

## Kitchen and donations update

Life continues to be busy in the Drop In kitchen with the number of meals served per session averaging 75. On 21 September, the valiant cooking team prepared 104 meals for our hungry guests!

In the last few months, two more local companies have offered to support us through regular donations. Every week Vestey Foods are supplying large amounts of eggs, cheese, milk, and juice, which is an enormous help. We also receive wonderful ground coffee from F&E Coffee Roasting Company. We must have the best coffee served at any drop-in centre in the country!

We are very blessed to receive fantastic support from businesses in and around Bury. Marks & Spencer, Greggs, Nando's, Tesco, VC Curry House, and Street Level Café continue to supply us with food each week, and we work hard to source nutritious, good-quality food for our guests. A number of our volunteers have been pre-cooking main meals for us, and we are very grateful for the work of these unsung heroes.

A decision has been taken recently to streamline the type of goods we donate to our guests. We don't have the space to store clothing and food, and these items are available from other agencies within Bury. The Salvation Army has generously agreed to supply our guests with free clothing and shoes, and there are several other charities within Bury that supply food parcels. We are now able to keep good stocks of the items guests can't obtain elsewhere: toiletries, underwear, and sleeping bags.

Anthea Marshall  
Drop In Trustee & Kitchen/Donations Manager



## Key supporter moves to new job

Polly Kane was an early supporter of the Drop In as Families and Communities Officer with St. Edmundsbury Council. Earlier this month, Polly moved to a new position with Norfolk County Council.

Drop In Director David Bonnett praised Polly for her contribution to the charity. 'Polly's experience in many aspects of community life was fundamental in helping us in our planning stages and earliest operating days. Her expertise, particularly in fund raising and navigating the maze required in presenting a bid for a grant, has been a huge help,' he explained. 'Her cheerful good humour was always welcome, and her enthusiasm was infectious. We will miss her wise counsel.'

## A LISTENING EAR, HEARTY AND TASTY HOMEMADE FOOD, AND SUPPORT TO ADDRESS LIFE'S ISSUES DOESN'T COME CLOSE TO DESCRIBING THE SUPPORT BDI PROVIDES.

'It has been my great pleasure to work with Bury Drop In for nearly three years,' Polly said. 'During that time, I have seen the service grow to offer a wide range of support to innumerable vulnerable people. A listening ear, hearty and tasty homemade food, and support to address life's issues doesn't come close to describing the support BDI provides—all through volunteers who go above and beyond what many paid staff would deliver. Going forward, I wish everyone at the Drop In the very best. You have my undying admiration.'

All of us at the Drop In wish Polly well as she moves on to a new stage in her life.



CAROL MARSH OF CHURCH WALKS in Bury St. Edmunds, is a supporter of the Drop In. Carol, some of her neighbours, and friends from her allotment sell surplus produce in support of various charities in the town. One of their number produces delicious jams that are sold to swell the donations. We offer our hearty thanks to these dedicated and enthusiastic supporters.



**LOOKING FOR CHANGE?**

It's good to give, but sometimes the money that you give to people on the streets only helps keep them there.

Change the way you give by donating online. Your money will go to the Bury Drop-In and will help people get off the streets and get the support that they need.

TEXT W90036 £ AND THE AMOUNT YOU WANT TO DONATE TO 70070 OR DONATE ONLINE AT WWW.JUSTGIVING.COM/BURYDROPIN

**BURY DROP IN**

Supported by: Bury Free Press, West Suffolk, Suffolk, Bury of Edmundsbury

## How you can help

### PRAYER

• Praise God for the outstanding event at the Theatre Royal on 16 July. It was a special time when the wonderful work of the Drop In was acknowledged and celebrated.

• Please pray that our volunteers have wisdom, understanding, and patience as they support our guests in joining up their dots on what can seem a chaotic picture of life.

• Please also pray for Drop In leaders as they continue to reflect upon and grapple with the core Christian purpose and principles that are the bedrock upon which BDI is built as well as how best we can achieve the charity's goals.

• Pray, too, that God will provide volunteers for our sessions as well as for the specialised positions we hope to fill.

### VOLUNTEERS

We continue to need more people to help weekly, fortnightly, or monthly at our Tuesday and Friday sessions. Our greatest needs are in the kitchen, at the reception desk, and as befrienders for our guests. We're also looking for people to coordinate our publicity and fund-raising efforts, head up our volunteer training, supervise first aid, and assist with administrative duties.

If you'd like to help, go to [burydropin.org](http://burydropin.org) and click on VOLUNTEERS or email [volunteer.dropin@btconnect.com](mailto:volunteer.dropin@btconnect.com) or [theburydropin@btconnect.com](mailto:theburydropin@btconnect.com) to obtain information and an application.

### 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, Office B, Hoste House, United Reformed Church, Whiting Street, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 1NR.**

If you would like to contribute regularly, please contact us, and we will provide a form you can complete and submit to your bank.

**Thank you very much.**

**BURY**  
**DROP IN**

**NEWSLETTER**

Issue No. 7  
October 2018

A place where the homeless & vulnerable find help and hope

## August break allows Drop In to plan for future

For the first time since its launch in September 2015, the Bury Drop In shut down operations this August to provide additional training for volunteers, review its services for the homeless and vulnerable, and plan for the future. It was a busy month, and the result is that the Drop In is better positioned to handle what has become a very heavy workload.

One of the most important tasks was a review of the key jobs required to run the charity. We had earlier determined that it would be most helpful to add a part-time, paid coordinator to work alongside Director and Chief Executive Officer David Bonnett. In August, a small team produced job descriptions for both positions, and we have begun to advertise the new posts.

The review also identified new volunteer positions that would help the organisation. Among these are people who can manage our publicity, fund-raising, training, clerical, and first-aid efforts. These tasks currently are performed by the trustees, but help is needed for them to be accomplished more efficiently.

Other teams reviewed our session operations and the challenges caused by a small minority of guests who fail to abide by the Drop In rules. These discussions resulted in development of a guest contract that must be agreed to by all those who use our services and a policy that covers causes and procedures for banning guests who don't comply. Both of these measures were instituted when Drop In reconvened in September.

One of the on-going challenges we face is having an insufficient number of volunteers for the large crowds of guests who assemble on Tuesdays and Fridays. The current high—74 guests—was set following our break in August. During the break, we began



## WITH THE GREAT CHALLENGES WE FACE, ALL WE ACCOMPLISHED IN AUGUST WAS SIMPLY A STEPPING STONE FOR MUCH MORE WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

work on setting up a recruitment campaign to add more volunteers.

In addition to the difficulty of interacting with guests, this huge attendance also is causing

expenses to rise significantly. Our discussions in August included how to relieve some of the pressure on our kitchen crew at each session, and this review is ongoing.

Training sessions, a volunteer forum, and a gathering of volunteers to pray for the future of the charity rounded out the month's activities. All were well attended and helpful in preparing those who serve so faithfully for the future.

With the great challenges we face, all we accomplished in August was simply a stepping stone for much more work that needs to be done in the months ahead. As always, your prayers and support will go a long way in continuing to ensure we can provide excellent service for some of the neediest members of our community.

**Bury Drop In**  
Trinity Methodist Church, Brentgovell Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1EB  
**Opening Times:** Tuesday & Friday, 11am to 2pm  
**Email:** [theburydropin@btconnect.com](mailto:theburydropin@btconnect.com) **Web:** [burydropin.org](http://burydropin.org)  
Registered Charity No. 1165258

## Expanding service requires additional prayer and support

*I want you to share your food with the hungry and to provide shelter for homeless, oppressed people. When you see someone naked, clothe him! Don't turn your back on your own flesh and blood! Then your light will shine like the sunrise.* Isaiah 58:7

As we reflect on the past months, we are encouraged and grateful to God that the work of the Drop In has continued to thrive and expand, experiencing much blessing, both financial and practical, as we seek to serve the community. On entering the fourth year of the Drop In, we anticipate with compassion, confidence, resilience, and fortitude the diverse challenges we encounter session by session.

The very fact that numbers attending the twice-weekly sessions have grown is in itself a source of concern. Clearly there are still numerous street homeless people in our community and many others in local hostels. We regularly welcome up to 70 guests to each session.

It is evident that we have a number of strengths that enable us to attend to those in need. We serve tasty and nutritious meals, and we provide cakes and pastries to accompany tea and coffee. Guests can take away sandwiches, cakes, and pastries at the end of each session.

Much of the food comes to us via various businesses in the town. Without this benevolence, the costs of running the Drop In would be much higher.

We continue to meet our initial goal of being a signposting centre, and to further this purpose, we are pleased to welcome a number of the local agencies at every session.

The Housing Department of the St. Edmundsbury Council have formed a Rough Sleeper Prevention Unit. Having started with a single worker, there are now six people working in this area, one of whom specialises in dealing with alcohol and substance addictions. The addition of a mental health specialist will bring the team's strength up to seven very soon. We are fortified by strong links to this group.

Having closed during August, the Drop In recommenced on 4 September. As another chapter opens, some challenges remain the same. Many men and women are still homeless and need food, clothing, and shelter. We face new challenges, one being the high number of guests we welcome each session. We are adapting, developing, and refining our procedures and practices to ensure the best use is made of our resources. More volunteers are needed, encompassing people with talents and abilities in all areas and those with specific gifts.

From the New Year onwards, we will employ a permanent, part-time, managing coordinator to oversee the behind-the-scenes running of the Drop In. This is a step of faith and will require additional financial support. Please pray and give in order to maintain this vital provision within our community.

Thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement.

David Bonnett  
Chief Executive Officer



**ON 15 AUGUST, DROP IN GUEST JUREK,** accompanied by Kevin, a BDI volunteer, spent most of the day outside the Apex in Bury St. Edmunds drawing portraits. The purpose was to

showcase Jurek's unique talent and, hopefully, to provide further openings for him. The time was a great success. Jurek was kept busy throughout the day, and the Apex's scones and tea are highly recommended!



## Drop In evening at Theatre Royal is huge success

On 16 July, the Theatre Royal hosted an evening in honour of the Bury Drop In. George Vestey—the High Sheriff—and a number of local and county councillors attended a concert at the theatre. More than 100 people enjoyed the joint venture between the theatre and the Drop In.

Before the concert, there was a real buzz as people chatted and had a bite to eat. Some at the event looked at portraits sketched by Jurek, one of our talented guests, while others checked out old furniture painted and decorated by Drop In volunteer Louise Bell.

For several weeks, the theatre had been sponsoring and running a writing project with some guests from the Drop In. The irrepressible Danni (Writer and Director Danusia Iwaszko) helped the guests prepare autobiographical material relating

to their circumstances and homelessness.

The Drop In choir, under the direction of Sheila Mitchell, interspersed songs with the readings. They opened with 'We're Gonna Put on a Show,' and the group sang really well. New soloists excelled on the night. Ralph McTell's famous song was sung with four soloists, and the choir made the song its own by singing 'streets of Bury.'

As the guests' stories were read out by professional actors (pictured, left to right Howard Saddler, Georgia

## AS THE GUESTS' STORIES WERE READ OUT, MANY IN THE AUDIENCE WERE MOVED TO TEARS.

Richardson, Hayley Murrow, and Ean Ravenscroft), many in the audience were moved to tears. The evening ended with a standing ovation for the performance the choir and actors put on. It was a wonderful evening, and Sheila and the choir members felt very proud.

Our sincere thanks go to Karen Simpson, artistic director and chief executive officer of the Theatre Royal and her staff for facilitating the event and to Lucinda Meredith, associate artist, who produced the concert.

Choir members would also like to thank the team at the Quaker Meeting House, who opened their rooms for rehearsals over a 10-month period, and to Som from the Golden Chip on St. John's Street, who donated sausage and chips to our guests in the choir after each practice.

Rehearsals shifted this month to Fridays at Trinity Methodist Church during Drop In hours.



Vestey showed great interest. He was sympathetic to our goals and has become active in his support. As chief executive officer of a large food wholesaler, Mr. Vestey has been most generous in donating foodstuffs to the Drop In on a weekly basis, and we appreciate his contributions.

## High Sheriff visits, pledges support

Always delighted to welcome visitors to the Drop In, we seek to demonstrate our activities to a wider public, and also hopefully boost their assistance and sponsorship in some measure. Earlier this year, we welcomed George Vestey in his role as the High Sheriff of Suffolk. In this ceremonial role, he was chosen by and represents the Queen in our county.

During his visit, Mr. Vestey conversed with volunteers, guests, and some of the agency representatives who were at the session. He also spoke with Louise Bailey and Rhys Walters (left and right in photo), Rough Sleeper Prevention staff members for the local authority.

As we explained what we are trying to achieve and how the Drop In functions on a day-to-day basis, Mr.



## Helping our guests to take next steps

Since Bury Drop In opened in September 2015 to help the homeless and vulnerable, it has offered increasing levels of support to the guests who attend its twice-weekly sessions.

This has included offering a warm welcome, providing free meals, giving access to agencies that can help with various issues, and passing on donated food and clothing. Although we fully appreciate the

positive effect this has on the lives of our guests, we'd like to do more to help them move on to a better quality of life, however that may be achieved.

We've always seen ourselves as a charity that signposts guests to agencies best equipped to help them meet their needs. While we continue to do this, we've also come to realise that we have a

## A NUMBER OF OUR GUESTS HAVE STARTED WORK OR TRAINING IN RECENT MONTHS.



HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR of St. Edmundsbury, Cllr Margaret Marks, visited the Bury Drop In 21 September. It was a busy day, with 74 guests present and 104 meals provided. Accompanying her was Abdus Shahid, the owner of Valley Connection Indian restaurant, who is a valued supporter of the Bury Drop In, supplying tasty curry each week. The mayor spent some time talking with guests, volunteers, and agency representatives. She commented that there was not one solution for the often complex needs of our guests. Her impression was that the Drop In provides a warm, friendly environment and the food is of a high quality. We thank Cllr Marks for her visit and interest and look forward to seeing her again.

role to play in preparing guests for and supporting them in the next step in their lives. This led former trustee Chris Debenham to devote considerable time and effort in helping guests into voluntary work, paid employment, or training for work. When Chris was no longer able to provide this valuable contribution, this left a gap in the support we could offer to guests.

Over the past several months, we've put together a small group of Next Steps volunteers to assist guests who are ready to improve their situations. This may involve looking for paid work, but it could also mean voluntary work or training. To do this, we are developing closer links with agencies that offer guidance and support. As far as we are able, we have a volunteer at each session who can offer advice and refer guests to the agency best suited to assist with their needs. In this way, we hope to support guests in their efforts to move on in their lives in positive ways.

We have been encouraged to see a number of our guests have started work or training in recent months. We intend to do all we can to help more of our guests to do the same.

Mike Ryall  
Drop In Trustee & Next Steps Coordinator