



# NEWSLETTER

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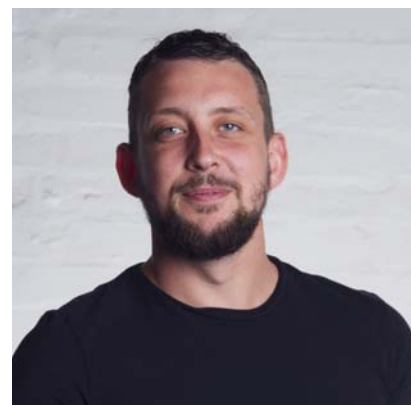
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## Message from our Head of Operations

Welcome to our Easter newsletter! After a long and difficult year, we are starting to see some positive signs in the fight against Covid. To combat the pandemic locally we've been working with the Local Authority, Public Health, NHS test and trace and the Department for Health and Social Care.

We converted our dining room into a space to run a lateral flow Covid testing pilot and in February hosted a Covid vaccination hub at the Good Shepherd for people who are experiencing homelessness and the people that support them. We're proud to have played a part in such vital initiatives.



The numbers of people having to sleep on our streets has decreased to the lowest levels ever and it's been heart-warming to see people who have slept rough for decades move into their own homes. In a time of real difficulty, seeing people who have lived on the streets for so long reconnected with their families, in safe and secure homes, and starting to move forward in their lives has been inspiring and has reminded us all of the reasons why we do the work we do.

No one should have to sleep on the streets in this day and age and this has proved that with the right resources, support, and partnership working we can end homelessness together and provide people with the opportunities they deserve. At the same time, we have record numbers of people in emergency accommodation and new people presenting as homeless every week. We need to maintain this momentum and ensure that support is available for people at an early stage to prevent further homelessness.

Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club and the Wolves Foundation have been long time supporters of our work and we have been delighted to be asked to link up with them on the new "Feed Our Pack" campaign. Food poverty is a serious issue in our communities and the extra support will help us and other providers in the city meet the need.

We are looking to the future with cautious optimism and have some exciting plans for the coming year. I hope this finds you well, and on behalf of everyone at the Good Shepherd, I wish you a happy Easter.

## Easter Message from the Brothers

Easter is the high point in the Christian year and even with the virus restrictions, we try and celebrate as best we can. The Easter message is of amazing hope replacing near despair. For us at the Good Shepherd there is now a real reason to hope. If the national and local Covid picture continues to improve, we should be able to see a gradual opening up of all of our services later in the year.



Looking further ahead, in 2022 the Good Shepherd to the homeless and needy will celebrate 50 years of service to Wolverhampton. We are looking forward to marking this anniversary.

Everyone at the Good Shepherd would like to congratulate Brother Michael who has reached the anniversary of 55 years as a Brother with the Saint John of God Hospitaller Services. Brother Michael, who has been with us in Wolverhampton since last August, has helped people all over the world over those 55 years, including, prior to joining us last summer, in Malawi.

## Message From Helen Holloway - Admin/Finance Manager

The Good Shepherd has grown from a soup kitchen into a charity that wants to tackle both food waste and hunger. For many people, cooking facilities are limited or non-existent so we are mindful of this when preparing food parcels. Keeping a roof over their heads and paying the bills leaves very little money to eat. Waking up hungry for many is normal so we are committed to breaking this cycle and ensuring we can offer high quality goods which have a nutritious value.

Our Head Cook Louise is passionate about the quality and versatility of the food she cooks, ensuring the meals are packed with fresh healthy ingredients. Our family food parcels are prepared providing daily fruit and vegetables and store cupboard essentials so families can cook around five meals each week from what they receive.

The last 12 months have been challenging for all staff, but we feel proud that we have been able to stay open, adapting to the regulations to continue to serve food on a takeout basis and delivering a range of other services.

The food service remains the bedrock and foundation for establishing links with people in need and creating a relationship of trust from where we are able to help them in other areas. So, the continuing donations of food and funds are absolutely vital to our service.

Thank you for your support.

# Good Shepherd Featured on Midlands Today

The Good Shepherd's work as part of an overall city-wide team effort to support rough sleepers was featured on BBC's Midlands Today, who spent a day filming with staff and service users before compiling their report.

Midlands Today reporter Joanne Writtle spoke to the Good Shepherd's Head of Operations Tom Hayden, Housing First key worker Paul Burns and one of our service users Neil, who had previously been rough sleeping on and off for the last three decades.

Rough sleeping figures have fallen following the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic when the government's 'Everyone In' campaign saw many different charities and agencies work with the City of Wolverhampton Council to provide emergency accommodation.

The Good Shepherd was one of those charities and has helped many of those who were put up in a hotel to find their own accommodation over the last 12 months.

Government figures released recently based on one night each year showed there was a 62% fall across the West Midlands from 2019 to 2020.

"After Covid arrived, we had all the homeless people of Wolverhampton under one roof and all the different agencies were able to step in and deal with all the issues and all the problems," said Paul.

Neil, who has been supported by the Good Shepherd, is now in his own accommodation having initially been brought off the streets to a hostel.

"This is a chance to look forward once again with better things to come - I can't wait," he said.

The full report can be viewed on the Good Shepherd's website -

<https://www.gsmwolverhampton.org.uk/support-for-rough-sleepers/>



# 50 Years of Good

Next year will mark 50 years since the Brothers of the Good Shepherd first set up in Thornley Street, to help the homeless and vulnerable in Wolverhampton.

And we are starting the commemorations early, with a '50 Years of Good' fundraising campaign this summer encouraging people to take on a challenge of their choice to help the Brothers take their incredible work into a second half century!

The Good Shepherd has certainly been on a 'Journey Of Change' over the last 50 years, and that will continue as we adapt both now and in the future. From June 7-July 26, we are encouraging our supporters to focus on some form of fundraising activity and be part of our journey.

Could you Walk for Good? Run for Good? Cycle for Good? Swim for Good? Covering a certain distance during that 50-day period? Be that 50 miles or a distance which is higher or lower depending on circumstances?

If you are at school or at work or are part of a sports team, church or faith group, could you think of a challenge which everyone could do to both support the Good Shepherd and build up team spirit? If home-based, maybe something focused around exercise? Dance for Good?

The journeys which our service users take from a life on the streets to rediscovering their feelings of self-worth and becoming part of the community are always different. No journey is the same. And so, no fundraising activity is the same either! The more the merrier when it comes to fundraising ideas and all we ask is that it takes place during those dates mentioned.

And for those who would love to support us but maybe prefer the easy life, you can donate to '50 Years Of Food' via our Big Give campaign, by clicking here <https://donate.thebiggive.org.uk/campaign/a051r00001epdI7AAI> and deciding on your donation.

Please feel free to send us your fundraising ideas, emailing [office@gsmwolverhampton.org.uk](mailto:office@gsmwolverhampton.org.uk) or putting them on our social media using the hashtag #50YearsOfGood

If you are going to set up a fundraising page to encourage people to support you, please click here <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/50yearsofgood> to add to our campaign page on Virgin Money.

Please consider joining us for 50 Years of Good this summer – and help take the Good Shepherd forward into a new half century!



# ART ATTACK!

The art class run at the Good Shepherd has been able to continue during the pandemic following all the necessary Covid-19 regulations and various plans are in place to exhibit the fantastic work that is being produced.



A pop-up exhibition was going to be set up as part of the British Art Show 9 which had selected the University of Wolverhampton and Wolverhampton Art Gallery among its venues for 2021.

Unfortunately, the show had to be postponed due to the pandemic but has been rescheduled for next January to April and the Good Shepherd are still hoping to be involved.

Members of the art class have also been learning and developing their photography skills, including by taking part in a project around urban waste.

Participants are collecting waste and redundant objects which are then photographed in the studio with advice given on the photography, lighting, and post-production techniques before delivering a small public exhibition.

The art classes, run by local artist Chris Manley and former Good Shepherd service-user Leanne, have also taken place at the Newhampton Arts Centre situated a few minutes' walk from the Good Shepherd.



One of those attending has revealed just what a positive difference the classes have made.

"The Good Shepherd have been really good and supportive and brought some hope and happiness to the nosedive of my life," he says.

"I've had it rough for a long time and they've helped me ease the pressure of a stressful life by allowing me to do the art class.

It helps me find balance within my chaotic life by taking a step out and doing something productive while learning a skill – it's good for the soul, man!

And the staff are all supportive and want me to succeed so I have nothing but gratitude and thank-you's."



# Covid Testing and Vaccination on Good Shepherd Premises

Vulnerable residents from Wolverhampton and the staff who support them have received their first Covid-19 vaccinations on the premises of the Good Shepherd in the City Centre.

The Good Shepherd linked up with the City of Wolverhampton Council and the Wolverhampton CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) to host the day-long session which saw over 200 service users and staff receive their first dose of the vaccine.

As well as the Good Shepherd staff and service users, Wolverhampton Homes, P3 and St George's Hub also attended as part of the overall vaccination programme aimed at protecting local people from the worst effects of the virus.

And this follows a previous link-up with the council where the Good Shepherd hosted two pilot sessions of rapid testing for Covid-19 to help identify asymptomatic cases.



“We were really pleased to link up with the council and CCG and several other charities and agencies whom we already work closely with to host a day of vaccinations,” says Tom Hayden, Head of Operations at the Good Shepherd.

“People who are homeless face additional barriers to accessing healthcare, so we were really pleased to be able to welcome them to the Good Shepherd and provide access to the vaccination, advice around Covid and to do it amongst people they know and in a venue they feel comfortable.

Service users were able to attend with their support staff who could talk them through the process and the benefits of receiving the vaccination and the added protection it can give them against the virus.

It was a busy day, but ran very smoothly, and that was thanks to the fantastic organisation from the council and CCG and excellent teamwork between staff from the charities and agencies involved.”

The previous rapid testing days also proved a success, with a large number of Good Shepherd staff and service users tested as part of the overall strategy in Wolverhampton to reduce the spread of the disease.

Leon Barrett, Team Leader at the Good Shepherd and one of several members of staff who received training to help administer the testing process, said "It was important for us to be involved in this pilot scheme and it worked really well.

It was really beneficial to work closely with council staff who were delivering the tests, and the trust we have with our clients meant we were able to talk them through the process and once they realised the importance of being tested, many were happy to take part."

All who received their first jab of vaccine at the initial session at the Good Shepherd will also be invited back for the second dose which gives further protection against the worst symptoms of the virus.

**Client Quote: Lawrence**

"I spent three months in a hostel in Aldridge before being referred to the Good Shepherd regarding moving on and finding my own place to live."

"I met with Tina and Leon from the Good Shepherd who assessed my needs and within two weeks of meeting them I was offered a room in a big house."

"I moved into the house just before Christmas and was assisted with bedding and shopping to help me settle in."

"I have now been living there for three months and in that time, I have managed to get myself a job – I have never been so happy in my life!"

"I would like to thank the Good Shepherd and their housing team and support with my debt collection letters and making sure that everything in the property works as it should."

**Client Quote: Christine**

"There is genuinely not a single word I can think of to begin trying to explain the gratitude I have for Dawn and the Good Shepherd or how to say 'thank you' at the level I would like."

"I can't describe the lengths you have gone to help me reach my goal and after all my problems to help me into my own accommodation. You truly are an angel."



# Can you help with regular giving?

In the next 12 months the Good Shepherd anticipates a large increase in the number of individuals and families who will need to access our services for both food and basic items.

We understand the difficulties and challenges people face when left with little money to keep a roof over their heads, pay bills and to eat.



For families, it is imperative we provide both fresh and store cupboard essentials which can be used in preparing meals at home from the range of items we provide.

We will produce recipe cards and host cookery classes so we can pass on our knowledge around cooking on a budget with staple ingredients.

For individuals we want to provide both a hot meal and have other store cupboard essentials which can be given out and used to combat hunger.

Would you be able to commit to a monthly regular donation, of whatever value? If you're able to help then please get in touch. We see first-hand the effects of many struggling from financial poverty and we want to ensure we can continue to meet this need.

Monthly donations give us the financial stability needed and allow us to plan for the future so we are here for the people that need us.

For more info, please call us on **(01902) 399955** or email **admin@gsmwolverhampton.org.uk**

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