



Update #1

March 2016

www.burydropin.org

Drop In Marks Six-Month

Anniversary

Bury Drop In opened its doors for the first time 18 September 2015. More than 20 enthusiastic volunteers arrived at around 10 am to set up tables and chairs, begin cooking, and prepare to meet any of the town's homeless and vulnerable adults who had heard about the centre.

During that inaugural session, two guests dropped in for a home-cooked meal and the opportunity to be cared for by more than twice that many volunteer 'befrienders.' Over the three hours the centre was open that day, the plans and dreams of dozens of people—church members, representatives of caring agencies, and local authority officials—came to fruition.

The September 2015 start-up was the culmination of more than nine months of discussions, planning, and training by the various churches and agencies involved in creating Bury Drop In. Through this period, more than 40 volunteers signed up to serve the most needy town residents between 11 am and 2 pm each Friday at the Garland Street Baptist Church hall.

Churches and local government leaders joined together to provide the initial funding for the centre. Publicity was put out initially through the council and

several churches, and this was augmented later by invitation cards that were distributed to locations frequently visited by people in need.

Between its opening and the end of the year, guest attendance rarely broke into double digits. As the weather turned cold and wet after the new year dawned, the number of men and women visiting the centre grew steadily to a current average of around 12 people.

In addition to hot meals and friendly conversation, guests have been able to take away toiletries and warm clothing—hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and jumpers—all donated by churches, businesses, and individuals around the town. We've also been able to give away tents and sleeping bags to those who are sleeping rough.

Over the past six months, our volunteer list has grown to more than 60 people. Financial donations have continued to roll in, and we expect even more contributions now that we have been given registered charity status.

To all the organizations and individuals who have given so generously to the Drop In, your thoughtfulness has and will continue to bless all our guests.

From the Bury Drop In Leaders

First and foremost, we extend our sincere thanks to the many people who have contributed to the tremendous success of the first six months of the Drop In. We've been thrilled to see so many diverse groups come together to make life a bit more bearable for our neighbours who are in great need.

Our thanks start with the folks at the local authority who had the vision to initiate a project that would aid the homeless and vulnerable of Bury St. Edmunds. Their initial funding of the project laid a solid foundation for the expenses such an effort would require.

In addition, we appreciate the significant contributions for the various agencies that provide counsel and practical assistance for our guests. More than 20 organisations have signed on to be a part of the Drop In. Several regularly send representatives to our Friday sessions to provide immediate assistance, while others care for our guests through referrals to the agencies' sites.

We're grateful, too, for the many churches that got behind the project from its very beginning. Your prayers and financial donations—not to mention the numerous volunteers who have come from your congregations—have made it possible to carry out our ministry week after week.

Of course, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the dozens of volunteers who serve faithfully at the Drop In. Many have been with us since the very first sessions. Others are being added to our roster every week. Whether your duties are in the kitchen, setting up or cleaning up,

greeting or befriending our guests, or serving in any way behind the scenes, thank you so much for your devoted and conscientious service. You are certainly wonderful ambassadors for Christ!

In particular, we'd like to thank a couple of people who were instrumental in getting Drop In off to a great start and who are no longer a part of our team. First, we're grateful to Jo Copsey, coordinator of Bury Town Pastors, who was an enormous help in getting the Drop In organised. Her tremendous experience in setting up the Town Pastors proved extremely valuable in our efforts to establish our newly registered charity.

Graham Jack, the very busy community pastor at West Road Church, cheerfully donated a great deal of time and shared a wealth of wisdom as the co-chairman of the steering group that got Drop In off the ground. We're thankful for Graham's outstanding help in the formative stages of the project.

So where do we go from here? Our management team continues to dream about and discuss what the future of Drop In may hold. While we're not sure where God will lead us, we're positive we cannot continue to provide excellent support for our guests without your continued involvement. We look forward to a long and fruitful ministry as we serve alongside you in caring for those in need across our town.

Rev. Robert Green
Chairman, Bury Drop In Trustees

Mike Coleman
Bury Drop In Chief Executive Officer



Mayor Drops In During First 2016 Session

On January 8th, Mayor Patrick Chung dropped in to the Bury Drop In to see the centre in operation. The mayor has been enormously supportive of the project as it has taken shape and, in the spirit of the occasion, he put on an apron and served meals to guests and volunteers alike.

There was the usual friendly buzz that is a feature of Bury Drop In and is one of the things that draws people in need to the project.

The Bury Drop In team is very appreciative of the partnership with the Borough, local agencies and others, and these links are part of the strength of the initiative.

At the conclusion of his visit, the mayor, who previously ran a Chinese restaurant, offered to cook a Chinese meal for Drop In guests one Friday. We think we'll hold him to that!

(Photo by permission of Charter Termes)

BDI Now a Registered Charity

When we began setting up Bury Drop In early last year, the local authority recommended the centre be run by a community group made up of representatives from local churches and other organisations. A steering team was formed, and work began in earnest. In February—after months of bureaucratic red tape—Bury Drop In was recognized as Registered Charity 1165258. The steering team has now become a management team, overseeing the centre's operations and planning.

A Day at Bury Drop In

Each week between 20 and 25 volunteers arrive at the Garland Street Baptist Church hall to prepare for the guests who will visit the centre.

Together they transform the hall into a homely banquet setting of six long tables covered in cheerful, red-check cloths set with glasses, napkins, and the menu.

Down the side of the hall, two tables are laid out with toast, jugs of fruit juice and milk, a choice of cereals, biscuits and—if one of the volunteers has had the time—homemade cake.

The kitchen is a hub of good humour and well organized activity as our cooks prepare baked potatoes and baked beans with love and maximum efficiency. During the winter months, we've added soup and bacon butties to the menu.



Meanwhile, those who will greet our guests set up a table and chairs inside the hall and arrange sign-in sheets for volunteers, agency representatives, and guests. The large, blue Drop In sign is retrieved and will be placed outside the building along Garland Street just prior to opening.

Before volunteers are briefed and pray together at 10.30, the tea and coffee trolley, covered in a rare assortment of mugs, rolls in to serve the team and later the guests when they arrive.



As the first guests arrive at around 11, a small group of volunteers continue to pray for visitors, agency representatives, and one another.

After guests sign in, greeters usher them into the main hall and introduce them to befrienders. If a guest is visiting for the first time, a volunteer will collect some information including specific areas in which we can help.

Hospitality, sharing a hot drink and a meal together, is part of the way we seek to build a relationship of trust with all our visitors and a spirit of community in the team and the agencies.

Befrienders listen to guests' stories and discuss their needs. If possible, they introduce our visitors to agency reps who may be able to help. In addition, we contact agencies that are not present on Fridays to arrange for them to respond to our guests' needs. We also provide warm clothing and toiletries to guests who can use them.



Drop In Partners with Local Agencies

Bury Drop In is just one of many local organisations that serve the homeless and vulnerable in our community. One of our primary jobs is to be signposts, pointing the needy to the many other agencies that provide support.

Every week, representatives from three to four organisations set out their stalls near where Drop In guests eat and chat with befrienders. Initially, we thought privacy would be key. In fact, relaxed, obvious accessibility has proved more successful.

As we prepared to launch the centre, 23 agencies expressed support for the idea. While not all of the agencies send staff to the Friday sessions, they're all more than willing to have us refer our guests to them for additional help.

Working together, Drop In volunteers and agency representatives are able to provide practical help to meet the physical, emotional, and mental health needs of our guests.



Caring Is A Team Effort

Among the organisations that support the Bury Drop In are the following:

Probation-Accommodation Officers
Genesis Supported Housing
Genesis STARS
Julian Support – Supported Housing
Julian Support – Criminal Justice
Liaison and Diversion
North Essex Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust
Turning Point
Gatehouse Project
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Havebury Housing

Suffolk Coordination Service
Supported Housing
Health Outreach Team*
SNAP
Anglia Care Trust
Safer Neighbourhood Team
West Suffolk Housing Options Team
Parish Nurse

* Part of the Suffolk Marginalised and Vulnerable Adults Outreach Services

Special Thanks to Our Loyal Sponsors



Thank you to Beckett Chartered Financial Planners for their kind donation in support of the Bury Drop In! Beckett's are one of East Anglia's largest regional providers of impartial financial advice to individuals and corporate clients. They have more than 25 years experience supporting families and businesses alike. More information at <http://beckettinvest.com>.



A big hats off to Nando's Bury St Edmunds for their ongoing support in the supply of fabulously tasty chicken for the guests of Bury Drop In! Check out their website and order a takeaway next weekend, and remember they support the Bury Drop In! More information at <https://nandos.co.uk/eat/restaurants/bury-st-edmunds>.



And a great big round of applause to the Street Level Cafe, Abbeygate Street, Bury St Edmunds for their kind support. Check out their excellent main course specials board for just £5, Monday to Friday! 30 years experience and just a stone's throw from the Angel Hill and Abbey Gardens. Highly recommended. More information at <http://www.streetlevelcafe.co.uk>.



A big thank you goes to the East of England Co-op's Member and Community Services team for their generous donation. Check out their Twitter pages at #cooptokens or their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/EastOfEnglandCoop.



We have a big smile too for Wisdom Toothbrushes! We're grateful for their kind donation of essential toiletry items. Check out their products at <http://www.wisdom-toothbrushes.com>.



We like Greggs, too! Lovely sausage rolls, pasties and buns to die for. We would like to shake the hands of all at Greggs, Bury St Edmunds for their kind and ongoing support of the Bury Drop In. Check out their website for special rewards and gifts and the location of your nearest branch at <https://www.greggs.co.uk/home/shop-finder>.

How We're Doing So Far— Our 6-Month Report Card

By the Numbers

- Lowest attendance = 2 (first day)
- Highest attendance = 15 (29 January)
- Average attendance (2015) = 6.36
- Average attendance (2016) = 12.1
- Total number of guests = 72
(50 men and 22 women)
- Guests with mobile phones = 42
- Guests with e-mail addresses = 12
- Most regular guest = 21 visits
- Main reasons for attending
 - Help with housing = 32
 - Home-cooked meal = 25
 - A friendly chat = 23
 - Need for clothing = 21
 - Help with benefits = 18
 - Health problems = 16
 - Need for bedding = 16



Donations on Hold

The Drop In has been blessed with an abundance of donations of clothing and toiletries. Our storage space is currently maxed out, so please hold off on further contributions of these items for now. Thanks for your generosity!

And a Couple of Anecdotes

Recently, two new guests joined us at the Drop In. Our befrienders pieced together a sad story of how they became homeless. A group of teens were regularly causing disturbances in their neighbourhood in Haverhill. Our guests had spoken to the young people on a few occasions, but the trouble continued. Eventually, the couple's home was the target of what police suspect was arson.

Our guests were placed into temporary accommodations in Bury St. Edmunds, but they had nothing to their names except the clothes on their backs. We were able to provide them warm coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and socks. We also assembled bags of toiletries for each of them. After a hot meal, two of our befrienders drove

the pair to The Storehouse operated by West Suffolk Vineyard Church, where they were able to pick up food for a few days. They arrived at the Drop In very discouraged and departed thrilled and overflowing with gratitude!

About a month after we opened, we hosted a guest who lives at Tayfen House. Graham had been in the Royal Air Force but had fallen on hard times after his service in the forces. He became a regular at Drop In and often invited others from Tayfen House to come with him. In January, Graham—a recovering addict—became our first guest to transition to volunteer status. He's with us each week and does a terrific job setting up, encouraging guests, and cleaning up.

How You Can Help

Prayer: Please pray we will continue to provide excellent care and encouragement for our guests and for the health and well-being of those who seek assistance at the Drop In. Pray for enthusiasm, energy, and skill for agency representatives and volunteers. Pray God will be glorified through the work of the Drop In.

Volunteers: If you'd like to help at the centre, you can obtain information and an application by clicking on VOLUNTEERS at www.burydropin.org.

Points of Contact: We would appreciate having a designated point of contact at each area church. This person would publicise Drop In news within the church, advertise volunteer needs, and provide information on how to make donations to the centre. If you'd like to take on this duty, please e-mail admin@burydropin.org.

Financial Contributions: If you would 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 would like to contribute regularly, please fill in the form below and provide it to your bank. Thank you very much.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To the Manager(Name of your bank)

(Address of bank)

.....
Please pay Lloyds Bank (**30-64-22**), Risbygate Street, Bury St. Edmunds, IP33 3AH, to the credit of **Bury Drop In**, Account No. **30933568**

The sum of £ (in figures)(in words)

Every year/month/week* commencing on(date)

Until further notice/until*(date if appropriate)

NameAddress

Your bank account details: Sort code Account No.

Signed Date

*Delete as necessary