



Report on St Luke's Winter Night Shelter - 2016/17

By Peter Livermore, Coordinator

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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 2016/17.

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, the very successful weekly community singing project, regular sessions of activities for babies, and sponsoring a scout group.

It was proposed about four 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 Alphege's 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.

In 2015/16, a separate scheme in Enfield was started with APAP running both schemes in Haringey and Enfield. In Enfield the shelter operated for 10 weeks.



St Luke's Winter Night Shelter 2017

3. Volunteers and donations

It would not be possible to run the shelter without the hard work of volunteers and the various donations we received, so **grateful thanks to all** who contributed and were involved, it was much appreciated. In September 2016 we started asking for volunteers and donations for items such as, new underwear and socks for men and women, gloves and hand warmers, and clothing, as well as funding.

Volunteers

Last year we had over 80 people who volunteered at the shelter and many volunteered again this year. We had many who volunteered for the first time, and many others helped with donations. In total we had over **70 volunteers** this year who were from the congregations of Clay Hill (St Luke's and St John's), and 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 group of volunteers, with great team work every week, always providing a warm and hospitable environment which was greatly appreciated by the guests. **Grateful thanks** to John Rhatigan in particular who was an enormous help, coordinating the shelter for the first two weeks, and volunteering nearly every week, covering over 20 shifts.

We had a team of 20 volunteers who were responsible for providing guests and volunteers with a three course evening meal and cooked breakfast. We also provided a packed lunch for guests to take away. The food was fantastic and the cooks did a brilliant job ensuring everyone was well-fed. We provided over 450 individual meals and about 130 lunches, which were very much appreciated and enjoyed by the guests and volunteers. So a **big thank you** to the volunteers who did the cooking.

Similar to last year, in addition to the 70+ volunteers, we 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 and the ever-helpful scouts



Preparing packed lunches for guests to take away

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 **£12,000**. (There were about 1100 volunteer hours in the thirteen weeks of the shelter, plus another 150 hours of planning and preparation, and the current London Living Wage is £9.75 per hour).

Donations

We continued to benefit from the grant that we received two years ago from The Old Enfield Charitable Trust (TOECT), which paid for many items including the cooker; various cooking pots, bakeware and kitchen utensils; and a full set of plates, cutlery and glasses, as well as heating in one of the toilets.

This year we replaced the airbeds. Having had problems last year with the airbeds regularly deflating, it was decided to get more robust folding beds. The manufacturer, Jay-Be, offered a discounted price and TOECT provided another generous grant of nearly £800, which paid for the new beds. **Many thanks** to TOECT for providing another generous grant, it was much appreciated.



The scouts helped make the beds every week. The new folding beds were funded with a generous grant from The Old Enfield Charitable Trust, and guests commented on how comfortable the beds were and how well they slept.

We had numerous donations of food, towels, bedding, underwear, socks, scarfs, gloves, clothing, and toiletries, which the guests appreciated. We had many cash donations and fundraising that helped to cover the running costs. The total amount raised this year was over **£2,300**, including tax refunds and the grant from TOECT. 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.

We had a number of food donations from local businesses. Holtwhites Bakery was generous again, providing plenty of bread as well as cakes every week.

Anna Erikson managed to get another couple of generous donations of meat, and also arranged for its collection and storage – so **many thanks** Anna. SJ Smith Butchers in Baker Street again 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 again, which was used for many meals. The quality of the food from Holtwhites Bakery, SJ Smith Butchers and Forty Hall Farm is second-to-none, so it was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by everyone.

Grateful thanks, therefore, to Kate, Richard and the team at Holtwhites Bakery; the butchers at SJ Smith; and Kate McGeevor at Forty Hall Farm

We also signed up to Tesco's Community Food Connection programme, where they give surplus food direct from local stores to charities for free. They work in conjunction with FareShare, who inform us by text what food is available then whatever we can make use of we pick up. We initially collected food from the Ponders End store and then the Windmill Hill store.

Many thanks to Alena and Oliver at FareShare and staff at Tesco stores in Ponders End and Windmill Hill.

4. Running Costs of the Shelter

The main running costs of the shelter were for the gas and electric and the laundry. Over the 13 weeks of the shelter, the heating and lighting cost was just under £800 – i.e. £62 per night. The service wash at the local laundrette for the bedsheets, duvet covers, pillow cases and towels was £17 per week (just over £200 in total). There were some other costs, such as new mattress protectors, a new toaster and reimbursements for purchased food.

5. Outcomes of the Shelter

As in previous years, overall there were 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 thirteen weeks of the shelter we had 25 different guests (including 3 women) and they appreciated the hospitality that each of the volunteers provided. It was noticeable how quickly they, and indeed the volunteers, were at ease as soon as they arrived.

The second aim was to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness. There are many perceptions about homelessness and there can be some apprehension, particularly for those who had not volunteered before. The project has enlightened and informed people's opinions. As I've said before, 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. Unfortunately, homelessness is an increasing problem, affecting a wide cross-section of people.

The third aim was to get wide community involvement, and this happened again 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 again who gave generously.