QUARTLERY NEWSLETTER Winter 2021

Thank you, donors,

Since starting online donations 8 years ago we have had £54k in donations with another £12k in gift aid.

You have given one off/ regular donations and supported fundraising events such as marathons.

NEW DONOR PLATFORM

Donations via our website are now handled by CAF

If you are a regular donor you can update via

www.tauntonopendoor.org.uk/donations/

(Virgin Giving closes Nov 30)

REFURBISHMENT

During recent lockdowns we have upgraded the shower block, kitchen and created an interview room





ROUGHSLEEPING

During lockdown most people living outdoors moved into Canonsgrove hall of residence. After the lockdowns many are back on the street. The centre is seeing client numbers similar to pre-covid times.

Many have several needs which can benefit from support.



CLIENT REFLECTIONS

Thank you! for all you did for me during my sojourn in Taunton. You were all amazing people and the food was great! Open Door is a credit to the town and the work you do is testament to what dedicated people you are. I'm still homeless but in a much better position and back in Y and forever grateful to all staff. You're definitely on my Christmas card list!

We never forget those who have been good to us and feel strongly that the centre is a place of positivity. I'm currently out blackberry picking & B is at college, something he is doing due to the help of one of your volunteers! That is surely a perfect example of how the place provides so much more than grub 'n' showers to folks that are open to it.

I've written a letter saying how important what the centre does is, and what a loss it'll be not having the face-to-face, come-in-and-chill aspect for a while. I mean, look at the name of the place! You do such a good job of getting to know the guys that come in so you know their needs.

NEWS FROM STAFF

We are now settling into a stable routine after all the uncertainties that the pandemic brought. We have two new members of

staff, bringing considerable experience from the housing and administrative sectors and enabling us to offer a fully rounded service. We are delighted to welcome Nina and Emma, as we also look forward to welcoming Chrissy back next year after her maternity leave.

Trustee update

Frances Heath-Coleman steps down after 9 years of being a Trustee. During this time, she has helped develop the advice and guidance service

Susie Peeler, a volunteer at the centre, became a Trustee earlier this year and Joy Milliken, Clinical Director of St Margaret's Hospice, has joined the team of 6 Trustees in September

Staff and Trustees are reviewing the charity's strategy for the next 5 years.

VOLUNTEER COMMENTS

Humbled by the other volunteers I met and by the warmth and kindness shown to me by the clients

A life changing experience for me

I love the feeling of belonging, the interesting things we do, and the fact that we can make a difference

I felt unsure what I could do to help people whose lives have fallen to pieces, I also felt rather nervous in town when homeless people were around. It's so good to work with friendly staff and volunteers, get to know the clients and know that I have done something worthwhile.

Temporary closure

In September we closed the centre for 7 days following an incident relating to drug use. The closure gave us time to improve protocols we use to ensure safety withing the centre. (This is the first time we have closed the centre since opening over 10 years ago)

NATIONAL PICTURE

Report from CRISIS:

Post-lockdown, local authorities expect to see an increase in levels of homelessness - 94% said they expect to see an increase in people made homeless after being evicted from
the private rented sector and increase in newly unemployed people made homeless by the pandemic.

Core homelessness' in England – a concept which captures the most severe and immediate forms of homelessness – is estimated to have totalled nearly 220,000 in 2019, having risen from about 187,000 in 2012. During 2020 these numbers dropped somewhat to around 200,000, mainly due to the effects of the Government's emergency measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 there were an estimated 10,500 people currently sleeping rough on any given night which had dropped by a third on the previous year.

It is predicted that the economic aftermath of COVID-19 risks a substantial rise in core homelessness, including rough sleeping, unless the Government implements a range of housing and welfare mitigation interventions, including continuing with emergency accommodation measures for those at risk of rough sleeping. In the longer term, the largest projected impact on reducing core homelessness would result from a large expansion of total and social housing supply and consistent, large-scale application of Housing First accompanied by appropriate support for mental health and substance misuse issues, and raising of the Local Housing Allowance.

SEASONS GREETINGS

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from the Staff and Trustees