

LEAMINGTON NIGHT SHELTER

Registered Charity No. 1153583

P O BOX NO. 6213, Leamington Spa, CV31 9LA

Margaret Moore and Chris Johnson, Joint Coordinators

0771 868 3531 07743 697 802

FEBRUARY 2016

Dear Supporter

Thank you for your wonderful continuing support – the Night Shelter would not be what it is without you.

Over the Christmas period the generosity of local people, churches and organisations was truly overwhelming in terms of donated goods, money and our volunteers.

2015 has been another busy year. We continued to open on Wednesday and Sunday nights at the Radford Road Methodist & United Reformed Church giving hot food, shelter and warmth. Clients come to us with a variety of needs and we tried to help wherever we could. We gave out food parcels, clothing, toiletries and Foodbank forms; accompanied clients to Court when requested; and assisted with form filling. We also made phone calls on clients' behalf to different authorities such as mental health organisations and Warwick District Council.

There does seem to be a greater depth of need among our clients as a result of benefit changes. We do not get involved in politics, but we do see the effects that Government policies bring. As well as a greater demand for food parcels, during this year there has been a marked deterioration in our clients' emotional health which, in turn, affects their ability to cope with practical day-to-day survival.

In terms of the numbers of clients coming to the Night Shelter, we had a total of 261 different clients coming to us from October 2014 – September 2015. We estimate that the number of rough sleepers included in this figure is 59. The average number of different clients coming along each *month* is 81; the average number of clients each *evening* is 30; and an average of eight people staying overnight. However, in the weeks running up to and over the Christmas period the average number of people staying overnight rose to twelve.

During October 2015 we were involved with the rough sleeper count and it was good to highlight findings with the relevant authorities. In fact the average number of rough sleepers we had during October 2015 and December 2015 was 27

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LEAMINGTON NIGHT SHELTER is a Company Limited by Guarantee Reg. No. 7028980

This is a Christian initiative arising from
Poverty and Homelessness Action Week 2008 and Hope Leamington

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We also undertake individual outreach work from time to time with clients that have more complex needs. Since our last Newsletter this has included helping a client to obtain better living conditions. We were also able to improve one client's mental health state by helping with his home situation. One of our volunteers also gave a lot of help to one immigrant who has now found work and a place to live. Involvement in outreach work can sometimes take many months, but we keep alongside our clients in their plight until there is some sort of resolution.

During the year we had a visit from the Food Standards Agency and the Leamington Night Shelter was awarded a level 5 hygiene rating which is the top grade. This is all down to our fantastic volunteers. Our thanks go to Kat in particular – her previous experience meant she was able to give us good advice in this field. One of our clients said: *"The best food in Leamington is at the Night Shelter; the trouble is you have to be homeless to get it!"*

The last twelve months have been really inspiring in terms of peoples' generosity. During September/October we received a lot of donations from various Harvest Festival collections. A number of local churches regularly donated food, clothing and toiletries to the Shelter as well as financial assistance.

Another term at Warwick University meant some excellent students came on board with us as volunteers. Over the years since we started we have had very good relations with the University, and we are grateful to Jenny Watson and her team at Warwick Volunteers for the support they have given us.

If you were to describe in one word what we do, we think it would be "hospitality" which sums up all that we offer: food, shelter, warmth and friendship.

Thank you all again for your continued support, especially everyone at Radford Road Methodist & United Reformed Church, and we look forward to another year of having the privilege of serving those in need.

A very Happy New Year and God bless you all.
Margaret and Chris

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