

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018



No More 'Suicide Sundays'...

Think of Sunday and I wonder what comes to mind. For me it's going to church, then home for lunch; maybe spending time with family and friends or simply relaxing. It's a day of rest! If you're a homeless person, it's the complete opposite. For many it's a day to dread because there's nothing to do and nowhere to go. With nothing to eat until evening time, it's a very depressing day. No wonder I've often heard it referred to as Suicide Sunday.

...Resurrection Sunday is coming.

Ever since I first heard that expression I have longed to do something to make a change. I'm glad to say that, with permission from Skinner Street URC, we are at last going to be able to open our doors on Sundays and welcome the homeless to come in, relax and enjoy a traditional Sunday lunch. This began on Easter Day when, thanks to St James's Church, Suicide Sunday was quite literally changed into... RESURRECTION Sunday for 25 guys and gals!

Churches, please can you help us?

To begin with, this will be a monthly lunch and St Luke's will run the next on 6 May, but if all goes well we hope to be able to open every Sunday. For this we will need your help. In the same way that Churches provide food on the street at Poole's Soup runs, we're hoping that you might feel inspired to come forward and offer to help us provide this important meal on a Sunday. We can't provide our homeless with a home from home, but by being there for them on Sundays, we can show them that there are people in Poole, who really do care about them and want to shine a little bit of God's light into their darkness. If you think you can help or would like more information then please get in touch with me: patsouthgate@btinternet.com

Let's never forget that Jesus said "What you did for the least of these, you did unto me."
Matthew 25:35

The Revd Pat Southgate,

Chair of Routes to Roots and Chaplain to the Homeless in Poole

To donate to Routes to Roots, text **RTOR42 £2** (£5 / £10 / £££) to **70070**

or donate online at: <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/routestoroots-poolcio>

Like Routes to Roots on FaceBook at: <http://www.facebook.com/RoutestoRootsHomeless>

Follow Routes to Roots on Twitter at: [@R2R_Poole](https://twitter.com/R2R_Poole)

Founded on Christian principles, Routes to Roots seeks to help all homeless and vulnerably housed people in Poole regardless of their faith. At four drop-ins R2R provides basic necessities, such as hot food, clothing and sleeping bags, and offers indoor and outdoor motivational activities, which aim to boost self-confidence and develop skills. In addition, internet and telephone facilities, 'care of address' and one-to-one support, guidance and information are provided. From November 2015 Routes to Roots has provided supported accommodation to three of Poole's homeless.

THE R2R TEAM

CHAIR & TRUSTEE	Revd Pat Southgate
TRUSTEE	Kate Mellor
TRUSTEE	Iain Scott
TRUSTEE	Martin Finch
TRUSTEE	Andrew Teale
TRUSTEE	Revd Lucy Holt

HON TREASURER	TBA
HON SECRETARY	Joshua Hale
NEWSLETTER	Susan Gittins

CHAIR ASST/VOL CO-ORD Elaine Mellers

Patron: Rt Revd Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne

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Plans for Poole Homeless Hub



Following a meeting of Trustees R2R is investigating how to proceed with our ambition to establish a homeless hub in Poole within the next twelve months.

The charity is already accepted as a centre for many outreach activities to benefit the health and wellbeing of the homeless but is aware that currently we can only offer help indoors on four occasions during the week and there is no overnight accommodation.

We have now agreed with Skinner Street URC that we can open an additional afternoon drop-in weekly on Wednesdays and monthly on Sundays.

However, R2R now feels we are in a position to operate seven days a week, getting the guys off the streets for the greater part of each day and working with the Poole Council outreach team to offer an overnight sleepsafes programme throughout the winter, and not only when temperatures fall below zero.

To make this happen, R2R will require a centrally located hall with office facilities and to increase its pool of volunteers, and is looking into what is possible. Let us know if you can help.

OUR SUPPORTERS



...and many Individuals, Churches, Christian groups and Businesses in Poole and the surrounding area.

KEY SERVICES: STATISTICS

All R2R Drop-Ins: Oct 2017 - Mar 2018

	Total 2016	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total 2017	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total individuals attending	263	97	87	76	296	82	75	76
Total afternoon meals	1587	204	209	175	1975	192	176	158
Total evening meals	1968	206	206	188	2101	183	192	169
Cumulative total of individuals	263	268	289	296	296			118

Breakfasts for Rough Sleepers

Total 2016-17	Dec 2017	Jan 2018	Feb 2018	Mar 2018	Total 2017-18
573	90	71	72	76	309

Since 2012 R2R has provided a Big Breakfast to rough sleepers through the winter thanks to the Fisherman Cafe on Poole Quay. Every year we have seen an increase in the number of individuals on the streets, from 39 in 2012-13 to 54 in 2016-17.



As for 2016-17, we again offered four breakfasts, as opposed to six in previous years, and provided a more substantial lunch at our drop-ins on the other two days - the Salvation Army provides breakfast on one morning. This was a deliberate decision to encourage rough sleepers to attend the afternoon drop-ins where they can engage with a wide variety of outreach services to help with other problems. This proved successful.

In November The Haddon Trust agreed a grant of £5000 for R2R to work with the homeless. This grant will be used to continue our winter breakfast provision for rough sleepers and to provide

footwear under a project initiated by our volunteer chiropodist, Jenny.

AT THE DROP-INS

Throughout 2017 our afternoon drop-ins continued to be a base for outreach services, which support clients who are unwilling or unable to access them otherwise.



In October PACT (Poole Addictions Community Team) was disbanded by Poole Council but we were fortunate to secure the services of EDAS (Essential Drugs & Alcohol Services) who now attend on Thursdays to engage with clients with drug and alcohol problems. This is Lisa from EDAS who has taken over the role of Harm minimisation, needle exchange blood tests etc that was formally undertaken by Andrew Teale of PACT.

A new service was introduced in 2017 with the weekly attendance of Katie Bathie, a mental health nurse from the Poole CMHT (Community Mental Health Team) based at Alderney Community Hospital. Given that a high percentage of people on the streets have mental health issues that can cause significant distress or risk to the individual or others, her presence has been invaluable. In particular we had two clients with severe issues and both needed to have mental health assessments, which took place discreetly at R2R - one was then admitted to St Ann's Hospital. Katie often has a trainee with her.

A Pivotal supported accommodation outreach worker and St Mungo's rough sleeper outreach team also now join us on Mondays. And we have a fortnightly hairdresser and Jenny Donovan, our long-term volunteer chiropodist, on the last Friday of each month.

Thanks to a grant from the Haddon Trust, R2R is now able to support Jenny financially with her project to buy suitable footwear for rough sleepers. Until now she has very generously bought the shoes at her own expense.

Shower for Rough Sleepers

Skinner Street URC has kindly agreed that we can install a shower in the church hall, which can be used by rough sleepers during drop-in hours.

We have been fortunate to obtain financial support with grants from The Screwfix Foundation and The Valentine Charitable Trust and work on the shower will be undertaken in April. This will be an extremely valuable step forward as presently the only shower facility open to rough sleepers is at the Salvation Army just once a week.



IN THE NEWS

1 in 200 Homeless

At the end of 2017 Shelter reported that across the population as a whole at least one in 200 people are currently homeless. In the worst affected areas one in 25 are homeless.

This shocking figure is based on their calculation of 307,000 recorded homeless, which is believed to be a conservative estimate due to flaws with the rough sleeper count and assumptions about household size.

This is placing a considerable burden on local authorities, who have a duty to rehouse homeless households who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need. There is a consensus that England is in the grip of a housing crisis, resulting in the recent rise in homelessness.

According to local authority statistics, the single leading cause of homelessness is the loss of a private tenancy – the number has soared since cuts to housing benefits began in 2011.

'Far from Alone: Homelessness in Britain in 2017' (November 2017)

In Poole

According to the official November 2017 street count there are 13 rough sleepers in Poole (39 in Bournemouth). This is up from just seven recorded in 2013 and 2014.

However, R2R believes this to be a considerable underestimate as every year we have seen an increase in the number of individuals on Poole's streets, from 39 in 2012-13 to 54 in 2016-17. Our figures are based on verifying that those given winter breakfast vouchers are actually sleeping rough.

Jenny Donovan and R2R featured on BBC TV South Today on 4 April, becoming the third most watched video:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-dorset-43671269/the-dorset-chiropodist-healing-homeless-people-s-feet>

PSPO Condemned but to Come into Effect in April

At Poole's annual Homeless Sunday Service on Sunday, 4 February, the Right Reverend Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne and Patron of Routes to Roots, expressed outrage at the introduction of the full PSPO, in particular the provision which prevents any homeless person from finding somewhere to sleep before midnight.

Bishop Karen talked of how devastating, dangerous and isolating it is to be homeless: one in three homeless people will be a victim of violence and they have an average lifespan of just 47.

The Revd Pat Southgate, chair of R2R, told the large congregation that Poole Council should be ashamed that it allows people who are ill and need care to be out at night and unable to bed down, even in a cold, damp and smelly car park, until after midnight. And Revd Lucy Holt said the order may result in the "criminalising" of those who need "serious and wide-ranging help".

Poole Council decided on 13 March that on 16 April, despite opposition from all those involved in helping the homeless, Poole's Public Spaces Protection Order will come into effect. In response Pat Southgate told the BBC: "Routes to Roots are no longer surprised by any decision the Council make regarding the homeless in Poole. This PSPO shows complete lack of care or compassion for the growing number of people, who are having to sleep on our streets or in our car parks."

The PSPO conflicts with new guidance from the Home Office issued in December 2017, which states PSPOs "should not be used to target people based solely on the fact that someone is homeless or rough sleeping, as this in itself is unlikely to mean that such behaviour is having an unreasonably detrimental effect on the community's quality of life which justifies the restrictions imposed."

OUR SUPPORTERS: Making Time



Throughout the festive season our very committed kitchen volunteers continued to dish up nutritious meals at our Drop-ins.

Our youngest volunteers got involved in raising funds whilst carol singing at Asda! We raised £244.82 with their



help ... and a few older voices. A further £71.16 was raised at Waitrose from carol singing. And supporter Adrienne added £100 from her efforts.

Thanks to the efforts of volunteer Natalie, who raised donations from her office at Merlin Entertainment and persuaded her colleagues to sponsor ALL the food for Christmas Lunch, we were able to offer an excellent meal at no cost to our funds. Many others contributed gifts and chocolates.

Food, Glorious Food

For the third year, Sarah and Joe at Kingsbere Kitchen brought their burger van to R2R at the evening Drop-in before Christmas. They provided hot dogs, burgers, cake, mince pies, tea, coffee and hot chocolate for everyone:

<http://www.mobilefishnchipsdorset.co.uk>

And we had a first visit from family-run authentic mobile wood fired pizza company Dorset Pizza Kitchen:

<http://dorsetpizzakitchen.co.uk>



On the last Friday of 2017 28 guys and girls came in from the freezing cold and were able to enjoy hot chicken curry and jasmine rice courtesy of Koh Thai.

The ladies from Koh Thai laid the tables and served the food, offering our clients a complete dining experience which they felt was easily equal to that enjoyed by the clientele in this boutique tapas restaurant in Lilliput High Street Poole. Crackers were pulled and jokes were shared: it was a really happy party atmosphere:

<https://www.koh-thai.co.uk/restaurant/lilliput/>

OUR SUPPORTERS: Making Donations

Gemma and Kev from Poole Bay Rotary Club again organised a music event over Christmas to raise money for Routes to Roots. The event was part of the Poole BID Christmas Extravaganza Festival, which took place in Poole over a whole weekend from 30th November to 3rd December.



Collections were gathered for Roots to Routes on Saturday at music stages on the Quay and in Falkland Square. There was also a Christmas club raffle, with all proceeds going to Roots to Routes. Altogether £2188.47 was raised. We are extremely grateful for their continued support.



Over Christmas we were grateful to have plenty of donated warm clothing for some of our most vulnerable homeless people living on our streets, including donations for the homeless from Tesco Tower Park.

Many thanks to all who gave

- * Albion Language Tours: £100
- * Baden-Powell Junior School: £274.21
- * Bankes Charity Cup: £1000
- * Broadstone Methodist Church: £990.13
- * Broadstone Townswomen: £30
- * CAF: £150
- * Canford Magna Church: £110
- * Catholic Women's League: £83
- * Christchurch Creekmoor: £100
- * Colehill First School Harvest: £201.59
- * Foundry Arms: £115
- * Hayeswood First School: £214.36
- * Holtwood Church Council: £50
- * Holy Angels' Church: 89.50
- * Homeless Sunday Service: £182.30
- * Longfleet Primary School: £803.25
- * Luminos: £685.04
- * Poole Grammar School: £222.75
- * Poole Printmakers: £308.50
- * Quakers: £300
- * Romsey Rotary: £135.22
- * St John's Ashley Road choir: £104
- * St John's Broadstone: £780
- * St John's Heatherlands: £260.80
- * St Mary's & St Anthony's of Padua: £300
- * St Mary's Longfleet: £2762.81
- * St Michael's & St Gabriel's: £45
- * St Michael's CofE Middle School: £261.50
- * St Joseph's Nursery: £200
- * TSB Bank: £300
- * Verwood URC: £235.68
- * WH Smith Trust: £100
- * Various individuals: £2731.14

Rev Chris Harwood at St James Church in the Old Town again organised a sleep-out in December and raised over £5000 - an outstanding amount.

Laura continued to run Tombola stalls at a number of local schools with items donated from Tiger and raised £1884.48 for R2R. Cheryl Burdon & Nigel Wills walked The Dorset Doodle in August 2017 in the pouring rain raising £365.

R2R Volunteers Stepped Up During the March Freeze



R2R volunteers were the only help to people who would otherwise have died of exposure on the streets of Poole during the snow storms of early March. On 2 March the Salvation Army was unable to get into Poole to provide their weekly Friday breakfast for rough sleepers. R2R opened up and served

poached egg on toast that morning! We were open again from 2.00-4.00pm and held our regular drop in at 7.30pm.

Because of the severe weather, Poole's SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Provision) had again been triggered, as it was through much of February. However, workers from St Mungo's, who are responsible for outreach to rough sleepers, were unable to transport people from the Salvation Army on New Orchard Street to the Gateway Church on Alder Road, where just 10 bed spaces are available. Therefore, R2R arranged for the homeless, who accepted the offer, to sleep in the Skinner Street URC hall that night and again the following evening.

Big thank you to the URC for enabling this to happen! Without our opening of the hall there would have been nowhere for people to go.



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/charity/volunteering-membership>

Volunteer application forms: <http://www.routestoroots.org/charity/volunteering>