

Management Report to Routes to Roots AGM

This has been a year of change for Routes to Roots on many different levels. Our client base is constantly changing as people come and go. Our volunteers join and leave. We've moved all our drop-in activities to Skinner Street which has been a great improvement for our Tuesday evening teams. And we have had to say goodbye to some of our staff: since just before Christmas Liz, then Scott and finally Alan all of whom so diligently and compassionately worked with our clients on outreach and support – not forgetting Kat from BCHA who also left in February.

Our fundraising committee has worked hard in the background to search out opportunities and apply for grants with which we have had some success but more work is needed. We've also spent a considerable time attending meetings, forums, network events etc, giving talks, raising the profile of Routes to Roots and the hours have paid off with a considerable rise in sponsors, donations and fundraising activities. We are very grateful to all our sponsors and fundraisers for their efforts.

A major part of our work has and always will be the drop-ins not just because of the immediate need for food but because they offer the human contact and the opportunity for friendship and support.

A few key statistics for the breakfast provision and the drop-ins over the last 12 months as follows:

Breakfast Provision to those actively rough sleeping – December 2013 to March 2014

Number of individuals assisted over 18 weeks = 40

Average number of clients per week = 12

Number of breakfasts provided = 826 Significantly more than 2012/13 – pro rata 60% increase

Afternoon drop-ins 2013

Average number of clients = 19

Lowest number of clients = 7

Highest number of clients = 34 – but only over 30 clients on 4 occasions

Total number of meals provided = 1,746

Evening drop-ins 2013

Average number of clients = 22

Lowest number of clients = 10

Highest number of clients = 33 – but only over 30 clients on 7 occasions

Total number of meals provided = 2,276

These numbers are slightly lower than 2012. However when we look at the cumulative figures ...

Drop-Ins 2013

Number of individual clients throughout that year = 280 (was 237 for 2012 so an 18% increase)

Maximum number of individuals in any one month = 100 (October 2013)

January to end of May 2014

Individuals at our drop-ins = 152

Afternoon meals served = 759

Evening meals served – 1,082

Whilst the number of individuals to May this year is down by 8% on last year, the number of meals served has risen by 18% over the same period. Not all those who attend are homeless and rough sleeping, although the majority of those in this category do access our drop-ins. Many of the people who attend are former rough sleepers; or those who are currently homeless and relying on the generosity of friends to sleep on floors or sofas; or those on the margins who are finding it difficult to make ends meet. Many having been through the homeless route and now being housed, still find it difficult to manage and are beset by all sorts of problems in having to manage their finances, deal with maintaining a property, overcome loneliness and we aim to be here to help where we are able. You will no doubt be aware of many of our friends who have passed away in the last year – sadly four of these had made the journey out of homelessness and into accommodation but their time on the streets took its toll.

Last year you may remember we had a number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour and as a result exclusions for some individuals. 2013 has been quieter with fewer incidents and fewer exclusions. Inevitably the quiet sessions go unnoticed by the neighbours and the noisy ones are those they remember.

With the ending of the Borough of Poole contract, the POST team (Kat, Liz, Scott, Alan) has now been disbanded and the work is being undertaken by a new contractor to the Poole area, CRI's Bournemouth & Poole Rough Sleeper Team. They are using a number of locations around Poole and at the start of the contract it was not easy for our "former POST clients" to sort out where they were to be found. As a result, guys often came back to Skinner Street to seek assistance. We have been fortunate in being able to open up the office with the help of one of our volunteers, Alan Berry. Now that the first hurdles have been overcome and things have settled a bit, the office is being opened for only a few hours apart from the drop-ins and then only when we have staff or volunteers available. This allows us to fill some of the gaps that have opened up: acting as a postal address for clients, enabling clients use of the phone to make appointments, speaking with landlords, the housing department, doctors, etc and giving clients access to clothing, toiletries, sleeping bags and a coffee and chat.

We shall continue to provide this much-needed outreach to those who are so very marginalised in our society for as long as we are able.

Finally, looking towards 2014/15, I am very pleased to welcome on board Neil Robertson who will be providing Projects Co-ordination for Routes to Roots. Neil has only been with us since last Monday so it is very early days as yet. We intend to develop the project work that we currently have, such as Holton Lee Flourish and the allotments, and devise new projects and search out new opportunities for the guys to take part in. Some of these may take place during our drop-ins but others will be away from the immediate area and possibly outside of Poole entirely. This is an exciting time for the new style Routes to Roots (Poole) CIO as we look to develop projects and enhance the lives of the guys. We look forward to sharing the journey with you.

Gabi Sanger-Stevens

Management Services

June 2014