

**Acton  
Homeless  
Concern**



**Advice • Support • Hope**

**AGM REPORT 2020**

# **Acton Homeless Concern**



**Advice • Support • Hope**

## **CONTENTS**

Mission Statement

The Management Team

Reflections from the Parish

Trustees Report

Manager's Report

Statistics

Treasurers Report and Accounts

Social Media Report

Services Before and during Covid 19

Our Mission is to provide **advice** and **support** for those who need shelter and **hope**.

## **Ethos & History**

The purpose of the Charity is to reach out to those who have nothing by providing a safe friendly place where they will be warmly welcomed as guests, treated with dignity and offered practical help.

Acton Homeless Concern came about in 1998 when the Sacred Hearts Community responded to those that came to the Church door seeking food, clothing, friendship and advice.

- All are welcome.
- Its premises help to develop and nurture friendships between clients and those who work for the charity
- It's located at the heart of the local community and is supported by it.
- It has expanded and has kept going thanks to the local parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, other local churches and faith groups, volunteers and the residents and businesses of Acton.
- Its remit has been financially supported by grants from the London Borough of Ealing and other providers as well as many individual donations.
- It works for justice to change the structures and systems that erode the dignity and quality of life of homeless people.
- It's where the homeless can access support networks where their needs are recognised, and their human rights are respected.
- It acts as an advocate for the most marginalized people in our society.

Many come in great need: lack of housing, poor accommodation, broken families, unemployment, mental illness, alcoholism and drug abuse etc. but the Charity is honest with itself about what it can do at any given time or place.

The ethos of the Charity is shaped by listening to those it serves and working in solidarity with them.

The spirit of the Charity is encapsulated in the Mission of Christ, "being sent to bring Good News to the poor": friendship, empowerment, transforming lives, social justice and truth.

## THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Anne Gray	Chairperson
Karen McDonagh	Treasurer
Fr. Fergal Maguire	Secretary
Mary Foster	Trustee
Peter Robertson	Trustee
Shirley Norton	Trustee
Maggie Curtin	Minutes Secretary
Ian Breen	Centres Manager

## OUR STAFF

**Rose, Emira and Damien - Emmaus House**

**Carole, Nadia and Les - The Damien Centre**

**Kim and Flavia - The Office**

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE PARISH

:

The line outside for lunch makes its way around the corner most days as the folks look forward to take-away. Since lockdown no sitting around the table for a chat and a rest from the cold and rain.

What a great service the staff of Emmaus and Damien provide for those on the margin of society in this area of Acton and Ealing and beyond.

Passing through from time to time, I sometimes pause to see at first hand the workings and comings and goings of the centre. From early morning the staff are on hand to make preparations for the day ahead. Deliveries could come at any time as products from companies and individuals are brought by van and unloaded unto the premises to be later given out to the homeless and shared with a smile.

The words of Pope Francis for lent come to mind as he writes” In order to give hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, to be willing to set everything aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference”.

The staff certainly give hope and bring a smile to many in these cold days. Besides the food on the stove, it could also be a pair of socks, an extra jacket, any post today or another request from a distressed person which the staff also do their best to fulfil.

We hope the vaccine will soon be available to all and things might become more open and free for all and they can return to table fellowship and other supports to help and comfort the many who continue to need our help at this time of pandemic.

A big Thank you to all the staff at Emmaus and Damien and to all who support the work that provides such a vital service to those in need in this area.

**Father Pearce Mullen SS.CC**

## TRUSTEES REPORT

Through this year hundreds of people have come to us needing help and support. We are grateful to Ian Breen and his staff and to our small army of volunteers who have, in this very unusual year, continued to provide a comprehensive package of services to our client in circumstances we could never have imagined. They are the face of the charity and our good reputation and acceptance from the local community is entirely due to their hard work, we are very proud of you all.

We receive most of our funding from individual donors, local fundraising and small trusts, which gives us freedom to decide how we are going to expend our income without restriction to best assist our clients. We are exceedingly grateful for this this freedom

We want to thank our volunteers whose working time enables to run the charity on a low, annual income Their services last year were valued at a very conservative £105,000

The anniversary year Golf Day, organised by Ciaran Casey and Tommy James, raised more than £37,000. It was a great event and the businesses and individuals who attended have continued to support the charity financially. .Thank you both, again.

We receive a substantial donation each year from an anonymous donor He would prefer that his name was not mentioned but he will know who he is, and we want him to know how grateful we are.

We received funding from the Emigrant Support Programme at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs They have supported us for many years. We thank them not only for the funding but for the help and affirmation we receive from them.

The Willow Trust and The Batchworth Trust have supported us financially for a number of years. These are small organisations who have chosen us when they are distributing funding each year. We are grateful for their support and for their trust in us to use their money wisely.

We are We have received donations and other support from local churches and schools, individuals who have done crazy things to raise money for the charity and people who just want to help. A little guy who did a brave swim and schoolgirls who rattled buckets. A confirmation class doing a sponsored walk. We are grateful to them all and we want them to know that every £ donated goes in full to services for the people they want to help. We thank them all for choosing this charity

And finally, a very special thanks to the priests and the parish of Our Lady Lourdes for your support throughout the year and for the continued free of cost use of the Emmaus House building, valued in our accounts at £65000 a year



## TRUSTEES REPORT

We met between 750 and 800 individual clients during the year, less than in previous years and due mainly to the departure and repatriation of many of our long-term Eastern European clients returning to their home countries, concerned about changes that might affect them when the UK leaves the European Union at the end of 2020. About 40% of clients attend regularly and use all services, others come when they are in crisis and need immediate help. By the end of the year we were beginning to see an increase in people coming for the first time, many of them female. There are no accurate figures for women sleeping rough as they tend to be less visible on the street and are probably poorly represented in national statistics.

Food continues to be the most popular service; an average 200 people came to the centres every day last year. Breakfast is provided every morning at the Damien Centre, cereal, toast, tea every day and bacon and eggs when food deliveries allow. There is also a constant supply of tea, coffee and snacks throughout the day in this centre where clients can also rest and relax. A hot lunch is provided every day at Emmaus House, always with dessert and tea and where there is often extra food to take away. Food is often drawn to the centres providing an opportunity for staff to assess other needs. Due to partnership with food distribution organisations, City Harvest and The Felix Project and donated food from local business we are able to provide this invaluable service at minimum cost, providing up to a 1000 meals each week for less than £100. In the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 staff and volunteers served 34645 hot meals at Emmaus House and 20012 breakfasts and light meals at the Damien Centre.

Showers are a popular service and in constant demand. The service is available on request when needed but scheduled Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 12 noon to 2 PM for men and Wednesday exclusively for women. Towels and toiletries are provided free of charge. The barber visits on Thursday for two hours and always has a queue of clients.

Clothes and household items are available to collect on Wednesday (women) and Thursday (men) but are provided at any time on request. During the winter we provided new sleeping bags and blankets to rough sleepers.

Doctors at Brook Green Medical Practice have seen clients by appointment during the year. Centres Manager, Ian Breen, who has advocated for more accessible GP services for people who are homeless has helped most of our rough sleepers to register with a GP practice during the year. This has often been difficult in the past for people without an address or proof of identity but campaigns by the Healthy London Partnership and Groundswell's 'My Right to Healthcare' cards it is becoming easier. Ian has distributed the cards to clients who are rough sleeping and when required he has helped with registration. As a result, almost all the charity's clients now have their own GP and all new clients are encouraged to register.

Health checks are carried out regularly by workers from St Charles Hospital. A female member of the team provides advice on Women's Health at the weekly Women's Group. We had two visits from Find and Treat mobile screening during the year. 70 clients were tested for Tuberculosis and one was found to be positive and was referred for treatment. Find and Treat is an NHS initiative to tackle the growing problem of TB in the UK. Doctor, .

Optician and Chiropodist are available by appointment

More than 1200 visits during the year from people needing help, advice and referral to our partner services. Emergency accommodation and accessing benefits were the most requested services. Most of these people would need more than one appointment, the average being four. This number does not include hundreds of people, who use the charity address as their mailbox, coming to collect letters. Or those who drop in because they need to chat

## **TRUSTEES REPORT**

Our partners for referral during the year included:

Brook Green Medical Practice

Alcoholics Anonymous

Ealing Rise for Drug Counselling and rehabilitation

Skylight Crisis, St Mungos and Street Link Outreach for emergency hostel accommodation

Ealing and Hounslow Winter Church Shelters - winter accommodation for rough sleepers

Ealing Food Bank (assessment and referral for food vouchers)

Inisfree Housing Association

Aisling for holidays in Ireland for homeless Irish clients

Ealing Homeless Programme

Ealing Broadway Repatriation Service

2M Solicitors

We would not be able to offer such a comprehensive range of services to clients without these partners

For most of the year we were able to provide normal services to clients

### **At Emmaus House to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

Hot lunch at midday

Distribution of clothes

Hot showers and hairdressing facilities

GP Surgery once a week, (at Brook Green Health Centre, transport arranged)

Health checks and testing (Fortnightly Checks for HIV and other illness)

Exclusive Women's day once a week

Access to Optician, Dentist and Chiropodist on request Guidance and crisis counselling (provided by partners): including: Advice on emergency accommodation

Alcohol and drug counselling Benefits advice and assistance

Fortnightly Legal advice clinic by Assistance with hospital visits

Benefit appeals and prison visits

Irish Support and Advice (Provided by partners) Weekly advice sessions for elderly client on housing, benefits and legal problems

### **At the Damien Centre to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

Breakfast and tea, coffee and sandwiches throughout the day

Opportunity to socialise and interact with peers, volunteers and staff A safe environment to rest and relax throughout the day

Advice and referral to Emmaus House services when required

Access to advice and counselling on an informal basis

## TRUSTEES REPORT

In the year to 31st March 2020 the charity recorded delivery of the following services:

<b>Emmaus House</b>		
Hot lunches	34645	
Provision of Clothing	2727	Requests (10,000 items)
Household items	159	(Requested and provided)
Showers and Haircuts	1559	
Health Services	135	
Holistic Health	394	People attended for various treatments
Women's Day	647	Visits
Advice Sessions	990	
<b>Damien Centre</b>	20012	Visits for food
Volunteer Hours	9528	

In January 2020 It became necessary to assess the impact that Covid 19 might have on the charity and clients, staff and volunteers. Older volunteers were becoming aware of their possible vulnerability and were concerned that they could be affected badly by the virus. They readily agreed to taking a break from volunteering with us for their own protection. There was also an element of concern regarding becoming infected with the virus among some younger volunteers.

We looked for advice from our partners and from the health professionals who worked with the charity and by the end of February, we had prepared new policies and procedures, Formal written guidelines and statements (*copies available*) were issued and published on social media. Staff and volunteers were involved in meetings and consultations on a safe way forward while still providing as many services as was possible.

Additional Trustee meetings were arranged and a sub-committee was put in place to provide staff with quick access to decision making.

By the end of February, a month before lockdown, Government guidance posters were displayed in both centres giving information on recognising and dealing with symptoms. All clients coming to the centres were provided with information on self-care and how to recognise symptoms. A small office was prepared where clients who were symptomatic could comfortably isolate while staff arranged for their care.

By early March it was recognised that we could not maintain any level of social distancing in the Damien Centre and it was decided that the centre should close. Staff were transferred to Emmaus House to assist with delivery of the new services. By the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March when the government announced lockdown, a full programme of closely monitored and socially distanced services were in place..

## **SERVICES from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020**

### **Emmaus House Monday to Friday**

Takeaway Hot lunch and food to eat in the evening  
Clothing provided on request to collect next day  
Toiletries and household items on request to collect next day  
Food Bank Vouchers and referrals  
Weekly support calls to elderly clients and volunteers  
GP appointment by telephone on request

### **Hot food at Ealing Soup Kitchen every weekend**

#### ***The following services were provided by phone or email***

Advice on emergency accommodation  
Alcohol and drug counselling  
Benefits advice and assistance - Benefit appeals  
Legal advice clinic by Zoom or telephone on request  
Benefit appeals

### *Our first socially distanced queue*



Some of our services statistics during the period from April  
2019 to March 2020

Free lunches  
provided to those  
in need 34,645



Free hot  
showers to  
those in need  
1,465



Referrals for  
accommodation  
from people  
sleeping rough 107



2,727 requests  
for clothes for  
those in need  
all given free



9,582 Volunteer  
hours across  
Emanuel House  
and the Damien  
Centre



647 visits to the Women  
and Children group for  
advice, support and a  
welcoming smile



990 client  
meetings covering  
Benefits, Housing  
& legal advice



Thank You

## MANAGERS REPORT

Numbers were up the beginning of March 2019 and we were seeing 170 plus clients each day. There were a lot of new faces from Europe, mostly seasonal workers arriving to work on farms.

In April we received a donation of 300 Easter eggs from London transport which was a great treat for our clients. We also started working with Neighbourly Care. They held an advice session Emmaus House once a week, helping elderly clients with benefits and loans and with form filling.

We had our first food donation from The Lions Club in April, and this has continued to the end of the year.

In May Ciaran Casey and Tommy James organised our annual Golf Day, the most successful to date, raising more than £37000 for the charity.

I went to the international school for the first time in May to speak about the charity, they have always helped us and this support was to increase dramatically during Covid 19 Lockdowns.

In June we saw a substantial increase in the number of Irish people coming for help. They needed accommodation, work and help with benefits. We had one person who was a second-year law student. He was homeless but relentlessly pursuing his studies on the street. The charity donated a laptop for his work and helped him with food and clothing until his student allowance came through.

Our regular corporate volunteers come from different companies each week, they come to see what we do, help out with service and to get insight into client's needs at first hand. We have many companies who regularly come to work with us like this and some are well known including Sotheby's Reuters, Bodens The Discovery Channel, Barclays Bank, The International School to name just a few. They are always impressed by the charity's work and many become regular volunteers because of their one-day experience.

In August we celebrated the charity's 30-year anniversary with a big party for clients which was much enjoyed by all

By September there was a small drop in the number of clients attending the centres and we were seeing about 130 people each day. This was in part due to seasonal workers were returning to their own countries but also a number of Eastern European clients were also returning due to fears about the UK leaving the EU. These numbers soon increased to the usual 150 to 180. Every day brought some one into the charity with a problem, homelessness problems with landlords and financial problems, no one was turned away and we would do our best to support everyone who came to us. I will never forget how the local community helped us this year. Their help and supported enable us to deal with every problem we were face with.

Christmas saw our Carole service followed by a party for clients and our volunteers Christmas dinner was a great success as usual. Clients had a three course Christmas dinner, and everyone received a present and a takeaway meal for the next day. More than 50 of our clients stayed at the Crisis Christmas Shelter and a further 100 attended each day.



In March, the confirmation class from Our Lady of Lourdes had a sponsored walk and raised over £2000 for the charity. Also, in March we had our annual Saint Patrick's Day lunch, bacon, cabbage and green white and gold jelly and ice cream. Afterward Irish clients gathered outside the centre for a singsong which was greatly enjoyed by themselves and passers-by. This was to be the last time that clients could be together in Emmaus House.

**IAN BREEN**

## TREASURERS REPORT

This annual report includes the statement of financial activities and the balance sheet for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

Full copies are available should anyone require them and can be requested during the zoom meeting via chat or they can be requested from the office.

Our income for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 was £271475 down £48174 from £319649 in the prior year. This reduction in income is due to donations received in 2019 for refurbishment works not carried out until 2020 financial year. *Income includes the donated value of the Emmaus House premises, estimated at £65000, from The Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes.*

Our total expenses in 2020 were £280,369 an increase £19285 on 2019 – This increase is caused by the use of above-mentioned donations on refurbishment works. The majority of our expenditure is salary for 8 employed colleagues.

Our reserve fund remains at in excess of £180,000 ensuring that we have more than 1 years' operating costs in hand, which is an incredible achievement for a charity of this size and is due to the generous donations we have received in prior years.

Our financial position has continued due to good governance and controls for this year which also included the start of the national lock down and due to efforts and work of colleagues and chairperson we were able to offer a service to clients and not have to close the centres as we are a front-line service for those who are most in need. We have not used the government furlough scheme.



At Acton Homeless Concern we provide free meals and other basic needs services to all housed and homeless clients. This would not be possible without the generosity of all our donors as we do not receive any local or national government funding to support these local community needs. We rely on the donations from business and Industry as well as funding from the Irish Government Department of Foreign Affairs and people in our community.

It is to the credit of such a committed team of colleagues and volunteers that we can offer all our listed services on such a small income, which would not exist without your support. The board of trustees are truly blessed to be working with such a great team and we thank everyone who contributes to the running and upkeep of the centres, as none of this is possible without you.

I know our clients are grateful for the warm welcome, smile and a hot drink and food along with a friendly face when it is most needed.

**Karen McDonagh**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2020**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>INCOME 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31st March 2020</b>	269,856	319,288
<b>Donations and gifts</b>		
Donated services - market rental of property	65,000	65,000
Donations	115,864	154,604
Activities for generating funds	48,992	49,127
Sundry income	-	557
Government of Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs	30,000	30,000
Willow Tree Trust	10,000	10,000
The Batchworth Trust	-	10,000
	269,856	319,288
Interest receivable	1,619	361
	<b>271,475</b>	<b>319,649</b>

<b>EXPENDITURE 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31st March 2020</b>		
Staff costs	152,454	149,151
Depreciation	1,084	1,061
Rent, rates and utilities	78,469	74,531
Telephone and email	4,134	3,927
Food and provisions	3,860	4,442
Cleaning and laundry	709	831
Repairs and maintenance	28,294	16,429
Insurance	2,497	3,212
Travelling	1,172	1,608
Printing, stationery and	1,742	1,327
Sundry expenses	1,420	2,219
Bank charges	494	126
Website costs	1,730	-
Legal and professional-Accounting	2,310	2,220
Charitable activities	<b>280,369</b>	<b>261,084</b>

## SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

In the last 12 months we have stepped up our social media engagement to reach out to supporters, volunteers and donors. As a small local charity, we do not have the resources to run the many different channels and platforms that are available.

Instead, our focus has been on developing our Facebook presence <https://www.facebook.com/actonhomelessconcern/> because it has the most flexible functionality for the charity's requirements and does not require significant administration. Over the last 12 months Followers have gone up 48% from 432 to 643 and Page Likes have steadily increased by 37% from 411 to 562.

We believe this has been driven by more regular Posts. We aim to write news and updates about the charity on a weekly basis. These might be about recent donations or a new service. The Post with the most views and engagement last year was in April. It was about our weekly takeaway service replacing the sit-down meal in Emmaus House during the first lockdown.

We find it a useful tool for people get in touch (recently almost daily) through Facebook Messenger. Typically, these are fielding inquiries about donations or how to become a volunteer and are passed on to the Centres Manager or the Administrator as necessary. We aim to respond within 24 hours.

Facebook also provides a shop window for our services and information about the charity. For example, we have uploaded a shorter version of our showreel video from the last AGM and include a link to our JustGiving page and website.

Our JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/actonhomelessconcern> is another notable way of engaging with our supporters. As well as a steady stream of monthly income, it gives donors a platform to express their support and highlight their charitable activities.

These range from making and selling Covid masks, sponsored events.. As more people have used our JustGiving page, we now have a system in place to thank each donor by letter if they have left their name. Many are anonymous.

The relaunched website <http://www.actonhomelessconcern.org/> continues to be a useful landing point. It contains links to all our other outlets, critical information and contacts. It serves as a repository for important documents, like the annual reports and the recent Covid announcements and safety protocols. We update it from time to time, such as the special Boden shop photo on the front page for Christmas, but it is not as flexible and immediate as Facebook.

**If you haven't already, please have a look at all our web outlets. We welcome your feedback.**

**PETER ROBERTSON**

**SERVICES AT EMMAUS HOUSE**

To 21st March 2020

Meals	Alternate Sunday/Monday, Tuesday to Friday. 11.45-2.00 pm
Clothing	Wednesday (Women and children) 12noon-2PM Thursday (Men) 11.45-2PM And on request
Showers	Tuesday to Friday 12noon-2.00 pm Wednesday (Women only) - 12noon-2.00 pm
On request Barber/Hairdresser	Every Thursday 12noon-1.30 pm
Chiropodist	Last Friday of the month 12noon-2.00 pm
Doctor/ Health Check	Referral on request
Optician	2nd Wednesday of the month 12noon-2.00 pm
Women and Children's Group	Wednesday at No.3 Berrymead Gardens 12noon-2.00 pm
Alcohol/Drug Counsellor	Tuesday 12 noon-2.00 pm
Dentist	On request
AA meetings	Saturday (Emmaus House) 11.00 am Thursday (Emmaus House) 7.00 pm
Homelessness	Advice and referral on request
Irish Advocacy	Friday (every 2 weeks) 12noon-2.00pm
Holistic treatments	Friday 9.00-12noon at No. 3 Berrymead Gardens

**SERVICES AT THE DAMIEN CENTRE:**

To 21st March 2020

Breakfast in the morning	Monday to Friday 9.00-12noon
Light meals in afternoon	Monday to Friday 2.00-6.00 pm Thursday: 2.30-6.00 pm
Saint Mungo's Rough Sleepers	12noon-2.30 every Wednesday

**The Damien Centre closed on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and staff relocated to work at Emmaus House**

**SERVICES AT EMMAUS HOUSE**

From 23rd March 2020

Telephone 020 89925768

Meals	Takeaway Hot Lunch and Supper to eat in the evening
Clothing	By request-detailed orders taken by staff for collection
Showers	Cancelled
GP Appointments	On request telephone appointments arranged
Barber, Chiropodist, Optician	Services cancelled
Women and Children Group	Cancelled. Emergency food and food bank vouchers provided on request
Alcohol and Drug counselling	In-house clinics cancelled. Telephone sessions For Clients in crisis situations provided
AA Meetings	Cancelled
Homelessness, Benefits and Legal Advice	On request by socially distanced appointment
Elderly Client Advocacy	In-house clinic facilities cancelled. Emergency Telephone appointments arranged on request



AN ROINN GNÓTHÁÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA NA HÉIREANN  
 DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND