

LEAMINGTON NIGHT SHELTER

Registered Charity No. 1153583
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May 2014

Dear Supporters

Thank you for all the great support you have given us. We continue to open for our clients on Wednesday and Sunday night each week. Thankfully, over this winter, the weather has been kinder to us. Although it has been a very wet winter, and our clients have had to struggle with the rain, the temperature has at least, never reached below zero. This has meant that we did not have to open any extra nights at the Free Church this winter, as we did last year.

Some of our homeless clients have now managed to get accommodation, and we have recently contacted other organisations to help our clients in this respect. However, we are concerned that the proposed benefit changes are going to put pressure on the more vulnerable members of our society - to be able to continue paying the cost of their accommodation. Also, there does seem to be a greater call by our clients for food and clothing. Over the period of October 2013 – March 2014 we have known of 49 different rough sleepers. Of these, we have had an average of 8 different clients staying overnight each night of opening together with further average of 20 different clients coming for food and company each night.

In November last year, we had a visit from the Mayor of Leamington (Cllr Judith Clarke) and her consort, Steve. She said that she was most impressed with the Leamington Night Shelter. We were pleased that Judith and Steve helped us by serving our clients during their visit. In February we had a visit from our local MP Chris White. He too, said he was impressed, especially with the food and the friendly atmosphere of the Shelter. We of, course, could not do all of this without the help of our wonderful volunteers, and it can seem to be slightly chaotic at the Shelter, especially over the busy time between 9.00 pm and 10.00 pm, but as one of our volunteers said recently “even when it doesn’t work, it seems to work!”

At All Saints Church in Leamington, during the months of March and April there was a display of a sculpture of two homeless people; this sculpture had been borrowed from Coventry Cathedral to raise the awareness in Leamington of the problems of homelessness. We took part in a number of public meetings in connection with this display, and this has led us to forge new links with other organisations. We would like to thank Margaret Middleton for organising this display, and for raising the awareness of homelessness in Leamington.

Two more things, if you would like to receive your Leamington Night Shelter newsletter by email, please do let us know at the following email address: chris@cjohnson.name – and as some of you know, we are now a Registered Charity, and you can, if you wish, gift aid your donations – back dated to 24th September 2009! – We have forms available.

Many thanks to the Town Council for supporting us with a substantial grant this year and a big thank you to all who have supported us in so many different ways. Best wishes to you all.

Margaret and Chris