

CTH Reports Sept 2023

Homelessness /Asking for Help Group. Report 12th September 2023

Meeting with Steve Nash & Racheal Felts from Harborough District Council. Housing Service Managers. Service 27th June 2023.

- **640** people presented as homeless to the council in the Harborough District last year.
- The main reasons for people presenting as homeless locally is domestic abuse, relationship breakdown and eviction as a tenant from a private rental property. We are not here talking about the so called 'street homeless.'
- There are currently **18 – 19 families in emergency accommodation**. There is a priority to house pregnant women and families with children. Single people are not as highly prioritised. Single men who present locally as homeless often have a 'suite of issues' which need to be addressed (of which homelessness is but one).
- The emergency accommodation is out – sourced i.e., to Travelodge/ self - contained units (a bit like air b n' b) where **12 families are currently housed** across Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Warwickshire. HDC sometimes responds to requests from other councils to accommodate people temporarily.
- **The Rough Sleeping Initiative** is based in Loughborough. Several local councils including HDC contribute financially to this. North - West Leicestershire District Council lead on this initiative. Leicestershire has signed up to The Homeless Charter.
- **HDC has NO housing stock currently** and no prospect of acquiring any.
- To present homeless to HDC it is imperative that the person has a local connection, however, the council's Housing Team is always happy to talk to anyone on the phone who may present as homeless here. There is a legal obligation for the council to at very least provide advice.

- HDC is always on the lookout to lease empty houses, old Manses etc.

Steve Nash suggested looking at what Churches Together in Oakham are doing to support homelessness through a Charity based in Peterborough called Hope into Action.

<https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/>

Hope into Action is a registered charity it has been in existence since 2010 whose unique purpose is to enable churches to house the homeless. Meeting with Rev Simon Aley St Giles Church 30th July 2023. Maureen Douglas and Liz Mills attended a service of Thanksgiving for the work of Hope into Action in Oakham. At present Churches Together support two houses offering accommodation & support to homeless people for ranging from those recently released from prison, refugees, families and woman in an abusive relationship. They have a paid support worker who helps residents with benefits, health, and other pressing issues. Voluntary support & befriending is encouraged from the local churches. Problems do arise at times with the residents but they are usually dealt with satisfactorily. Hope into Action will provide a speaker to come to a meeting to promote the work of the charity.

Meeting with Natalie Buchanan Community Manager from Falcon Homeless & Community Support. 4th August 2023.

Falcon Support Services have join with Beacon Care to create a Community Hub to offer information and support with

Homelessness, Tenancy, Form Filling, employability, harm reduction, recovery aftercare, Benefits support and signposting.

They are based at 10 Fairfield, Market Harborough open Tuesday - Friday 10-4pm, 01858 374949 email:

harboroughhub@falconsupportservices.org.uk

Natalie has offered to speak at a CTH Forum meeting on the work of Falcon.

An update on The Cube: September 2023

The Cube has seen a busy summer of activities for local young people and their families, including a Summer Spectacular fundraising event aimed at younger children, which included summer crafts, face painting and a treasure hunt. For the older young people, weekly activities to suit all tastes included survival skills, water games and a family BBQ.

Monday, 11th September saw a range of people from different areas of the community, local churches and organisations attend an open meeting to celebrate and see at first hand the work that the Cube is doing. The occasion also saw the official opening of 'Eden,' the counselling caravan, which after a major, imaginative re – furnishment is being well used as a welcome additional counselling space. A recently created wellbeing garden was also on view which helps to create an oasis of calm beside the caravan.

The new school year has seen youth workers and counsellors going back into Welland Park and Robert Smyth Academies to run drop - in lunch time sessions as well as continuing to run the open access group on a Wednesday evening. The counselling service is now well established, a year after it was re - established to offer counselling sessions to young people, providing a much needed service.

Please continue to pray for the team who work at the Cube, running and overseeing its various activities and services for our local young people, for its continued funding and for God's blessing on its plans as it moves forward.

Janet Smith, Trustee.

Jubilee Food bank Report for HCT September 2023

Jubilee AGM

18th July Catholic Church 30/40 supported by Everest Lounge. This was a really lovely event all the Frontline volunteers and referral agency teams were invited -approximately 40 attended and refreshments were provided by Everest Lounge Indian restaurant. Liz, Tony and Jordan presented details of our work and figures for the previous year and then there was a chance to network and get to know everyone.

A really nice opportunity to share news of our work and to get to know people as many work in isolation and also to say thank you with a little bit of a social.

August Summary

We have helped 265 households this year so far that is 2,610 people.

August 2023 is the month with the highest referrals so far in 2023.

Yet again, CAB made the most referrals (34), with Beacon/Falcon hub (30) a close second. Renew Wellbeing Café in the Baptist Church (11)

Pensioner referrals remained low, with only 5 in August.

We continue to see several households using us as their “weekly shopping trip”

We also continue to see a few “returning households”, i.e., households who have gone several months without a referral but have now come back.

Store Report

Donations of food into the store baskets have been really down this month and we are having to subsidise and buy in goods to enable the full range of foods to go into bags. The goods that we are missing are being advertised widely on social media and this is having some impact.

Website & Social Media

These continue to be developed and improved – an advert is going into the Commercial break magazine soon to try to reach out to a wider demographic.

Emma our social media volunteer was on Radio Leicester recently advertising the foodbank and requesting help – it was really excellent.

Vouchers

Fresh Food vouchers for the market place meat and fruit and veg are continuing to be used when appropriate.

Vouchers for hot meals at Blue Wave and Master Fry are continuing to be used regularly and increasingly as they are so useful for people housed in the Travelodge and the homeless. Father Chris has also ‘bought’ some Blue Wave vouchers for the Catholic Church to use in emergency situations.

Community Fridge

Some of the donated items that cannot be used are being taken regularly to the community fridge; which is also always an option for offers of food that cannot be processed by the foodbank, for example after the Shambala festival left over food was donated by festival goers and food franchises and this was taken to the community fridge at The Village which Jubilee advertised on our website and the food was gone in the next few days.

Welcome Event Planning

We are planning a big welcome event to reach out to people in need who may not know about the foodbank, or know that they can use it. A provisional date of Saturday 21 October (in the morning) was set for the event to tell people how to get a parcel, which would include giving anyone who attended a few items along with a leaflet about how to get help in future.

We will investigate venues and availability.

Publicity will be on HfM, Harborough Mail, noticeboards in churches, the market, the library (places that the older generation might visit) plus social media posts aimed at younger friends/relatives with a message along the lines of “do you know someone that needs help/ would benefit from a food parcel?”

Community Collections

We are planning on a new campaign to encourage community groups to collect food – whether junior football- street communities like Willow Crescent or community Choirs etc.

Storage space for Harvest and Christmas collections

Conversely we are also planning for extra storage space during the more fruitful times of harvest and Christmas collections, that saw us swamped at the food store last year, so we are looking for free temporary extra storage spaces, if anyone has any offers or good ideas that would be useful.

Property Lease

The property we were hopeful of leasing is still being negotiated and we don't have an outcome. In the meantime we are still looking for a bigger and better property to house the food store and potentially be viable for people to pick up their own food parcels and perhaps even be given some on site support. If anyone has any ideas they would be gratefully received.

Cook food donations

The Manager of Cook food in town has offered 30 free frozen meals a week for struggling or vulnerable people. For instance she used to live in Leamington Spa and Churches there cooked the frozen meals and served them to people at the warm welcome hub every other week.

Jubilee are not able to accept this kind offer as we cannot manage frozen food; and likewise The Village also cannot commit to staffing a freezer and managing the meals. If any Church could make use of this offer, the manager Samantha has said that she is happy to manage these on an ad hoc basis and even offered her drivers to deliver food. Contact me if you feel that you can use these and I will put you in touch with Samantha.

Trussell Trust

I have visited Lucy Freeman at Lutterworth Villages Foodbank to discuss being part of the Trussell Trust; and Jubilee are inviting the area coordinator of Trussell to our next meeting to ask further questions to bring to our discussion about joining this organisation or not.

Homeless Food bags

Last meeting I handed out an emergency bag of food for the homeless to all the Churches in CTH- does anyone have any feedback about these- have they been used, have you needed to request more. Is there anything more useful that we could offer?

REPORT ON HOLIDAY AT HOME AUGUST 2023

Holiday at Home is run by a group of volunteers under the auspices of Churches Together Harborough at the Methodist Church on Northampton Road. It is aimed at any senior citizens living in Market Harborough and the Bowdens of any religion or none who would otherwise not be able to go on holiday because of finance, loneliness or infirmity. It costs participants £6 per day to help cover the cost of the lunch. Free transport is provided for those who need it.

This year Holiday at Home took place from the 7 August to 11 August inclusive. There were 47 participants during the week (an increase on last year). Some attended every day and others just a few days. Altogether there were 25 volunteers on a rota basis with some coming each day and 32 volunteer speakers, musicians and activity leaders as well as volunteers from the Methodist Church who cooked a meal on two days.

The programme for the week ran as follows:-

- Coffee/tea/biscuits on arrival
- One hour of a choice of three activities per day. This year it included art, carpet bowls, beetle drive, quiz, cooking demonstration, craft making, arm chair yoga, board games, talk by Leicestershire Wildlife Hospital.
- One hour talk or music session ('My Life as an Auctioneer', U3A Ukulele band, The Old Friends musical group and KUPE, a group of local musicians which include flute, ukulele, mandolin and guitars as well as the human voice.
- A two course lunch with tea/coffee.

The feedback was very positive. One participant told us it was the highlight of her year and one woman explained that her husband was now too frail to go anywhere and that this really was a 'Holiday at Home' for them both. He loved the art sessions which gave her the opportunity to take part in other activities.

A very popular talk this year was from a local woman about her journey to transition from a man. Those listening treated her with sensitivity and kindness.

Participants included those accompanied by a carer or needing a mobility scooter/walker to get around and those with vision impairments as well as the elderly well and active.

It is wonderful to look around the room when the participants are having coffee or their lunch to see them chatting, smiling and laughing together. At the end of the week they were exchanging telephone numbers. It makes us, as volunteers, feel it is very worthwhile

We consider Holiday at Home to be an important community initiative which enables senior citizens to come together to make new friends and undertake new experiences which lifts their spirits and confidence.

The following letter was given to the volunteers by a blind participant.

"Thank you all for making this week so good. It has been a great way of bringing those of us who may not have had a holiday together. I have enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones.

The hospitality given by all has been excellent. Hearing a familiar voice event before coming in meant a lot to me. Then just knowing there was always a helping hand available when needed

There's more I could say but hope this sums up everything. Thanking you all again"

Carole Baldam

Hon Treasurer, Holiday at Home