

## **Report on the Winter Night Shelter 2017**

This report provides a summary of the Night Shelter project that was hosted at St Luke's church during the winter of 2016/17

### **1. Background**

St Luke's church hosted the night shelter for the first time during the winter of 2014/15, in a joint Haringey and Enfield scheme. We had the shelter for six weeks on Friday nights from 2 January to 6 February 2015.

In 2015/16, a separate scheme in Enfield was started with the Christian charity All People All Places (APAP) running both schemes in Haringey and Enfield. In Enfield the shelter operated for 10 weeks.

### **2. The shelter in 2017**

In 2016/17, the Enfield shelter operated for 13 weeks starting on 4 January and finishing on 6 April. In Enfield, the shelter was provided at the following churches:

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

At St Luke's, we started on 6 January and finished on 31 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.

APAP provide assistance to help guests break the cycle of homelessness, including casework services offering advice, advocacy and practical support. During the 13 weeks, we had 25 guests plus a dog at St Luke's shelter, including 3 women. Many of the guests found accommodation, and APAP continued to work with guests after the shelters finished to help with tenancies, find accommodation or provide food.

### **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.

#### **Volunteers**

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.

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.

### Donations

We continued to benefit from the grant that we received two years previously 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 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.

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.

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. Grateful thanks for the quality of the food from Holtwhites Bakery, SJ Smith Butchers and Forty Hall Farm, which is second-to-none, it was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by everyone.

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. We initially collected food from the Ponders End store and then the Windmill Hill store.

#### **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.

*Peter Livermore*