

**GOOD  
SHEPHERD**

wolverhampton

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SPRING  
NEWSLETTER  
2024





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# UPDATE FROM OUR CEO

## Welcome to our Spring newsletter!

2023 was another busy year for us as we continued to support people impacted by the cost of living crisis and worked with people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage in Wolverhampton. Unfortunately, in 2023 we saw an increase in demand with over 1300 people presenting at the Good Shepherd for practical support, advice, and guidance. 225 of these individuals were families accessing our family food pantry and 1100 were single people accessing one of our various projects.

On a positive note, in 2023 we supported 131 people into training or education, 11 people into employment, prevented 149 people from becoming homeless, and worked with 39 people with a long term history of rough sleeping to access and sustain accommodation through the Housing First project.

We couldn't continue to meet this need without our supporters, so a huge thank you to everyone that has been involved in or supported our work in Wolverhampton by donating, volunteering, or sharing our stories and campaigns. You're a crucial part of the Good Shepherd team and we're needed now more than ever.

In November, the Molineux Sleepout was once again held to raise vital funds for the Wolves Foundation and the Good Shepherd. Turnout was fantastic and we received £25,000 to go towards our work ending homelessness, supporting recovery, and creating pathways out of poverty. Thank you to Will, Tom, and our friends at the Wolves Foundation for linking up with us again to spread awareness and raise much needed funds to support people in our city.

In February we launched our new projects, Central Community Shop and Pomegranate social enterprise coffee shop. You can find out more later in the newsletter but if you're in Wolverhampton please pop in, say hi and grab some lunch or a cup of coffee while you're there!

We have some exciting projects coming up this year including a new art exhibition in partnership with local artists and our friends at SUIT. To stay up to date with our work please follow us on social media or get in touch and ask to be added to the mailing list.

Wishing you all the best for 2024

**Tom**



# OPERATIONS MANAGER UPDATE

I am delighted to be able to contribute to the first Good Shepherd newsletter of 2024, but not as delighted as I am to be here at the charity, whose work I have admired from the outside for so many years.

By way of introduction, my name is Lee Smith and I started as Operations Manager at the Good Shepherd back in September 2023.

I have really enjoyed my first six months and feel very privileged to be able to work with the staff and the clients that we engage with and feel deeply passionate about ending homelessness and helping to provide pathways out of poverty.

Having spent 16 years 'over the road' with the Wolves Foundation, Wolves' official charity, most recently as Senior Manager for Operations, I got to know the Good Shepherd very well via the various partnership initiatives that the two charities have linked up on.

It's not just me that admires the work of the Good Shepherd, my 9-year-old daughter Francesca is very keen to help and has already carried out several fundraisers of her own. She was also there rattling a bucket when Robert Plant asked the Good Shepherd to set up a stall at The Halls – formerly the Civic – ahead of his concert in December. I am sure I will be calling on Francesca's services again going forward!



I have to say the team of staff and volunteers at the Good Shepherd is every bit as good a place to work as I could have hoped for. Everyone has been brilliant in my first six months, showing an amazing attitude and all the values of the charity which will help us move forward and push closer towards hitting our collective goals.

Seeing the charity in action over Christmas was a real eye-opener in terms of how staff and volunteers go above and beyond at such a busy time, and the incredible kindness of the community in making donations and wanting to help those across the city who are less fortunate. I think we can safely say that the Good Shepherd 'team' extends not just to people within the building but also the members of the public who have been so generous over so many years.

I think it is important for staff to 'put their money where their mouth is' when it comes to fundraising. So, I have decided to take on a mammoth challenge of my own by taking on eight 'Blaze' gym workouts, back-to-back, to raise funds for the Good Shepherd. For those that may not know, Blaze is a full body workout which combines cardiovascular training with strength, boxing, and martial arts techniques, creating a unique, high intensity workout. I had planned to this in April but unfortunately have suffered an injury which means I will have to postpone for now. But I am definitely planning for it in the future and hopefully doing my bit to bring in some funds to support our work. Watch this space! And let's see if I can do as well as Francesca!

Anything anyone could donate would be much appreciated: [Good Shepherd Services](#)  
[Wolverhampton: Blazeathon \(enthuse.com\)](#)

Thanks to everyone I have met for giving me such a warm welcome and I look forward to meeting more Good Shepherd fundraisers and supporters over the coming months.

**Operations Manager - Lee**

# COMMUNITY SHOP AND CAFE LAUNCH



At the Central Community Shop, open 10am-2pm from Tuesdays to Thursdays, for an annual membership fee of £3 you can then purchase affordable food and toiletries all the year around.

The Pomegranate Café, open 10am-2.30pm Tuesdays to Fridays, offers great coffee, snacks and lunches with the added bonus that all proceeds are invested back into the Good Shepherd's free-to-access food and support services.

The new project was officially opened with a launch event in February - pop in and see us when you can!

Have you tried the new Central Community Shop or Pomegranate Café yet?

Based in the historic Queen's Building in the City Centre next to the bus station, we are delighted to be heading up an exciting new project in partnership with Wolves Foundation and the City of Wolverhampton Council.



## FOOD SERVICE

With over 23,000 hot meals served in 2023, our team of staff and volunteers have been working hard to meet the considerable growth in demand for the Food Services. Being able to sustain this would not be possible without the invaluable support from various food partners and businesses, alongside the generous donations we received throughout the year from our local community. We are sincerely grateful to our army of dedicated volunteers who contributed an astonishing 5445 volunteering hours to Good Shepherd in 2023 in a variety of roles and projects.

Often our first point of contact with clients, the Food Service offers more than a meal; we continue to work with a number of local partners to offer support and advice in many forms and working towards our aims to end homelessness, support recovery and create sustainable pathways out of poverty.



## SUNDAY LUNCH

The Good Shepherd Dining Room will once again be opening its doors to the public for our popular Sunday Lunch. This takes place on Sunday 14th April at 12.30pm and the cost will be £15 per person for a three course Sunday Lunch. Please contact the Good Shepherd office on 01902 399955 to book your place.





## Danny's Story



Very few recovery journeys are linear. For people experiencing homelessness and addiction, even when they possess a strong desire and determination to move forward, there are often obstacles. The traumas which have often prompted their lives to move in a painful and unwanted direction are extremely difficult to shake off.

That is why, at the Good Shepherd, no one is ever judged. And no one is ever given up on.

A difficult childhood saw him already battling drug addiction from a young age, and, even being caught by his parents injecting into his groin, didn't prove a sufficient deterrent

Periods of sustained drug abuse and spells in prison followed, alongside being able to work for a living, but in 2000, he was attacked from behind with an iron bar during a theft, spending a long period in a coma before being rehabilitated at the specialist Brain Injury Unit in Birmingham. That has left its legacy in terms of affecting part of his speech and movement, and there have been many times since where he has either been locked in a cycle of addiction and homelessness, or trying to come off drugs and move forward.

Now though, Danny has come through several months of a sustained move forward.

Aiming to overcome his addiction, he has, under the guidance of a team of people including Good Shepherd Key Worker Paul Burns, and the Housing First project which provides specialised support to people within their own accommodation, made substantial progress.

"The life I have had before, it's just exhausting, there was nowhere to go to escape from it"

A monthly injection of Buprenorphine, which counters his dependence on heroin, and a desire and determination to engage has seen Danny not only start to pick up the pieces of his life, but be able to take his own decisions and feel like he is making a positive contribution.

At times Danny was street homeless, at others he has been in hostels, but only for short spells has he ever felt in control.

More recently however, the coming together of different charities and agencies has put a package of measures in place which have brought more positive news

“It feels like I have got my life back, 100 per cent, like a different person,” he says.

The Good Shepherd deliver Housing First in partnership with the P3 charity which recently provided Danny with some supported accommodation.

The Recovery Near You charity have also been there to help and provide advice through the addiction, with the probation service also on hand for additional guidance, and a specialist nurse administering his treatment.



Paul & Danny

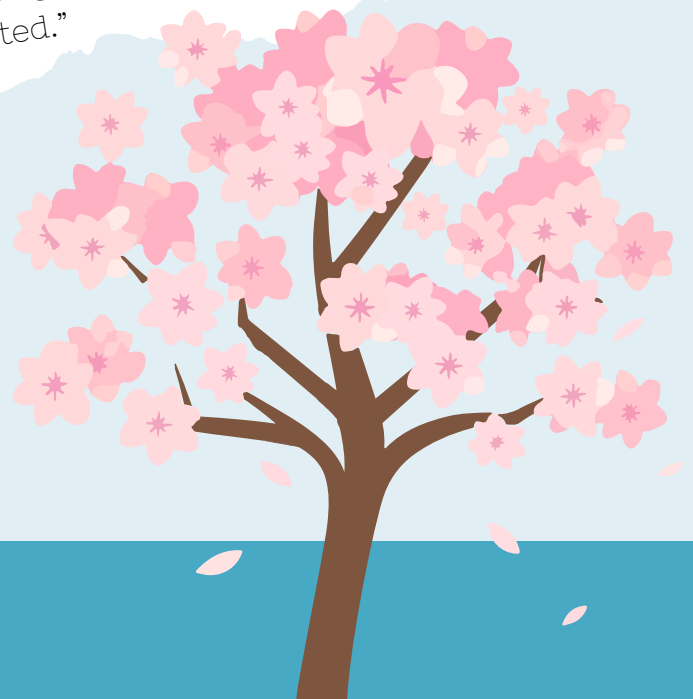
“For all the years I have been working in this area, I think this is one of the most spectacular examples of progress that I have seen,” adds Paul

The results of the multi-agency support have been both considerable and hugely positive, and Danny has now become a service user volunteer, working in the Good Shepherd dining room.



Louise & Danny

“I feel like I have something to look forward to, and something to get up for every day for and be motivated.”



# GEESE THEATRE COMPANY

Geese Theatre Company is a charity, based in Birmingham, that works nationwide in criminal justice and social welfare settings. In January and February 2024, they delivered a project at Wolverhampton Art Gallery which culminated in a performance, *Out of Darkness Cometh Light* which premiered at Newhampton Arts Centre.

This project is part of four-year funding from the Arts Council England enabling Geese to deliver projects in HMP Oakwood, work with artists from Wolverhampton interested in criminal justice work and work in the community with people who have experience of the criminal justice system.

Andy Watson, Geese's Artistic Director and the company's lead practitioner on *Out of Darkness Cometh Light* said, "The welcome and support we have had from the Wolverhampton community has been phenomenal. For the community project we worked in partnership with SUIT who provided amazing levels of pastoral support to the group. We also must acknowledge the team at the Good Shepherd for their support, all the staff at the Art Gallery, the team at Newhampton Arts Centre and everyone in the audience who attended the final performance. Our work is about using theatre and drama to provide hope, to offer opportunities for change and growth and to enable people who might traditionally feel marginalised or excluded to have a voice and a space to be heard. We are delighted that this project has been so successful and well received and excited to think about how we harness the momentum and deliver future projects in the Wolverhampton area."



Two of our LEAP volunteers, Steve and Akram took part in the project and production.

**"Geese Theatre taught me awareness and gave me confidence. It really surprised me how easy it was to create bonds with relative strangers. The cast all had experience of the criminal justice system, so we had something in common but by the end of the rehearsals and the production we had become like family. I can't put it into words but I'm grateful for the opportunity. I would encourage anyone to do the Geese Theatre. It is life changing." - Akram**

**"My experience with the Geese Theatre has been a once in a lifetime experience which has helped me heal, to find peace within myself. I am not alone. Many of us share experiences that have been difficult to understand and hard to forgive. I am very grateful for the opportunity provided to me. I believe this has made me a better person." - Steve**



T H E A T R E  
C O M P A N Y





# ART COUNCIL FUNDING



It is with great delight that we can announce that The Good Shepherd has been successful with our Arts Council funding application.

We attended Creative Black Country's funding workshops that helped us put our bid together and we have been awarded funding for a large-scale exhibition for Recovery Month in September this year. Recovery Month is held to increase awareness, challenge stigma, and celebrate the success of those in recovery from all addictive behaviours. We have widened the remit to also focus on recovery from homelessness and mental health issues.

The Good Shepherd has partnered with SUIT (Service User Involvement Team), Recovery Near You and the University of Wolverhampton to produce artwork for the upcoming exhibitions in September. The funding has allowed us to run a diverse selection of creative workshops at Studio G5 at Newhampton Arts Centre. There is something for everyone in our sessions and we are already at maximum attendance.

The first workshop kicked off on January 12th with illustrator Charlotte Webb, an artist who has lived experience of addiction herself and who has been an absolute delight to work with. Charlotte shared her story with the group and is six years sober which inspired everyone in the group on their own recovery journeys.



Kate, Charlotte and Sally have shared powerful stories of recovery and just how art can have such a positive impact on people's lives.

Please look out for our monthly podcasts sharing the experiences of artists and service users as we work towards our exhibitions in September. The workshops have been having a massive impact on both the artists and service users and we are so grateful to Arts Council England for making this all possible.



# A MESSAGE FROM THE BROTHERS

Easter is the greatest feast of the Christian year when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from death. If its really true, there are some amazing consequences: Jesus is always with us, as he promised, as our protector and friend; he will help us follow him in a life of service and love; death is not the end for ourselves and our loved ones.

At Easter we specially remember this great hope. We still have to get on with our daily lives with their problems and difficulties as well as the good times, but whether we are enduring or enjoying life, we can always look forward to something better to come. We may not feel it all the time but the 'Easter glow' is the constant backdrop of our lives.

At Good Shepherd we pray that all who come through our doors may experience in some way, the joy of Easter.



# DATES FOR THE DIARY



March 31st –  
Easter Sunday

April 14th –  
Sunday lunch

June 20th –  
West Park walk

September– Recovery  
month exhibition



# Good Shepherd Shopping List

- Long life milk
- Tinned meat
- Curry sauce
- Gravy granules
- Sandwich filler
- Pot Noodles
- Cleaning products
- Tin foil & cling film
- Easter treats
- Spaghetti
- Jam
- Ketchup
- Sugar
- Coffee
- Hot chocolate
- Toiletries

**Items can be dropped at:  
65 Waterloo Road**

**Monday-Friday 8-11am or 2-3pm**

**Thank you for your support**

