

### **Housing News**

The winter period is always a difficult time for the homeless and brings extra trials into their already hard lives. So we are very happy to be able to report that several men were housed in November and December in various sorts of accommodation. Via the brokerage system we were able to assist five men with obtaining supported housing. Others housed earlier in the year in private rented accommodation have needed help with furniture etc which can be obtained cheaply from Dorset Reclaim – so again we have been pleased to be able to assist with these purchases, in order to set the guys up in their new homes. It is gratifying to see those who not so long ago were sleeping rough are now in a warm, secure and more settled state.

Routes to Roots is also in consultation with the Council as regards Winter Watch – a scheme whereby a night shelter becomes available when the temperature drops below a certain level – this is a “work in progress” and at present there is no emergency night shelter available in Poole. In the meantime Rob Fish, our Outreach Worker, is still working to house more of the homeless over the next few months; it seems so much more urgent in the winter! At present, there are still homeless on the streets of Poole and several more who are termed “hidden homeless” – that is they sleep on the sofas of friends, or are in and out of short term accommodation – which is a very short term answer to their problem.

### **Christmas News**

For those still on the streets, Christmas can be a particularly difficult time of year and so we were grateful when Rev Steve Sheppard of the Water's Edge Church once again arranged to transport the guys to his church hall on Christmas Day, for lunch, tea and a sleepover. This is the second year that Waters Edge church has helped in this way and we thank them and their volunteers for their compassion and commitment to the Homeless in Poole.

### **The WAY forward**

For Routes to Roots, our vision of the way forward is to have a Daytime Resource Centre. This would be open daily and would be a place where the Homeless could access basic human needs such as showers, toilets and washing machines as well as help with health/housing/employment. It would also be a place where they will be encouraged to learn new skills and be creative. It would be a safe place, where they could come and simply “be”. This Autumn we have invested a lot of our time and energy into drawing up our proposal for something which until now has just been 'a dream'. We hope and pray that this year our dream will become a reality. Please see “The Vision” page on this website for more details.

### **Fun and Fundraising**

And finally, many of you will have heard, and may even have attended, the exciting Concert that was held on December 29th at St Peter's Church Parkstone, to raise funds for Routes to Roots. As promised, the concert arranged by Richard Mc Lester, a member of St Peter's and the alternative rock band OPOSIUM, was awesome! Not only did it help to raise awareness of Routes to Roots it also raised £650 for which we are very grateful. We are also grateful to members of St Paul's Church on Canford Heath for the £310 pounds they collected by carol singing, and the £1,871 raised by Longfleet St Mary's at their carol services! Thank you to everyone who has raised money or has supported us in any way this winter; please keep your support coming. Remember Jesus said,

***'when you did it to the least of these,  
you were doing it to me.'***