



SUMMER '22

HOMELESS EMPOWERMENT & RELATIONAL TRANSFORMATION





WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. We really value the support of folk from across Chichester and beyond who have a heart for the homeless and are passionate about seeing lives transformed. As you read on, you'll discover our biggest need right now is for more volunteers. So, if that might be you, please get in touch via the contact details below.

In the first seven months from January to July we served just under five thousand breakfasts! Given that we're open every day of the week, that means we're welcoming an average of 22 guests each morning. And we're not just providing food. Clothes, toiletries and other essential items are also on offer, along with friendship, support and prayer.

Working with some of the most vulnerable people in our city is not always easy. The homeless community has its ups and downs and tensions that have been building up below the surface can sometimes erupt without warning. Sadly, our team have had to defuse a number of these challenging situations these past few weeks. At the same time, we understand from partnership

organisations that members of the homeless community have themselves been the target of abuse from others within the city and that the police have diligently increased their presence to help tackle this concerning issue.

Needless to say, we operate a zero-tolerance policy with regard to violent or inappropriate behaviour so as to ensure that HEART is a safe place for all. We are therefore immensely grateful for God's protection and for the wisdom and skill He has given to our staff and volunteers. At the same time, these situations have shown how vital it is to have a sufficient number of volunteers on duty each morning. Sadly our numbers are down right now, so recruiting more volunteers is a matter for urgent prayer and consideration!



Time has flown by since Becky Haddow joined the team as our Administrator last autumn. We asked Becky how things had gone so far.

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR BIGGEST JOY SINCE JOINING HEART?

Popping into the breakfast every Friday, after I've bought the weekly supplies, and getting to know some of the guests a bit. Even though most of my role is behind the scenes, it's been great to have this connection with them – learning little bits about their stories, and what brings them joy.

Also, fundraising the money to buy a new oven for HEART has been a joy as it's made all the cooks so pleased!

WHAT'S BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Making sure we have enough volunteers to open the breakfast and operate safely. We have an AMAZING volunteer team who are so committed to serving our guests. However with changing work, volunteer and life schedules, we're always looking for more volunteers to join the team.

AND WHAT'S AT THE TOP OF YOUR WISH LIST?

I'd love for HEART to have more volunteers so that everyday there were more helpers to sit with the guests at the breakfast, playing games with them, offering them friendship and chatting.

60 SECONDS WITH OUR ADMINISTRATOR

STORIES FROM GUESTS?

We've talked to Maria about the possibility of sharing some of our guests' personal stories, both as an eye opener into the experience of homelessness, and as a witness to what God has been doing at HEART. On reflection, however, we're cautious of crossing a boundary into our guests' personal and private lives.

Maria says there's the odd occasion when a good news story occurs of someone truly finding their way out of the struggles of homelessness or finding faith; and on these occasions we may gladly share these stories so you too can join in celebrating the good work of the Lord.

However, many of our guests carry some shame around the term 'homeless' and feel categorised or misunderstood as not being the same as everyone else in the world. Success for our guests may not always look like leaving homelessness behind. And, just as we all have ups and downs, their 'good news' may last a day or a week before being mixed in with more struggles and challenges which would not always be fair for us to share.

In light of this, we will for the present err on the side of caution both to protect our guests' privacy within the safe haven of the breakfasts and to avoid fostering a picture of them as homeless people with or without a success story attached. We would like to promote a message on our guests' behalf that we are all simply human and loved by God, dispelling the myth of 'them and us' that so often surrounds homelessness.

LUNCHES

A couple of months ago we made the big decision to stop providing packed lunches to our guests and focus on breakfasts instead. Yes, there was a financial element to this decision: we don't have a bottomless pot of money! But things have moved on since the pandemic. We don't want to duplicate other local services. And as Stonewillow now offer lunch at the Hub, where people can get help on a whole range of issues, we've been encouraging our guests to seek support there.



PIANO

HEART isn't all about food. It's also about friendship and helping people regain control of their lives and build better relations with others. On that note, music is a great way of having fun together and finding skills and abilities we didn't know each other had. So we were thrilled to welcome our own piano into the hall! It's second hand, a bit run down and probably needs a tune, but all guests are welcome to play on it. Maybe we'll organise a project together to sand it down and give it a fresh coat of paint. Listen out for news!



NEW OVEN

Ovens don't last forever, especially when they're cooking as many breakfasts as ours is every day. So we were incredibly grateful to the person who kindly paid for a new oven for HEART. Thanks too to all those volunteers who spent a busy Saturday morning giving the kitchen and the rest of the hall a much-needed Spring clean; and to everyone who's helped ensure we're in tiptop shape for the hygiene inspectors. Now we're all set to serve the next few thousand meals!

NEWS FROM MARIA LUSH

OUR OUTREACH WORKER



On a recent day when temperatures were reaching up to 27 degrees, Maria packed HEART's brand-new cool bag backpack with supplies and headed out into town in the midday sun. Sure enough, she came across nine of HEART's guests all of whom enjoyed a choice of sun cream, cold water bottles, smoothies, polos, a lollipop and, needless to say, a friendly chat!

CHURCH VISITS

When she's not engaging with our guests, Maria has been out and about telling local churches about the work of HEART and how they can become involved. Here's how she's got on.

At St Pancras, Maria reminded people that everyone deserves to be noticed and she encouraged them not to walk by but maybe to smile and say hello to people they see sitting on the ground. This rang a bell with all ages and a number of people came up to her afterwards offering support in monetary donations, prayer and volunteering.

Two people have already joined the team after Maria was interviewed at Chichester Baptist Church and six others have expressed an interest. Others offered financial support and links with local services they work for.

Following a joint service of St Leodegar's and St Stephen's in North Mundham, Maria received five completed pledge forms for a standing order and four people expressed an interest in volunteering. Many took a small wooden heart as a reminder to pray for HEART.

What a joy it is to sit and eat with some of the most humble people I know



Maria Lush, Outreach Worker

THE BIG PICTURE



HEART isn't alone in working with the homeless and needy in Chichester and we value the support and cooperation of other agencies and statutory bodies. We're members of Chichester District Council's Rough Sleeper's Panel, work closely with Stonepillow and The Four Streets Project, and participate in the Mayor's Homelessness Forum. Together we aim to make a difference.

When time allows, we're also hoping to support the twice monthly market stall that Chichester District Council runs to promote the Just Giving scheme. This is a great way of encouraging people to donate centrally to all the local bodies supporting the homeless (such as ourselves and Stonepillow) rather than giving them money on the streets.

Through our Chair of Trustees, Mark Payne, we also have links with the Chichester Welfare Trusts (CWT) which exists to make small emergency grants to residents of Chichester who are experiencing hardship. Over the years money has been given to individuals to help buy white goods and fund home improvements. More recently money has also been given to support the arrival of Syrian and Afghan families into the City.

As one of CWT's trustees, Mark tells us that Increasingly CWT is working to help people into housing. The Trust is finding that many people who move from homelessness or insecure accommodation into Housing Association properties discover that they have no floor coverings. This is hard for anyone – but especially difficult for families with young children. CWT has made a number of grants enabling people to get a new carpet in their living rooms and bedrooms.

This is just another example of how a variety of different groups in Chichester are working together to provide for some of the most needy in our society.

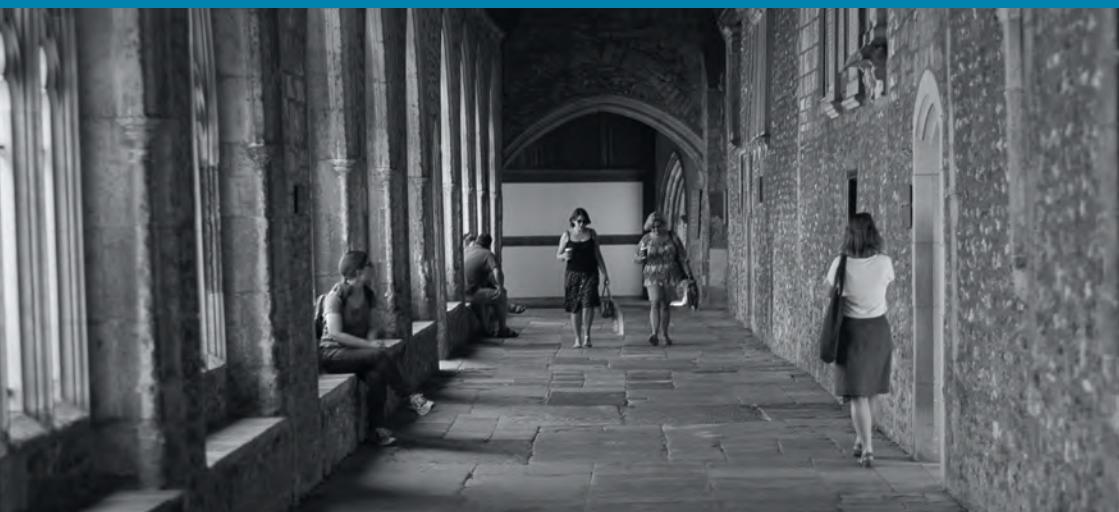
If you know of someone (a Chichester resident) who might benefit for a small grant then please contact Mark Payne.

TRUSTEES

Earlier this year we welcomed Sue Bowers as a new trustee. Sue tells us she's found her first few months a rewarding and interesting time. She's made it a priority to meet as many of our volunteers as possible and really appreciates the work they put in on a daily basis. On a few occasions she's even been able to don an apron and cook some breakfasts herself! Sue says what a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere has been created in St Pancras Hall where guests can chat with friends and volunteers. It is obvious the guests enjoy their daily breakfast, and the 'Heart Café' means a great deal to them. She's found it a real privilege to have been invited to join the team and would urge anyone with a few hours to spare to volunteer as well. Even one morning a month would be greatly appreciated, and she's sure you would find it very rewarding.

We say goodbye to Dan Slatter whose term of office as a trustee shortly comes to an end. Dan has been a tireless supporter of HEART behind the scenes, providing no end of wisdom and know-how to help keep the charity running smoothly. We ask God's blessing on him for the future.

We also welcome the appointment of Vanessa Baron as our new trustee. Vanessa is Canon Treasurer at the Cathedral and has special responsibility for the care and interpretation of its fabric and treasures, a role that seems to include everything from leading services to scrubbing floors! She will bring wisdom and a fresh perspective to HEART and we look forward to having her on board.



PRAYER REQUESTS

VOLUNTEERS

As always, a very big 'Thank You!' to our volunteers for all the work they do at the breakfasts and behind the scenes. One of our trustees recently got a first-hand glimpse of this when he dropped by to help. The volunteers worked amazingly hard and there was a great atmosphere.

With 30 guests coming for breakfast, other things happening and only two volunteers available, you can imagine what a hectic morning it was!

It was great that a couple of guests came to lend a hand, but the big lesson was that to run smoothly and build the friendships with guests that are central to HEART's aim we need a bigger team of volunteers!

There's always lots to pray and give thanks for. Here are the things at the top of our list:

Volunteers and funding – there is an ongoing need for both if we are to continue our work.

St Pancras – thanks to the church fellowship for offering HEART use of hall for the next two years.

Wisdom and safety – we're working with vulnerable people often with challenging lives.

The wider community – that HEART might be a witness to the local community and for good relations with our neighbours.

Other organisations working with the homeless – CDC, Stonepillow, the Four Streets Project, the police, etc.

FUNDING

It costs between £4,000 and £4,500 a month to keep HEART running. This is the cost of salaries, rental, insurance and food etc. It may not sound a lot, but it's enough to give both our Treasurer and our Administrator a regular headache!

We were therefore very relieved that two of our recent grant applications were successful. Generous grants from the National Lottery Community Fund and St John's Trust Chichester will help cover our costs for the next few months. But they will only go so far in helping to keep HEART running.

We are therefore continuing to appeal to local churches and individuals, who have a heart for the homeless people in our city, to consider making a regular donation to support HEART's work. By doing so, you can help ensure that we can continue to provide the friendship, support and prayer so many desperately need.

If you would like to donate, here are our bank details. A donate button is also available on our website
www.heartchichester.church/donate/

Chichester HEART For Homeless
ACCOUNT: 00033349
SORT CODE: 40-52-40

Thank you!



**If you'd like to sign up to receive our
newsletter directly, click this link and
sign up using the google form:
<https://forms.gle/nu44Eha7bf9esNdv9>**



CHICHESTER HEART
FOR HOMELESS

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