



# Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness

May 2016  
*Warming up!*

## Bringing hope and support to homeless people in Kingston

### Your prayers are asked for:

- Suitably qualified applicants for our two job vacancies
- Jan Ganney, following her retirement after 7 years' service with KCAH
- The remaining staff, who are under greater pressure

### Pilot Winter Night Shelter

A total of 13 "entrenched" rough sleepers were given shelter by local churches during the month of February. Our thanks to the estimated 150 volunteers, from churches, statutory services and Kingston University, who made the shelter possible.

Many of the guests reported an improvement in their personal safety/security, their physical health and a reduction in their substance misuse. One guest was accepted into the Joel Project and is now in residential care, one got a better job and was able to start renting, another is hopeful of securing supported housing for his mental health. Sadly, one guest has since died.



Podiatry and dental treatment were provided during the month.

A 5-page evaluation of the Night Shelter is available on our website or can be provided on request.

### News Round Up

KCAH urgently needs to fill **two vacant posts**— a Housing Adviser (part-time) and a Housing Support Worker. Details are available on our website. Closing date for applications is 12 noon Friday 27 May.

There have been some recent delays, but we are confident that KCAH's **move to St Peter's Church Norbiton** - to work alongside Joel Community Services - will still take place in the summer or autumn of this year.

The Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) has started the process of **commissioning**, rather than grant aiding, services provided by the voluntary sector. Publication of a tender relevant to the provision of services to homeless people is expected at the end of July, with the successful bidder being contracted to provide services from October. Until then, KCAH is continuing to receive grant aid from RBK.

A few of KCAH's clients are now receiving **Universal Credits** rather than a package of separate benefits. When the number increases, KCAH will be in a better position to make appropriate plans for the future. KCAH staff recently met with Housing Benefit officers to clarify the future payment arrangements.

KCAH's services have been used by one **Syrian refugee** so far.

### Exhibition of pictures taken by local homeless people

Thanks to a collaborative effort by several local organisations, 12 homeless people – all KCAH clients - were given a camera to take pictures of their daily lives.



The result was a stunning exhibition of photographs at The Quaker Centre on 23 March that was visited by scores of interested people. The Rose Theatre then hosted the exhibition for a further 11 days at the beginning of April.



If you would like to see more of the photos, you can take a look at the video on our website.

## Paapa's Story

Paapa came to KCAH in early 2013. After his mother had passed away, he needed somewhere new to live. He had enough money for a deposit and rent in advance on a flat with Foxtons. But within days of moving in, he was served with court papers to move out as the owner had defaulted on the mortgage. Paapa had no redress with the letting agent—he was homeless.

KCAH placed Paapa into the Winter Night Shelter. With the last of his savings, he found a room for let. Unfortunately, the property belonged to an unscrupulous landlord who, it later transpired, had a well-documented history of misdemeanours. The property soon became unaffordable. Paapa returned to KCAH, in danger of becoming homeless again.

Paapa then moved into the Access Project. He found work at times but nothing permanent. But he has always remained focussed on securing a job and still aspires to become a bus driver. Paapa has always involved himself in KCAH activities and paying rent has always been his priority.

Because of his previous negative experiences with landlords, Paapa is naturally cautious about renting again. But he now has somewhere new to stay: *"I never ever expected to be homeless. And once you are in that position, it is so difficult to get out of it. That's why I'll never forget KCAH."*

## Growing support for KCAH

Initial work on our year-end accounts suggests that total donations in 2015/16 were very similar to the previous year at around £110k. Donations from individuals may prove to be down slightly (due in part to a one-off £8k donation in 2014/15). Donations from churches have held steady at around £23.8k.

Almost 40 new people donated in 2015/16, mostly online through Virgin Giving but a few through Standing Orders. Another positive development was the growth in donations from other local organisations, up to £23k from £16k in 2014/15.

There was also been a substantial increase in the volume of **material** items donated during the year, eg sleeping bags, rucksacks, pants, socks, food, clothes. From the beginning of August 2015 (when we started to keep records) to the end of March 2016, 78 organisations and individuals contributed to KCAH in this way. One big donation in February came from the Al-Khair Foundation, a Muslim Relief Organisation, which delivered 55 sleeping bags as part of their 'Let's Warm Britain' campaign.



We now maintain a list of **current** items needed on our website in the 'Donate Items' section. Or call us for details.

## Can you help?

**Urgent! Does your church have a music group or choir? Do you know any bands? Do you know any school music groups? We are looking for people willing to participate in a music evening, in aid of KCAH, planned for Thursday 17 November at All Saints Parish Church, Kingston.**

Would you be willing to hold a collecting tin from time to time? We need a pool of volunteers so we can collect in places such as shopping centres and train stations.

And do you know anybody who is willing to be sponsored for their participation in sporting or adventure activities?

**Offers of help to Nigel Spalding [nigel.s@kcah.org.uk](mailto:nigel.s@kcah.org.uk) 020 8255 2439.**

## 4 Ways to Donate

- **Standing Order**—ask us for a form
- **Cheque** to "KCAH" or Cash
- **Online** with 'Virgin Giving'
- **Text** "KCAH36 £10" (or £2 or £5) to 70070

## Communicating with You

If your contact details have changed, you wish to be removed from our mailing list, or you would prefer to receive our newsletter by email, please let us know. We only post our quarterly newsletters to the home addresses of people who have agreed to receive it. We never give or sell individuals' contact details to anyone outside the organisation and we never ask for money over the phone.

## KCAH

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