

# Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness

JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

Special Edition



## MESSAGE FROM MATT HATTON



"What a journey we've been on over these last few months! I am immensely proud of the way that KCAH has responded in these exceptionally

challenging times. Kingston Council has turned to the faith community and voluntary sector for help in caring for the homeless during this crisis. This is because in an emergency, we can generally respond the quickest and get things done. It's a great opportunity to put our faith into action!

Back in late March, the government directive was to suddenly close all night shelters and day centres for people rough sleeping and focus on getting 'Everyone In'. KCAH became the single point of contact and, to date, we have assisted 120 people into safe accommodation.

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## THE JOEL CENTRE

KCAH is taking on the daily running of the Joel Centre, based right next door. Joel is a key part of our 'In For Good' strategy to make sure that those being supported by KCAH in a local hotel, do not return to homelessness once the pandemic is over.

Plans are moving forward to turn the Joel side of the building into a temporary 'stabilisation centre' which will provide accommodation and clinical support for up to 7 people with acute addiction and mental health needs.



We greatly miss Joel's founder, the Rev'd Peter Holmes and we are determined to continue his legacy and vision. As a faith-based organisation, we will ensure that Joel remains a centre for some of society's most broken people in desperate need of our love, care and compassion.

'Everyone In' - our COVID-19  
Impact Report on page 2

# KCAH COVID-19 Impact Report

## 'Everyone In'

Since the 'Everyone In' directive on March 26th...

**120**



We have helped place 120 people into accommodation who would otherwise be homeless, so that they could safely self-isolate.

87 volunteers have worked 881 hours helping clean our buildings and delivering meals to vulnerable clients during lockdown - an equivalent saving of £9,471\*

At the London Living Wage of £10.75\*

**87** Volunteers



**881** Volunteer hours



**24**

successful 'move-ons'

We have helped facilitate the move-on of 24 people into more appropriate accommodation.

**120**

People supported



We have given advice and support to 120 people to claim welfare benefits and make homelessness applications.

*"Thank you to the amazing staff and volunteers for the food deliveries. It helps me and my little boy so much!"*

*Clients and Tenants say...*

*"I'm very thankful to the staff and volunteers who have helped me through this hard time - I would have been stuck without them due to my COPD."*

*"None of this would get done without KCAH. There would be a LOT more stranded people and lost souls than there already are in Kingston."*

*"I want to show my appreciation to the volunteers for making sure I have all the necessities during lockdown."*

*"You saved my life. You are absolute angels - I can't thank you enough!"*

## **Message from Matt Hatton**

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KCAH night shelter workers have been kept on to help run this project safely and we have been supporting some particularly vulnerable people. We have achieved this on very limited resources and it has been intensely tough - notwithstanding the opposition that we inevitably face for such a project.

However, I am really privileged to work with colleagues who are passionate and committed to their work and step up on every occasion. We are also blessed to have a 650-strong volunteer support base. It is largely thanks to them that KCAH has been able to work so dynamically and overcome the logistical problems thrown our way.



Collaborative working has been essential, particularly in respect to food supply and delivery. Special thanks to our key partners, Kingston Foodbank and Voices of Hope. Also, a big thank you to all churches and schools who have so effectively supported our work during these times in so many ways. The challenges keep coming!

Our focus, now, is to try to ensure that as few people as possible return to the streets with the strategy of keeping people "In For Good". Travelodge accommodation is only available until end of September at the latest, so we are currently grappling with how we continue to help and support over 100 people. It's an immense challenge.

We need to be able to keep people safely accommodated so that they can overcome the traumas that may have caused their homelessness in the first place. We want to help them maintain a tenancy and develop crucial life skills. Maybe even rediscover long forgotten talents and passions.

Through your vital support, KCAH can continue to be today's Good Samaritan, picking up that broken, beat-up person invisible to others, left lying at the side of the road. We can be the innkeeper who invites and welcomes the weary, offers a warm and loving community, where food and life is shared.

KCAH was set up in 1993 by the local churches to address homelessness in Kingston. Christian support and influence is so pivotal to all that we do and has helped us grow as a charity. Our Christian roots have enabled us to widen our support base beyond the churches into the broader community. Everyone has a role to play. Homelessness must be stamped out and we need your support more than ever. Thank you for giving it!"

**Matt Hatton**

**KCAH Chief Executive Officer**



# Stephen's Story



KCAH was able to step in and help when he was signed off sick and had 6 weeks with no income. Then, in 2019, he became a supported housing tenant with the KCAH Access Project.

Jhoana Serna is the Asset Coach for the Access Project. She said, "It quickly became clear to us that Stephen has a real love of history and a talent for writing. He soon became one of the driving forces behind the tenant newsletter which gave him a true sense of purpose. We are hoping that he will be able to contribute to a new Access website that's in the pipeline."

Stephen became homeless in 2018 after losing his job falling into rent arrears following problems with his housing benefit claim. In October last year he was diagnosed with COPD, a chronic pulmonary disease, rendering him unable to work.

Stephen said he's very grateful for all the support and opportunities he's been given, "KCAH has been taking the burden of dealing with all the hassles that central and local government create and I've been totally free to pick up other commitments or responsibilities at my own speed."

## PLEASE PRAY FOR

- All those in housing crisis at this time in Kingston.
- The KCAH staff and volunteer team.
- Plans to use the Joel Centre for the most vulnerable.
- Those self-isolating in unsafe homes.

## A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Have you considered leaving a gift for KCAH in your Will? KCAH is dependent on donations and even a residuary gift of 1% in your Will can make a huge difference. Please visit: [www.kcah.org.uk](http://www.kcah.org.uk)

Please remember to mention our Charity number: 1075890

## PLEASE SUPPORT US

Visit [www.kcah.org.uk](http://www.kcah.org.uk)

Click '**Donate Today**' button or visit our '**Can You Help**' section to find out about volunteering or how to donate items.

**Thank you so much for all your support!**