

BURY

DROP IN

Issue no. 2
September 2016



. Elven Centre .

GARLAND STREET

OPENING TIMES

Tuesday & Friday
11am – 2pm

www.burydropin.org

DROP IN COMPLETES FIRST YEAR OF MINISTRY

Bury Drop In has come a long way in a short time. Last September, two guests dropped in during the charity's initial session. As attendance slowly increased between then and the end of the year, it was not unusual for the volunteers to outnumber the guests by as much as four to one.

The New Year ushered in a growth spurt at the Drop In that, while it has slowed down, may continue as the organisation kicks off its second year of operation.

Guest attendance on Fridays now runs between 30 and 35. Over the past 12 months, the centre has hosted almost 180 different men and women, providing each guest a hot meal and some friendly conversation. Local helping agencies have been on hand to assist the needy in finding accommodation, physical and mental health support, and counselling on a number of issues associated with being homeless or vulnerable.

Drop In trustees, aware of the increasing number of guests and in response to their requests, decided to open a second day of the week. Beginning in June, Drop In began hosting men and women on Tuesdays. Within a short two months, attendance had equalled that of the Friday sessions, meaning that between 60 and 70 guests walk through the doors of the Elven Centre each week.

In the early days of the Drop In, several volunteers chatted with each guest during the duration of his or her visit. Today, a volunteer will greet each guest and spend a few minutes catching up, but then the Drop In host moves on to another visitor. This has resulted in the centre's guests developing a sense of community with one another.

Volunteer Terry (*right*) talks with James, who travels to Bury from Ipswich each Friday because of the care and friendship he's found at the Drop In.



THIS IS EXACTLY WHERE WE SHOULD BE

The last few months of the life of Bury Drop In have been mightily encouraging. The increasing number of guests has been matched by generous giving, tremendous volunteering, and the hard work of a growing team. In June it was a step of faith to start opening on Tuesdays, but I think we all knew it was inevitable – like a train coming down the track!

Numbers are significant. Since opening last September, we have met with nearly 180 individual guests. But it's not just about numbers; it's about changed lives.

Those of you who were able to attend the 'Come Together' event at St. Mary's Church in June will have heard the powerful stories of two men – one helped by Christians Against Poverty debt counselling, the other from Bury Drop In. Both told graphic stories of lives coming apart at the seams but having found a place of sanctuary, friendship, and genuine help – despair being turned to hope.

As a reader of this newsletter and interested in Bury Drop In, you may or may not identify with Christianity. Jesus once commented that He only did what he saw the Father doing: 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what he sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.' (John 5 v19-20)

I believe we have touched on part of what God (the Father) is doing today. Bury Drop In is authentic, credible Christian faith in action. This is exactly where the church needs to be! You may see it differently and see serving people who may have nowhere else to turn as a good and necessary thing. Well, that is wonderful, too! As you lend your support, bear in mind you could be helping us to do God's bidding!

Thanks for your interest and support.

*Rev. Robert Green,
Chairman of Trustees*

PROVIDING HOPE AND HELP FOR THOSE IN NEED

As we approach Bury Drop In's first birthday, it gives us all time to reflect on what has been achieved and what the future might hold. If some admitted to fears at its conception, they can have nothing but confidence as together we move into a second year.

If asked to sum up BDI in a word, I'd say hope. It's a commodity in short supply, especially missing from the lives of those we seek to help. American Hal Lindsey once said, 'Man can live 40 days without food, three days without water, eight

minutes without air . . . but just one second without hope.' How true we've found this to be.

Over the past year, we've seen lives changed, bias and prejudice disappear, and a new sense of hope prevail. And that's true not just for our guests, but also for our more than 50 volunteers who have committed hours to serving those who have fallen through a system which, in many cases, was meant to support them.

Volunteer Kevin Bullock explains, 'I've seen guests who on arrival look shell-shocked and downtrodden. Within weeks, their lives have been turned around to the point that eventually they become part of the volunteer team, making a positive contribution to our on-going work.'

BDI puts high emphasis on training. We equip our volunteers to handle the many – often serious – situations they face. For most, engaging with homeless and disturbed people on the

fringes of society is a new experience, taking them out of the familiar to help the marginalised.

Nationally, we are in a vortex of change, and it is our prayer that humanity and kindness will prevail in a society that shows all too little compassion and understanding. Many local agencies support the work of BDI by offering help and advice that can enable guests to take the first steps into a new life.

We want all these agencies; the many people who commit our work to prayer; and the wonderful volunteers who cook, register and chat with guests, wash sore feet, and trim overgrown hair to know how much we value your input. You are all bringing love, hope, and dignity to men and women who – for whatever reason – have known only despair.

*Mike Coleman,
Chief Executive Officer*

FORMER AND CURRENT MAYOR SUPPORT BDI

Councillor Patrick Chung, the past mayor of St. Edmundsbury, has made a donation of £250 to the Bury Drop In.

Trustee David Bonnett received a cheque from Mr. Chung at a presentation in West Suffolk House, Bury St. Edmunds, on 28 July. The money donated to the Drop In – and

contributions to several other local organisations – was raised by the former mayor during his term of office.

St. Edmundsbury's current mayor is scheduled to visit the Drop in 20 September. Councillor Julia Wakelam has expressed her interest in observing the centre's operation and talking with guests and volunteers.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

PRAYER: Please pray for the volunteers and agency representatives who support our guests. Pray for God's care and protection for those in need who visit us.

VOLUNTEERS: If you'd like to help at the centre, click on VOLUNTEERS at: www.burydropin.org.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS: If you'd like to make a one-time donation, please make your cheque out to Bury Drop In and post it to Bury Drop In, c/o Garland Street Baptist Church, Pump Lane, Bury St. Edmunds, IP33 1HN. If you'd like to contribute regularly, please download a Standing Order Mandate from our website. Thank you for your faithful support.

SURPRISE DONATION FROM NCS TEAM 4

Right out of the blue on 9 August, a group of wonderful young people arrived at Bury Drop In carrying bags of gifts for our guests and £124 in support for the project. These teenagers had given up part of their post-GCSE summer break to do something good in the community.

They have been working as Team 4 – part of the volunteer National Citizenship Service. Team members raised money and slept out in the town overnight as a taste of what homelessness feels like in their efforts to support some of our most vulnerable neighbours.



Team 4 were able to spend some time seeing first-hand how the centre is making a difference. Guests and volunteers at the Drop In were delighted and moved by the unexpected treasures. WELL DONE TEAM 4!

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LOYAL SPONSORS



We mentioned in our initial newsletter that Greggs had been providing delicious baked goods for Drop In guests each Friday. Recently, Greggs has increased its giving, with twice weekly donations to the centre. In addition, through Drop In, Greggs makes weekly contributions to five other groups that care for 135 poor and needy in our community. Well done!



Thank you to the Abbey Rotary Club in Bury St. Edmunds. In June, Bury Drop In was one of several worthy causes honoured by club members for service to the community. The group contributed £300 to the work of the centre.



Street Level Café on Abbeygate Street in Bury St Edmunds continues to provide terrific support for the Drop In. Each week the folks at Street Level contribute bacon, and they regularly provide a block of cheddar cheese. Our guests have been arriving very early on Fridays to make sure they're in time to enjoy a delicious bacon sandwich, and the cheese-topped jacket potatoes are a favourite.

Thanks, Street Level!



The Really Rather Good Coffee House at the bottom of Abbeygate Street regularly provides tasty scones and other pastries on Mondays and Thursdays for the Drop In sessions the following days. On other days, the staff makes donations of food to the Tayfen House. We salute the owners at RRGCH, who are committed to supporting the work we do. Both are former service personnel and are keenly aware that many who separate from the forces can end up in difficulty.



Precision continue to provide us with Design Services and print of leaflets.

“Not as tasty as the cakes and savoury food of the other marvellous donors;” says MD Matthew Caldwell-Nichols, “but hopefully as helpful in its own way. “

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We're very grateful for the continuing donations from Beckett Chartered Financial Planners. Managing Director Ian White is one of the most faithful supporters of Drop In. Not only does he contribute financially, Ian also spreads the word about our work with the homeless and vulnerable. We're in conversation with a number of possible donors who Ian and the folks at Becketts have sent our way. We appreciate your help.

VIV'S PATISSERIE

The Drop In is also grateful to the folks at Viv's Patisserie on Woolhall Street. They have contributed bread and other baked goods, which our guests have enjoyed.

More sponsors welcome!

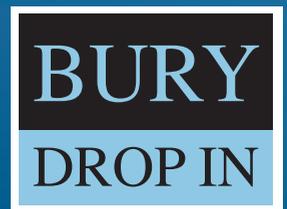
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