

Volunteer Meetings

Unfortunately due to the Corona Virus outbreak we have had to postpone all volunteer meetings for the foreseeable future. It is uncertain when we will be able to restart but here are the dates for the autumn period:

Tues 8th September 12.30 – 2.00pm

Sat 31st October - 10.30am – 12noon

Weds 16th December – Christmas Social – time TBC

All regular meetings will take place upstairs at St Andrews.



Homeless?

We might be able to help:
Call 07828 041152

Once more we have been amazed by the support in this very challenging time and a huge THANK YOU GOES TO:

The many individuals who have donated food.

Aaron James, kitchen manager from the Crown Pub for donating food and cooking takeaway breakfasts every Wednesday.

Devizes Food and Drink Festival for their donation of £300.

Devizes Lions for recently granting us £500.

Jeannette von Berg for her very generous donations of food and drinks for our guests, and PPE for staff and volunteers.

Damion Godwin from Devizes Running Club for the Easter Eggs, which went down very well indeed!

Devizes Rough

The Newsletter of Devizes Opendoors
Spring 2020 - COIVD 19

How things have changed!

Update from John Saunders

The national introduction of frequent hand washing and the 2 metre rule in March meant we needed to change the nature of our sessions drastically. So, from 3rd April only Hilary or one volunteer went to the parish rooms to cook meals and these were just for rough sleepers. This has happened three times a week and the food has been taken by a volunteer to a pickup point at the Wharf carpark, where they and Angie have distributed it. The number of people turning up to these Wharf sessions in April has ranged from just two to eight, with the average being 4.8. In addition to a cooked meal, people have picked up Foodbank referrals, a bag of food items, laundry tickets and their post. It is good that they have also been able to meet, phone or email Turning Point, the Probation Service or the County Rough Sleepers team. Due to the energetic efforts of the County team, the number of rough sleepers has declined over April. Several are now temporarily housed elsewhere, which is great. (See update from Angie on Page 2.)

So, in May, whilst continuing to offer support to rough sleepers, Opendoors is turning its attention to others who haven't homes of their own, those who are sofa surfing, or sleeping in vehicles and boats or in local hostels. A team of local volunteers, Alfie and Amber Fletcher and Allegra Della Ragione, (collectively know as Pandemic Pizzas) have offered to make fresh pizzas for us and these will be distributed to our local homeless from the Wharf car park.



This will be an opportunity for them to talk (at a distance) about how they are getting on and about anything they would appreciate help with. It might develop into a telephone support system, providing one or two phone numbers that can be texted or rung for just a chat or for help with something specific. We hope to offer pizzas again later in the summer!

Because of their age or underlying health condition (or both) many volunteers have had to withdraw from face-to-face sessions during this pandemic. We look forward to when they will be able to play their part again. In the meantime, we are very grateful to Hilary, Angie and those volunteers who have been doing a really great job over the last couple of months. Due a special mention are the cake bakers, the meal makers, those delivering the hot food down to the Wharf, and those doing shopping trips. It really would have been impossible without you.

We are all finding new ways of making contact with others and of playing our part in the community. Please feel free to get in touch when you think you would like to start (or re-start) helping the homeless. Please also get in touch if you have an idea of two you would like to suggest. Just text or ring 07828 041152, or email: coordinator@devizesopendoors.org.uk.

Team Contact Emails

For information on any of the items in the newsletter please contact us by email.

- **General Volunteer Enquiries:**
volunteers@devizesopendoors.org.uk
- **John —Chair of Trustees**
admin@devizesopendoors.org.uk
- **Hilary—Coordinator**
coordinator@devizesopendoors.org.uk
- **Angie—Deputy Coordinator**
info@devizesopendoors.org.uk



Other Useful Numbers

County Housing Options
01225 718005

Impact (Turning Point)
01225 341520



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What We Usually Do

Devizes Opendoors runs a Drop In Centre at St. John's Parish Rooms, Long Street three times a week, and one session a week on a Thursday afternoon at St Andrews. With no statutory funding it relies on grants, donations and fund raising. It serves more than 50 hot meals a week, provides a safe meeting place, friendship and support for homeless and vulnerable adults.

In Other News...

Quiz Night at Devizes Museum

We are delighted to say that our quiz night, (which took place just before lockdown was imposed) raised a total of £344, which is much needed funds for our coffers. Thanks very much for the time and effort put in by the organisers, Philippa Morgan and Declan Sweeney.



Our Guests

We are all extremely concerned for the welfare of our guests in these unprecedented times, and the fact that we are able to offer a contact point and hot meals three times a week is a lifeline to the most needy. Angie, who attends the Wharf Car Park three times a week to supervise the meal distribution wanted to let you all know what has been happening to some of our 'regulars'.

Five out of our nine main rough sleepers have been placed in temporary accommodation, either hostels or supported housing. Three in Salisbury, one in Chippenham and one in Cornwall. All are coping well with the transition and are receiving help from the local housing, probation service and Turning Point. The remaining four guests are still in Devizes. Two in tents at different locations to each other, one sleeping rough and occasionally sofa-surfing and the other one is still on his dilapidated boat which is deemed unfit for human habitation. Two are quite keen to be helped by the local housing team and are in the process of contacting them; the other two do not wish to be helped at this time.

AGM

Obviously our planned AGM was unable to go ahead, but existing trustees met by video-conferencing and (following the Constitution section 13.5) were pleased to announce the appointment of new trustees Sue Buxton, Jonathan Hunter and Alix Thomas, whom we warmly welcome. We must also express our sincere thanks to two trustees who stood down, Andy Geddes and Jacky Thomas.

Area Board Grant

Earlier in the year we applied to the Area Board for funding for some new IT equipment and kitchen equipment. We were awarded the money that we had applied for, on a match fund basis of course, meaning that Opendoors pays 50% of the cost. We have been able to purchase and set up three new Chromebooks (a type of laptop) for staff and volunteer use and it is hoped that when we return to more normal format that we will be able to keep more electronic records of our guests to help them improve their long term circumstances.



As the kitchen at St John's is not working at any thing like full capacity we are holding back on spending on the range of kitchen equipment, but as and when circumstances change we will do this.

Volunteer Training

Unfortunately all of our group training sessions for the spring and summer period have had to be cancelled. We do hope that circumstances will allow us to put on a full programme as usual in the autumn. We will of course keep you updated. If anyone has any ideas for new training please let Hilary know.