the schemes in early December, but in Enfield it started on 2 January after Crisis at Christmas finished. Both schemes finished just before Easter, so in Enfield the shelter operated for 10 weeks.

In Enfield, the shelter was provided at the following churches:

- St Alpheges Edmonton – Saturday nights
- All Saints Edmonton – Sunday
- St John's Palmers Green – Monday
- Lancaster Road United Reform Church – Tuesday
- St Andrew's Southgate – Wednesday
- Enfield Baptist Church – Thursday
- St Luke's – Friday

At St Luke's, we started on 8 January and finished on 11 March. The shelter was run by volunteers providing food, shelter, warmth and friendship overnight for up to 12 guests. Only guests with low support needs were referred to the shelter by APAP as the project operates with volunteers rather than trained professionals.

2. Volunteers and donations

The hard work of volunteers and the various donations we received made it possible to run the shelter, so **grateful thanks to all** who contributed and were involved, it was much appreciated. In September 2015 we started asking for volunteers and donations for items such as hot water bottles, new underwear and socks for men and women, gloves and hand warmers, and clothing, as well as funding.

Volunteers

Last year we had over 50 people who volunteered at the shelter and many volunteered again this year. Many others also helped with donations. In total we had over **80 volunteers** this year who were from the congregations of Clay Hill (St Luke's and St John's), and also from other churches in the area, including many from the catholic churches of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St George (Enfield Town) and Our Lady of Walsingham and the English Martyrs (Holtwhites Hill), as well as friends, local residents and further afield from Broxbourne (there was a lot of support from Broxbourne with many volunteering in both the Haringey and Enfield schemes, and the Council provided funding to APAP). It was a fantastic team of volunteers, always providing a warm and hospitable environment which was greatly appreciated by the guests. It was a challenge for me to ensure everyone had an opportunity to volunteer at the shelter.

We had a team of 20 volunteers who were responsible for providing guests and volunteers with a three course evening meal and cooked breakfast, as well as a packed lunch for guests to take away. The food was fantastic and they did a brilliant job ensuring everyone was well-fed. So a **big thank you** to the volunteers who did the cooking.

In addition to the 80 volunteers, we also had a team of scouts help set up the shelter every week, particularly the beds, which was an enormous help. So a **big thank you** to Paul Bates for organising the efforts of the scouts and coming to the shelter every week, and to all the scouts who helped.



Paul shows scouts how to make a bed and Fr Edward talks to them about homelessness

There are clearly benefits to volunteering – for the guests, the volunteers, the church and the wider community. In terms of the economic value of the work of volunteers, I've estimated the value of volunteers' time was over **£9000**. (There were about 820 volunteer hours in the ten weeks of the shelter, plus another 150 hours of planning and preparation, and the current London Living Wage is £9.40 per hour).

Donations

We had numerous donations of food, towels, bedding, underwear, socks, scarfs, gloves, foot warmers, clothing, hot water bottles and toiletries, which the guests appreciated. We also had many cash donations and fundraising that helped to cover the running costs and the purchase of new beds. The total was over **£3,500**, including tax refunds. We also continued to benefit from the grant that we received last year from The Old Enfield Charitable Trust, which paid for many items including the cooker; various cooking pots, bakeware and kitchen utensils; and a full set of plates, cutlery and glasses. So a **huge thanks** to everyone who gave generously, including Mothers Union, the Friday singing group and many other individuals, it really helped. Donated clothing that was left after the shelter finished was passed on to raise funds for Bridge of Hope, a charity supported by Clay Hill parish.

Last year APAP were able to provide churches with mattresses and bedding. This year they had less resource and double the number of venues with the two schemes. They therefore asked churches to get beds and bedding where possible. Fortunately, we received a very generous donation to purchase 12 airbeds which we shared with Lancaster Road URC – **thank you very much** Mick, for giving guests a good night sleep. We were able to get duvets, pillows, duvet covers, and pillow cases both from donations and from APAP. Some fitted sheets were donated, the rest were purchased. We had some initial problems with air beds deflating due to punctures, but with diligent sweeping of floors the situation improved. We also borrowed some camp beds from St Alpheges for back-up.

We also had a number of food donations from local businesses this year. Holtwhites Bakery was generous again and provided plenty of bread, as well as cakes and sandwiches which guests were able to take away.

Anna Erikson managed to get a couple of generous donations of meat, and also arranged for its collection and storage – so **many thanks** Anna. SJ Smith Butchers in Baker Street provided a very large pack of bacon each week, which we shared with Lancaster Road URC. Forty Hall Farm provided plenty of frozen organic meat including lamb mince, stewing steak, shoulder of lamb and gammon joints.

The manager of the Co-operative store (Hollybush branch) provided £20 worth of goods at the beginning of the shelter. A volunteer who works at Westmill Foods (a local provider of specialist Asian food products) also made a generous food donation.

We also signed up to a new scheme that Morrisons started which enables local community organisations to collect food that would previously have been wasted. We started collecting food from the Enfield store on Wednesday evenings at the beginning of February. The donations varied each week and we received fresh soup, sliced meat, garlic bread, various chocolates, cakes, puddings, yogurts and crisps. We also shared some of it with Enfield Baptist Church when an abundant donation was provided.

Grateful thanks, therefore, to Kate, Richard and staff at Holtwhites Bakery; the butchers at SJ Smith; Kate McGeevor at Forty Hall Farm; Mijan at the Co-op; Lorenza at Westmill Foods; and Diane and staff at Morrisons Enfield.

3. Running Costs of the Shelter

The main running costs of the shelter were for the gas and electric and the laundry. Over the ten weeks of the shelter, the heating and lighting cost was just over £750 – i.e. £75 per night. The service wash at the local laundrette for the bedsheets, duvet covers, pillow cases and towels was just over £300 – i.e. £30 per week.

4. Outcomes of the Shelter

Overall, there three aims we wanted the night shelter project to achieve. The first priority was, of course, to provide a warm, safe and hospitable environment for our guests and to feed them, and this we did. Over the ten weeks of the shelter we had 14 different guests (including 1 woman) and, although it is difficult being homeless, they appreciated the hospitality. It was noticeable how quickly they, and indeed the volunteers, were at ease as soon as they arrived.



Birthdays of guests and volunteers were celebratedwith cake!

The second aim was to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness. There are many perceptions about homelessness and there was some apprehension before the shelter started, particularly for those who had not volunteered before. The project has enlightened and informed people's opinions. Although we had glimpses of the lives of our guests, it is difficult to comprehend what it is like to be homeless. It's not just about having nowhere to sleep, it's about having everything in your life that you take for granted being taken away. As we know from recent articles in the media, homelessness is an increasing problem, affecting a wide cross-section of people.

The third aim was to get wide community involvement, and this happened in many ways. There was a broad range of volunteers who brought much to the project, and there was a very strong community spirit. It was an amazing experience for everyone, and many felt it was a privilege to have been involved with the project. There was also a great response from local businesses who gave generously.



The welcome board gave guests the menu and list of volunteers for each shift