

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2021

Message from the Brothers Christmas will soon be here, that special day and season at the end of the year. For Christians and indeed for many others it is a time of great joy and celebration. It's also a time when we tend to look back over the past and look forward to the future.

For all of us associated with the Good Shepherd the coming New Year of 2022 is especially significant: it is the 50th year since the Brothers came to Wolverhampton in 1972 to begin our work with the homeless and others in need. We plan to mark the year with various events and activities. We will be looking back over the last 50 years as well as looking to the future.

The Good Shepherd mission to support the homeless and others in need has seen many changes over the years since 1972. Inevitably there have been ups and downs. The work has faced challenges of all kinds (most recently the worldwide COVID pandemic). Many different people have been involved with the work – different generations of Brothers, benefactors, staff and volunteers. There have been changes of location – from Thornley Street to Darlington Street to Waterloo Road. There have been different ways of organising our provision of immediate, practical help and long-term support.

The past 50 years have seen many, many changes and improvements in society but problems of homelessness, poverty and need of all kinds still exist in Wolverhampton as elsewhere.

We very much hope our efforts have made some improvement, small or great, in the lives of the many people who have passed through our doors over the past 50 years. Looking ahead, we are always seeking new ways to help our struggling brothers and sisters. We certainly plan to continue our work as long as we are needed.



Tom Hayden - Chief Executive

It has been another extremely busy year at the Good Shepherd. We stayed open throughout the whole of the pandemic adapting our services so they were Covid secure. In August we fully reopened our dining room, shower and laundry facilities, and started to welcome agencies back into our multi agency hub.

Between the 1st of April and the 30th of September 2021, 728 people accessed our service for food, advice, guidance, or support. During this period we provided 9032 hot meals, 8258 individual food parcels, and 1098 “shopping trips” at our new community pantry for families.

It's not just about the food and practical support we provide, we've now expanded the services we offer and last year supported over 50 people into their own accommodation including 27 people housed through the Housing First scheme.

There have been positives during what's been a very difficult time for us all, including buying our building and securing a home for the charity, the outstanding art exhibition put on by people that use our services and our meaningful activity team, the Molineux sleepout in November, and most importantly large numbers of people who had slept rough on the streets of Wolverhampton supported into their own accommodation and given the opportunity to live the life they deserve.

Since the pandemic started we've had people present to us that hadn't had to access services before, and during each lockdown we had a spike in demand which really stretched the charity and our team. We couldn't have met the demand without the dedication and commitment of our supporters, volunteers, and partners, so a huge thank you to everyone that contributes to our work in Wolverhampton. It's a team effort and we couldn't be here for the people that need us without your contributions and support.



ART EXHIBITION: RECOVERY IS FOR EVERYONE!



The Good Shepherd's art exhibition, Recovery is For Everyone returned to the Light House in September for Recovery Month. Our first large scale exhibition was in 2019 and proved a fantastic success. This year's exhibition highlighting the work of people going through journeys of recovery surpassed all expectations.

Works of art and photography from participants in the Good Shepherd's weekly art classes were exhibited alongside work from local emerging artists and students and alumni from the University of Wolverhampton. It was a thought-provoking exhibition that championed artists that are in recovery from addiction and mental health issues. The exhibition was officially opened by Good Shepherd ambassador, Natalie Graham. The launch event also featured a powerful testimony from Paul Huggett, who had previously experienced homelessness and addiction. Paul shared his inspiring story of recovery from a life-threatening addiction to his current job as a peer support lead with the Hepatitis C Trust.

Other Good Shepherd ambassadors Niall Farrell, Jack Kirwan and Jaki Graham were also present to show their support on the night. The Mayor of Wolverhampton, Councillor Greg Brackenridge and local MP Stuart Anderson were later visitors to the exhibition and met with the artists and other Good Shepherd service users in recovery from addiction and homelessness.

Kate Penman, project worker at the Good Shepherd, organised the exhibition and is a key player in the art and photography group. The group is led by established artist, Chris Manley, and former rough sleeper and now team leader, Leanne Hayes, alongside Good Shepherd project worker Stephen Hughes.

"The art groups offer a safe space for people to come and talk and share any issues whilst also giving people the opportunity to express themselves creatively," says Kate. "For many people who are in recovery or going through different problems in their lives, finding a new interest and an outlet to express their feelings can be a hugely important part of their journey.

"While it is a chance for expression, it is also a chance for people to be valued. My favourite part of exhibiting is when the Good Shepherd artists see their work in the exhibition for the first time. It's framed, and in a gallery space for the public to see and they're blown away by that. Their work and stories are important. Being in a professional exhibition at a wonderful venue like the Light House is a powerful statement and validation of their worth.

"Exhibiting at the Light House, has given us an incredible opportunity to tell hidden stories and share talents which were previously unknown and share them to a much larger audience"

Recovery Near You and SUIT were also involved with the Recovery Exhibition and like The Good Shepherd are also part of the Wolverhampton Mental Health Forum. The NHS CCG wanted to raise awareness around mental health and homelessness ahead of World Mental Health Day and World Homeless Day in October. They invited the Good Shepherd to move the exhibition to the Mander Centre Community Hub as part of their awareness raising campaign.

The city centre venue meant many shoppers would venture in to look at the pop-up gallery. It prompted a lot of open and positive conversation around mental health issues. It also ensured that the work had a presence within the City on World Homeless Day and World Mental Health Day on October 10th.

For Leanne, who is now studying for a degree in Fine Art at the University of Wolverhampton, the exhibition was very much a labour of love.

"It's amazing to be part of this event and the fact that I'm helping to run it has really helped me in my own development along the way," she said.

MATTHEW'S STORY - SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR

The pandemic has provided huge challenges for so many people, not just connected with the Good Shepherd, but across the community in general.

Sadly there have been so many people lost to Covid-19, or suffering serious and lasting illness from the virus, and the effects both financially and on mental health are expected to continue.

Amid such as devastating time, there were however several stories which emerged of how people supported by the Good Shepherd and other charities and agencies in the city were able to use such a difficult period to turn their lives around

The 'Everyone In' initiative, funded by government and then organised locally by the City of Wolverhampton Council, saw all rough sleepers offered a place in a local hotel and given access to both food and a wide range of support services from different organisations, including the Good Shepherd.

One of those was Matthew, who had previously spent time in prison and was begging on the streets of the City Centre. He didn't know which way to turn.

But having been given accommodation, and access to support, slowly but surely Matthew's situation began to improve, particularly with the help of Good Shepherd project worker Ram who helped him onto the Housing First programme where people with complex issues are given accommodation and then the advice and guidance to be able to move forward.

"I was a long-term heroin and crack cocaine user for over 20 years and on the streets for long periods of that time," Matthew explains.

"I had been in prison and came out clean but then a relationship broke down and I went back to the drugs.

"I was in a really bad place with my mental health, using all kinds of stuff, but then someone told me there were people helping the homeless at the Redwings Hotel.

"I went down there to have a look and staff told me 'yes, we can help you, we can give you a room and help you with all your support needs and connect you with the people you need to be connected with'.

"At the start, to be honest, I thought it was too good to be true.

"There was no pressure put on me, I was honest with everyone who I was speaking to, and we started working together to see how things went."

Things went well, very well, to the extent that Matthew, after coming through a serious bout of pneumonia after leaving the hotel, is now in his own accommodation, has been clean for nine months, and is volunteering with the SUIT charity in Wolverhampton.

For his project worker Ram, the transformation has been remarkable.

"The transformation in Matthew's journey has been marvelous, from the minute we first started helping him in the hotel to where he is now, in his own flat, is amazing."

What the transformation has also achieved has included Matthew being re-engaged with his family, and now looking forward to a much brighter future.

"I couldn't have turned things around any better really, and it feels like now I have got something to live for, every single day."

MOLINEUX SLEEPOUT RETURNS

Foundation

MOLINEUX SLEEPOUT

Staff, volunteers and supporters of the Good Shepherd are once again spending a night under the stars as the Molineux Sleepout returns for 2021.

Across the night of Friday November 12th, residents of the city have been invited to sleep outdoors in the Stan Cullis Stand at the fundraising event organised by Wolves Foundation.

All funds raised will be shared between the Good Shepherd and the Foundation's work with the vulnerable across the city.

The first ever Molineux sleepout in 2019 proved an inspirational experience for all who took part and raised a fantastic £50,000 between the two charities.

With restrictions associated with the pandemic in place last year, the sleepout went 'virtual' with participants encouraged to sleep in their gardens or set up camp indoors away from their beds with another £13,000 raised.

The Good Shepherd are extremely appreciative of the backing they receive both from the Foundation and from supporters who take part.

Tom Hayden, CEO at the Good Shepherd, says: "We are both delighted and hugely grateful to Wolves Foundation for the opportunity to link up once again for the third Molineux Sleepout.

"It is such an important event which highlights not only the need to support vulnerable members of our society but also the fantastic community spirit in Wolverhampton where so many people want to help.

"We know how tough the pandemic has been for so many people – and still is – and at the Good Shepherd we are proud that we have been able to stay open throughout, providing food and support services to those who need us.

"There have actually been some remarkable success stories of people who have managed to make substantial positive changes to their lives over these last 18 months and that has only been possible thanks to the incredible generosity of the local community and partnerships with organisations such as the Wolves Foundation."



HOUSING FIRST NEWS

A new approach to supporting those most at risk from homelessness in Wolverhampton and the Good Shepherd have been part of a pilot of the scheme to assess how it works in the city.

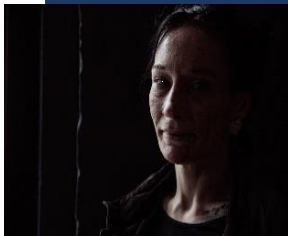
The concept of Housing First is based around seven key principles that everyone has a right to home and flexible support for as long as it is needed.

The scheme, piloted in the West Midlands, Liverpool, and Greater Manchester. Housing First is a nationally recognised intervention for people who have experienced homelessness, have multiple and complex disadvantages, and have been excluded and failed by existing pathways and services.

People are given accommodation and then assigned a project worker to deliver one-to-one support to help them stay and thrive in that accommodation, with the Good Shepherd working with partners Wolverhampton Homes to deliver the scheme on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council and West Midlands Combined Authority.

This partnership has housed 45 people so far since 2019, including one who had been rough sleeping for three decades.

We spoke to two of those on the programme, Samantha and Julie, to find out more.



Samantha's Story

I had been homeless for about seven years on and off. I have known Paul Burns at the Good Shepherd since I was little as he knew my Dad, and he knows how much I have struggled.

That is why he has never ever given up on me, and gradually I have started to work with him.

I had become that used to living on the street that it was difficult having my own flat, but Paul helped me to settle in.

I am still working with addiction, but I am trying, and Paul keeps saying he wants to get the normal Sam back again.

Without this flat I would be homeless, but now I have something that we can make into a home.

I have been really low in the past, but they are helping me, and I honestly don't think I would still be here without that support.



Julie's Story

When I first came to meet Dawn, I was a bit nervous and a bit wary because I didn't know her and with what has happened to me, I find it difficult to trust people.

When I came out of jail, I was on the street for two-and-a-half years, sleeping rough in old buildings or on benches.

It's not easy on your own, I had to look after myself, and have had people bullying and picking on me which has left me feeling paranoid.

It got to a stage where I really needed to do something about it because all I was thinking about was my next fix.

When I came to the Good Shepherd, I told Dawn all about myself and with her and Paul (Burns) we built up a friendship and worked hard to get where I am now.

I have got a nice home, am really happy and settled, and very grateful for what they have done for me, I just want to have a normal life.

MARTIN THE MARATHON MAN!

A huge congratulations go to Martin Evans, from the University of Wolverhampton, who completed the London Marathon to raise money for the Good Shepherd.

It was Martin's first ever Marathon, and he produced a superb effort to complete the distance in just over six hours and raise almost £1,500 for the Good Shepherd.

"I recognise all the good work the Good Shepherd does supporting the homeless in Wolverhampton and wanted to help out," says Martin, who works as a principal technician within the Wolverhampton School of Art.



I'M SO DIZZY MY HEAD IS SPINNING!

Fundraising activities often take on all shapes and sizes, and the Pure Gym Wolverhampton South got creative with their challenge by getting 'on their bikes' for a 24-hour spinathon at their Birmingham Road site.

Participants were able to book themselves in for one-hour slots – or more if they preferred – between 6pm on a Friday and 6pm on a Saturday – with Good Shepherd ambassador Natalie Graham popping in to get the event officially started.

In total over £1,500 was raised for the Good Shepherd.

"For me this was about giving back to my home city and the Good Shepherd do such a great job supporting the homeless and vulnerable in Wolverhampton," said CEO of Impact Fitness and event organiser Sam Gordon.



WALKING FOR GOOD!

The St John Henry Newman Cluster of four Catholic churches in Wolverhampton and Walsall took on a sponsored walk which raised £6,000 to be shared between the Good Shepherd and their ceiling fund.

A total of 53 people took part in the walk which included buffet and worship at the end.



Thanks to all who have taken part in fundraising initiatives and supporting the Good Shepherd. If you think you can follow in their footsteps and take on a fundraising challenge please email us at office@gsmwolverhampton.org.uk

MAKING A NEW START

Linking up with Wolves Foundation for regular football sessions has become a part of a new initiative aimed to helping offenders escape from a cycle of re-offending and undergoing a series of prison sentences for petty crime.

The 'New Start' project is literally that, offering ex-offenders a new start with a wraparound programme of support tailored to each individual's circumstances and ambitions.



This has included becoming involved with football sessions run by the Foundation at their Arena in Aldersley, including linking up with colleagues from the P3 charity in Wolverhampton.

"It is all about offering person-based support based on the individual because everyone is different, but with the shared overall aim of reducing re-offending," says Good Shepherd Project Worker, Neil Booth.

"Having that safety net for people coming out of prison is crucial – they know they have someone here for them if anything goes wrong."



NEW BUILDING

With thanks to a £275,000 grant from the Eveson Charitable Trust, generous fundraising from the community of Wolverhampton, and an interest-free loan from St John of God Hospitaller Services, the Good Shepherd has purchased both 63 and 65 Waterloo Road for the total sum of £600,000.

The charity, supporting the homeless and vulnerable in Wolverhampton, had been renting number 65 Waterloo Road but now owns 63 allowing it to shape a longer-term strategy to provide a variety of support services for people from across the city.

BIG GIVE CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN



Thinking of making a donation this Christmas? For one week only The Big Give will be hosting a Christmas Campaign, from 30th November to 7th December and during this period donation made up to £5,000 will be increased by the fund to help us reach our £10,000 target

<https://donate.thebiggive.org.uk/campaign/a056900001txOyMAAU>

GOOD SHEPHERD CHRISTMAS SHOPPING LIST

Cereal, Long life milk, Biscuits,
Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Chocolate,
Squash, Jam, Coffee, Hot
Chocolate, Tinned Meat, Tinned
Fruit, Tinned Vegetables, stock
cubes, curry sauces, crisps, pot
noodles, olive oil, Shampoo,
Shower Gel, Toothbrushes,
Toothpaste, Washing Up Liquid,
deodorants and Soap

**All items can be dropped to
65 Waterloo Road | Monday-Friday
8-11am OR 2-3pm**

Many thanks for your support

Thank You

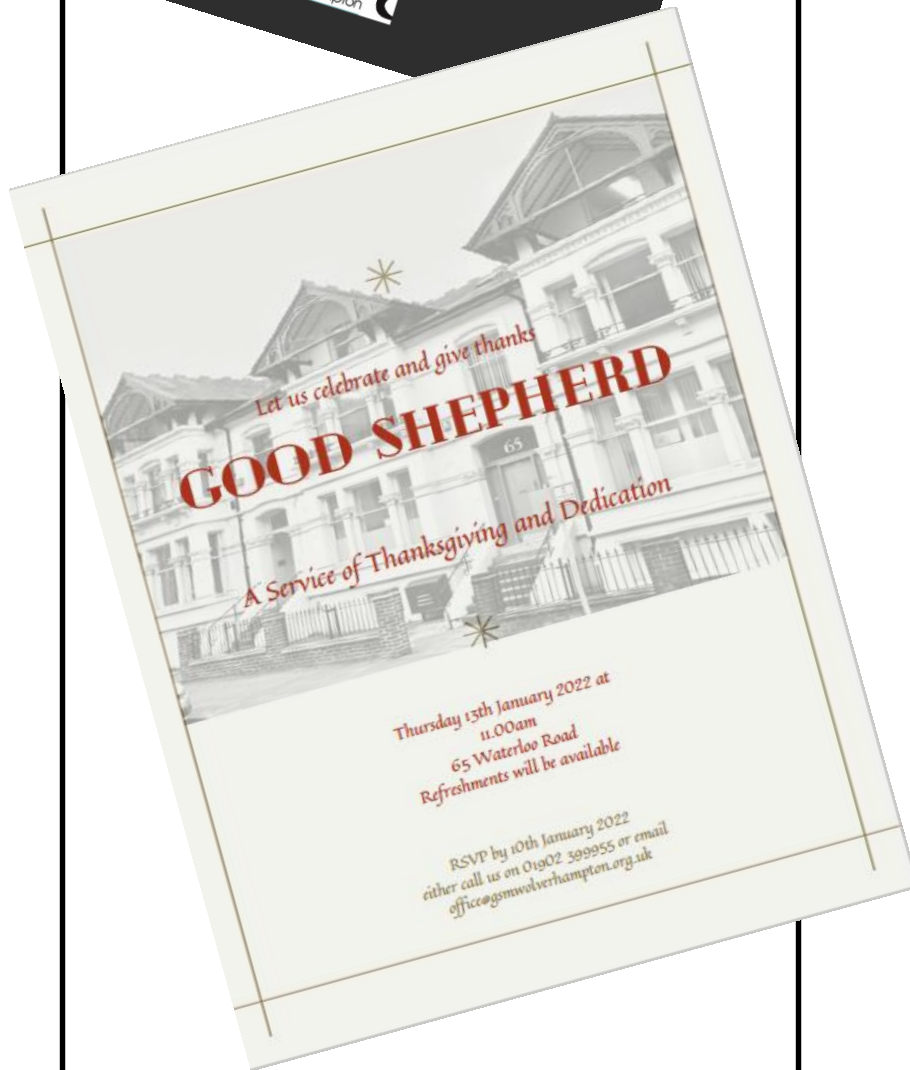




ST PETERS CHURCH WOLVERHAMPTON
WILL BE HOSTING..

GOOD SHEPHERD'S ANNUAL ADVENT CHRISTMAS SERVICE

MONDAY 29TH NOVEMBER AT 6:30 AT ST PETER'S CHURCH
WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU
ALL WELCOME



Let us celebrate and give thanks

GOOD SHEPHERD

A Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Thursday 13th January 2022 at
11.00am
65 Waterloo Road
Refreshments will be available

RSVP by 10th January 2022
either call us on 01902 399955 or email
office@gsmwolverhampton.org.uk