Light Shines in the Darkness

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported Routes to Roots in the last year. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of money we received for our Xmas appeal, not only from churches but from businesses, Rotarians, schools and individuals.

We thank also the United Reformed Church and Fisherman cafe who continue to support us... and the help keeps coming in.

Our strength comes from the fact that we are truly all working together in Poole to help others. It is not just R2R but all the churches who have been running the soup kitchens for 20 years.

I want to thank all of our armies of volunteers. Only with your help can we help the homeless. It is because of you that those who have no one can find someone who cares and who will be there for them.

Our patron Bishop Karen spoke about the importance of speaking out and making our voice heard at our Homeless Service in January. As she said, the world is a very dark place for many, particularly the homeless, and we need to shine a light on their problems and be their advocate: “it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.”

The Rev’d Pat Southgate,
Chair of Routes to Roots and Chaplain to the Homeless in Poole

Page 5: Homelessness is a growing issue
Page 8: Homeless Sunday and Update on Amos House

“Thank you for applying to Dorset Community Foundation for a grant from the Comic Relief Local Communities funding programme. The programme was heavily oversubscribed - we had just under £18,000 available and we received applications totaling over £130,000. I am pleased to tell you that your application has been successful - the panel have agreed to pay the full grant requested of £5000.”

Ellie Curry
Grants Manager
SOCIAL MEDIA
Those using the internet regularly will have noticed a tremendous upsurge in our presence on social media. This is entirely down to Natalie Heiriss, an evening drop-in volunteer from September, who volunteered her services for social media in November. Natalie is 28 and a Business Development Manager.

Thanks to Natalie we have already seen an increase in individual donations made via MyDonate. The number of our followers on FaceBook has doubled and we are more effectively targeting our posts, ensuring for example that the January activation of SWEP was communicated to 23,000 people in Poole.

Natalie will be running the Manchester Marathon in April and aims to complete the UK Three Peaks Challenge solo in under 24 hours in June - both raising money for R2R.

You can donate via her Just Giving page: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/natalie-wild-heiriss

You can follow R2R on FaceBook at: http://www.facebook.com/RoutestoRootsHomeless

You can follow R2R on Twitter at: @R2R_Poole

...and many Individuals, Churches, Christian groups and Businesses in Poole and the surrounding area.
R2R provides a Big Breakfast to rough sleepers through the winter thanks to the Fisherman Cafe on Poole Quay.

**KEY SERVICES: STATISTICS**

**All R2R Drop-Ins: July - December 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total 2016</th>
<th>Total 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total individuals attending</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative total of of individuals</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total afternoon meals</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>1203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total evening meals</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lorraine’s story**

"I'd just like to say a big thank you from my personal journey.
4 yrs ago I was homeless on the streets of poole and you guys gave me hope and support. I'm forever grateful to the amazing people I met.
Thankfully I'm now clean and sober (4yrs) and without the food and clothes and happy people I saw every day when I came for lunch I don't think i would of had faith and hope to keep going.
Also you welcomed my dog jock. He was always fed and loved and that was important as he was my life and part of my street life so thankyou again.
I'm hoping he to pop in and customer in the new and just give back. I'm living in Gosport at the moment and hope to return to poole in the future and to help there would be a great privilege for me.
keep up the amazing work to all that are involved helping the fisherman's cafe. what a great job they do. xxx"

As sent to Routes to Roots’ FaceBook page (with full stops added to aid reading).

**BIG Breakfast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 2016</th>
<th>Jan 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. breakfasts claimed</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. individuals served</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min-max clients per week</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>9-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coffee at the Spire: Buy Two and Someone Gets One Free**

Wesley’s Café In Poole High Street offers a 'suspended coffee' scheme. Pay £1 for your coffee and leave another £1 to buy a coffee for someone in need.
Anyone who goes in and really can't afford to buy a hot drink can have something through the scheme. Based in Poole Methodist Church's Spire building, the café has been open since 2015.
There's also free Wi-Fi and The Spire provides a public toilet for all passers-by.
GIVING SATURDAY
What a marvellous day Saturday 17 December was for the guys and girls who rely on Routes to Roots as individuals and groups throughout Poole came together to show their support by fundraising and giving.

We are particularly grateful to Poole Bay Rotary Business Networking Group who set up and ran ‘Fighting homelessness with music’, a live music event around four pubs in Poole. Many thanks to the Brewhouse & Kitchen, Jolly Sailor, Lord Nelson and Drift, plus the many musicians, who all gave their premises/time for free.

Those enjoying the music donated £214.79 to R2R. This is in addition to £524.12 donated to their Christmas Santa train on Monday 12 December from the residents of Oakdale. And £919 from a raffle. A grand total of £1657.

With the vocal support of our Patron, The Right Reverend Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne, our carol singers raised £350 from generous customers at Asda in Poole.

With the support of members of the congregation of St John’s Heatherlands, Parkstone, we raised £168.64 from equally generous customers at Waitrose in Parkstone.

And overnight there was an sleep-out at St James Church in the Old Town also supporting R2R. Organiser Rev Chris Harwood says: “We had people from St James’, Reconnect, Routes to Roots, formerly homeless and currently homeless friends join us throughout the evening. We have raised about £1600 once everyone’s money is in.

“It was such a relief to return to a warm home the following morning and very sobering to think of those without a home to return to.”
IN THE NEWS: HOMELESSNESS IS A GROWING ISSUE

More than a quarter of a million people reported as homeless in England

Research from Shelter has used multiple sets of statistics to estimate that more than a quarter of a million people are homeless in England. The report included a heatmap of levels of homelessness; the highest rates were found in London, Birmingham, Brighton and Luton.

Two case studies recently published highlighted the growing issue that homelessness can present: Mandie and Daisy-May. Mandie, included in the report, was made redundant in January and evicted from her two-bedroom flat in Luton, which almost led to her children being taken into care. "It was horrifying," she said. "The council threatened to take my children from me."

Daisy-May and her family were made homeless when their landlord evicted them after deciding to sell the house, which had been their family home for 13 years. She said, "We tried to find somewhere else, but there was nothing we could afford because of the dramatic rise in rents in the area. "So I came back from uni, and in between my finals and graduation we put all our stuff into boxes and moved into a hostel – me, my mum and my 13-year-old sister."

Martin Tett, the housing spokesman for the Local Government Association Housing, said: "Finding emergency housing for homeless people, particularly young or vulnerable people or those with families, is increasingly difficult for councils. [...] Councils need powers and funding to address the widening gap between incomes and rents, resume their historic role as a major builder of new affordable homes and join up all local services - such as health, justice and skills. [...] This is the only way to deliver our ambition to end homelessness."

Housing update from Citizen’s Advice Expert Advice Team, 7 December 2016

Rough sleeping on London’s night buses has risen dramatically in the last four years

Rough sleeping on London’s night buses has risen 121 per cent in the past four years, according to an internal report by Transport for London. Across the city there were 213 driver incident reports between November 1, 2015 and January 24 this year – an increase from 97 over the same period in 2012/13.

Almost all of these reports were because of rough sleepers’ refusal to alight the bus at the end of the line; the figures do not represent all rough sleepers, which is likely to be far higher.

Joanne, 22, began sleeping on night buses after problems at home meant that she could no longer live with her parents. "The first night I didn't sleep at all because I just didn't know what to expect," she recalls. "Obviously I would drift off but like, you know when you're really tired then you're instantly aware of where you are? It was really, really cold. I remember my hands were numb because it was so cold. I watched some people come in and sleep as well."

"I used to think all homeless people were drug addicts so I didn’t feel sorry for them. When I was in that situation it made me think it could happen to anybody."

http://www.bigissue.com/features/6664/why-londons-homeless-are-boarding-the-night-bus

According to Homeless Link’s latest figures, collected in the Autumn of 2016 and published in January 2017, 4134 people are estimated to be sleeping rough on any one night. There was an increase of 16% from 2015 to 2016, while since 2010 rough sleeping estimates show an increase of 134%.

http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/homelessness-in-numbers/rough-sleeping/
to the streets or cold concrete of a carpark as there is no overnight shelter in Poole. Only if the temperature drops to zero degrees or below for three consecutive nights does Poole Council have a responsibility to offer emergency housing to people who are rough sleeping to reduce the risk of death due to the severe weather.

SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Provision) was triggered in the last week of November for three nights and again in January.

R2R’s two afternoon and two evening drop-ins continued throughout the Christmas holidays as did the evening soup runs organised by local churches. Routes to Roots also provided a hot breakfast for rough sleepers at the Fisherman’s Café.

For many years now, Routes to Roots’ volunteers have served a traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings to our homeless and vulnerably housed clients on Christmas Day. This year was no exception. Thanks to generous supporters, we were able to hand out presents and chocolates as well to make the day even more special.

In addition, Sarah and Joe at Kingsbere Kitchen again brought their burger van to R2R at the evening drop-in before Christmas. Thanks for making their day to:

- Laura and Nicki, for 35 bags of Xmas Cheer from their Reverse Advent Calendar Project
- Susan and friends for 10 bags of pressies
- Skinner St URC for shoe boxes of gifts
- Albion Language Tours for gifts
- B Curtis in Wareham for two large turkeys
- Miranda, who delivers veg at the drop-ins, for two big boxes of organic vegetables
- Pupils at Broadstone First School for crackers, which included a free hot drink and all individually handwritten jokes
- Poole Yacht Club for a real Xmas tree
- Alex from Morden for a turkey
- So many more, too numerous to list

Afterwards, although some have accommodation, many unfortunately returned
THANKS TO YOU, AND YOU, AND YOU ...

Donations and Fundraising
* Asda, Poole customers: £549.79 from carol singing on two days
* Baden Powell and St Peter’s Middle School: £595.09 from Christmas Jumper Day
* Borough of Poole for a donation
* Broadstone Methodist: £400
* Broadstone URC: £195.92
* Christ Church Creekmoor: £100
* Dorset Wheelchairs: £129.13
* Everyone Active at the Dolphin Leisure Centre: £26.94 from staff and customers
* Foundry Arms, Lagland Street, Poole: £150
* Highworth Insurance: £175 from dress down days
* Integrity OMD, Wareham management consultancy: £3055.57
* Little Red Roaster for a donation raised from selling crackers
* Morden PCC: £153.33
* Poole Missional Communities: £200
* Skinner Stret URC: £127.50
* Society of Friends: £100
* St James PCC, Poole: £500
* St John’s PCC, Broadstone: £800
* St Joseph’s Catholic Church: £482.72
* St Mary’s Longfleet Road: £2323.64
* St Michael’s & St Gabriel’s, Hamworthy: £80
* St Paul’s Oakdale: £314.17
* St Peter’s PCC, Parkstone: £97.10
* Ultra Electronics, Wimborne: £107
* URC Skinner Street, Poole: £127.50
* Waitrose, Parkstone Green Token appeal: £354
* Waitrose, Parkstone customers: £173.64 from carol singing
* Starbucks, Poole: £43.53
* Laura & Nicki, Canford Heath: £370.45 from Christmas Reverse Advent Calendar Project

Donations in Kind
* Big Yellow, Poole: storage space valued at £2000
* PK Francis Clark: £50 vouchers for sleeping bags
* Poole Bay Rotary Business Networking Group: 6 sleeping bags

Grants
* Dorset Community Foundation: £5000 for Afternoon Drop-Ins and Projects
* The Alice Cooper Dean Charitable Foundation: £3000 towards the ‘homeless and vulnerably housed in Poole’
* The Bridging Fund Charitable Trust: £1500
* WH Smith Trust Community Grants Fund: £100

Ongoing Support
* The Co-op, Blandford Road, Hamworthy BH15 4BH has adopted Routes to Roots as their chosen charity and are raising money for us through their membership and 5p bag sales until March.
* Baden Powell and St Peter’s Middle School has adopted R2R as its charity for the year.

Shopping online?
Since first joining Easyfundraising, 38 supporters have contributed £456.49 to R2R – a few pennies or pounds at a time, and it all adds up. We have now also registered with Giveasyoulive.

Log on to the sites, register yourself and Routes to Roots as the charity you would like to support and start shopping. For ease of access, add the addresses to your bookmark bar:
http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/routestoroots
https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/routestorootsfightinghomelessnessinpoole

Individuals
* £2867
* Homeless Sunday congregation: £267
* Volunteer Ewa for £340 raised for St James’ sponsored sleep-out
Amos House One Year On

During the service Kate, one of our Trustees, updated everyone on what is happening at Amos House, our supported accommodation for three former rough sleepers. It is just about a year since they moved in and things are going well. Two of the residents agreed to share their thoughts on their experience:

“If I hadn’t gone to R2R then I would probably still be on the streets now. I was pretty messed up mentally. I was very stressed and depressed at having reached rock bottom.”

“It was a huge adjustment to be inside. Sleeping outside had become the norm. I think of the amount of damage the cold did to me when I was outside, all day. The cold gets in your bones. If I was back on the streets again now, I don’t think I would survive.”

“What is so great about Amos House is not just that I have a roof over my head but that R2R are always there to support us if we have any problems.”

“I now volunteer at the drop ins. It gives me something to do and gives me an opportunity to give something back.”

We are now starting the second year of the project, and are considering the next phase, which will be to help the guys move into their own accommodation, hopefully with the courage and experience to keep it going. Then, we will recruit more residents. By this time next year, we hope to be entering a new phase with three different residents in Amos House.

You CAN Help Us

For information about becoming a member, volunteering or making a donation please visit the R2R website.

Annual membership, from April to March, costs only £24 for an individual or £48 for a Church, School or Business (pro rata if you join during the membership year).

Membership, donation, standing order and gift aid form: http://www.routestoroots.org/updates/volunteering-membership

Volunteer application forms: http://www.routestoroots.org/updates/volunteering