CTH Homelessness/Asking for Help Group Report 2023 - 2024

The CTH Homelessness/Asking for Help Group has not met during these last months but has been involved with information gathering and engaging with services who are involved with helping the homeless and vulnerable in our local community.

Last summer the group requested a meeting with the council to find out what it is doing to help and support homeless people and to provide the council with a summary of the group's activities as local churches working together. Representatives of the group met with Steve Nash, Harborough District Council's (HDC) Housing Service Manager and Rachael Felts, Head of Customer Services and Community Partnerships, who gave us a snapshot of the local picture on homelessness. The headline statistics were then reported to the CTH Forum.

Steve also mentioned the **Hope into Action** charity https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/ based in Peterborough and one with which Oakham Churches Together are involved. This charity provides accommodation for the homeless and aims to empower the Church to respond to homelessness. Two members of the group investigated the charity further and attended a service at Langham Church to find out more.

It is true to say that the group has experienced some ongoing frustration and challenge about how best to help homeless people and those who ask for help locally. Hot food vouchers continue to be distributed through the Jubilee Foodbank and most churches hold emergency food bags. Going forward it seems logical that the group continues to work ever more closely with the Jubilee Foodbank and other local organisations 'on the ground' to meet the needs of the homeless and vulnerable in our town.

Janet Smith