

Acton Homeless Concern



Advice • Support • Hope

Annual Report 2019

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MISSION STATEMENT FOR ACTON HOMELESS CONCERN

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
Simon Makepeace	Trustee
Mary Foster	Trustee
Peter Robertson	Trustee
Karen McDonagh	Trustee
Shirley Norton	Trustee
Maggie Curtin	Minutes Secretary
Ian Breen	Centres Manager

OUR STAFF

Rose and Emira - Emmaus House

Carole, Nadia and Les - The Damien Centre

Kim and Flavia - The Office

MINUTES OF AGM February 2019

Location: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Centre, Acton Meeting opened: 19.40 Meeting closed: 20.35

Attending: Five Trustees and one Prospective Trustee: Vivienne Duggan, Mary Foster, Anne Gray, Father Fergal Maguire, Shirley Norton (Prospective Trustee) and Peter Robertson; Ian Breen (Centres' Manager) and 27 Members and Guests.

Apologies: Simon Makepeace, Karen McDonagh and Councillor Dr. Patricia Walker.

Minutes taken: Maggie Hingley

Facilitated by: Peter Robertson

Item	Actions & Discussions:
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Opening Prayer:</p> <p>Peter warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the trustees. Father Fergal Maguire led with a prayer in which he asked those present to remember in their thoughts, a client of Churches Together who had recently died.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 1st November 2017:</p> <p>Maggie reviewed the minutes from the previous Annual General Meeting, highlighting several points of interest. Anne asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes and as there were no questions, the minutes were approved.</p> <p>The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 1st November 2017 be approved by those members present.</p>
3.	<p>Trustee Resignations and Elections:</p> <p>It was noted that there had been no trustee resignations this year. Approval was requested for nomination of prospective trustee, Shirley Norton. Shirley let the meeting know that although she currently worked in a sector that was very different in nature to that of Acton Homeless Concern, she was fully committed to helping raise the dignity and respect of the homeless and vulnerable and looked forward to supporting an impressively run organisation.</p> <p>Approval be given by those members present to the election of Shirley Norton to the Board of Trustees of Acton Homeless Concern.</p>
4.	<p>Trustees' Report:</p> <p>Anne explained that this Annual General Meeting had been scheduled later than usual as it was programmed to be the first in a series of events throughout 2019 designed to mark the Charity's 30th Anniversary. She also let the meeting know that Peter and Lawrie had edited this year's brochure and had taken the Charity's timeline for the last 30 years as the central theme. She explained that the Charity's existence over this time was not a cause for celebration but that its achievements were worthy of being marked. The profile of those in need had not greatly changed over the years and included those who existed on the outside of society and had been marginalised because of mental health issues or drug and alcohol addiction.</p> <p>The Charity's founding aims were to give advice, support and hope and in this anniversary year, staff, volunteers and trustees would be supporting the promotion of respect and dignity for homeless people. This would be championed by everyone especially when working with housing, medical and other support services who dealt with clients.</p> <p>The Trustees report be noted.</p>

5.	<p>Centres' Manager's Report:</p> <p>Ian let the meeting know that he had been working at Acton Homeless Concern for many years. In that time he had been privileged to work for an organisation that offered the marginalised, the poor and the excluded support and comfort, even though it wasn't always possible to help everyone who had been forgotten by society. He offered his heartfelt thanks to staff and volunteers who worked at the Charity and who gave dignity, respect and hope to all who came through their doors.</p> <p>The Centres' Manager's report be noted and thanks be recorded to recognise all who supported the work of Acton Homeless Concern.</p>
6.	<p>Financial Overview and Questions:</p> <p>Anne presented the financial report for the year ending March 2018. She also welcomed to the meeting, Paul Davies from the accountancy firm Helmores who was supporting Acton Homeless Concern with the accounts.</p> <p>Anne explained that the income had increased by approximately £30,000 on previous years and this had been due to a rise in donations. Also included in the donations and legacy account was the market rental value of Emmaus House which totalled £65,000. Anne also explained that the use of Emmaus House was classified as a donated service and would have been included as an additional expense were the use of the building not donated free of charge. Anne informed the meeting that the biggest expense was the salary bill and the smallest expense was the cost of food which totalled £8,000; this was impressive considering that 66,000 meals had been provided in 2017/18.</p> <p>In response to a question asked by Rose Mwananshiku about why the use of the Damien Centre was not included as a donated service like Emmaus House, Anne explained that the Charity actually owned the Damien Centre so there were no rental issues attached to it.</p> <p>The report outlining Acton Homeless Concern accounts for 2017/18 be noted.</p>
7.	<p>Marking the Charity's 30 Years:</p> <p>Peter outlined the events planned to mark the Charity's 30 year anniversary which had started with this meeting. The next event was the Confirmation Class Pilgrimage to Westminster Cathedral and was due to take place in March. Confirmation candidates had been learning about the work of the Charity and they hoped to raise money by getting sponsors for their walk.</p> <p>A clients' party was planned for April and the Golf Day for May. It was anticipated that the Quiz Night would be in June and celebrations would then be paused in July and August. An Interfaith Service was planned for Autumn, this would take place after a 12 o'clock Sunday Mass, details to be confirmed when arrangements had been finalised. A volunteers' party was scheduled for October in recognition of the valuable contribution volunteers made to the running of the Centres. The annual dance was scheduled for November and December would be busy with the usual Christmas activities and celebrations.</p> <p>Peter drew attention to the video that was playing throughout the meeting which had been made for the Charity by students from the Met. Film School. He also drew attention to the 30th anniversary brochure which would be used to publicise the Charity's work to potential donors and other interested parties.</p> <p>Peter reiterated the importance of the anniversary theme of upholding respect and dignity for homeless people in all aspects of the work of staff, trustees and volunteers. The Charity would strive to echo this theme in all dealings with clients, outside organisations and in any part of society that had dealings with the homeless and the vulnerable.</p> <p>The 30th Year anniversary arrangements be noted.</p>

8.	<p>Questions from the Floor and Acknowledgements:</p> <p>How did Acton Homeless Concern view the efforts of Ealing Council to help homeless and vulnerable people back into society given negative reporting by many who had used Ealing’s support services to get back on their feet? (Asked by Paul Joseph): Anne replied that it was often difficult to get agencies to deal with this issue proactively, but the Charity would continue to advocate for and support vulnerable people when trying to get the Council and other agencies to their deliver services effectively and with compassion. Ian added that it was crucially important that clients and other vulnerable people were treated as human beings; although this should be obvious, it was often a missing component when clients were being passed from one agency to another. Peter added that the Homelessness Act 2017 had put the onus on local councils to be more proactive in preventing homelessness. It did not however, do much to alleviate the problems caused when vulnerable people were in the midst of homelessness.</p> <p>Had the new summer leave arrangements which had been trialled last year been reviewed with staff to gauge their success? (Asked by Rose Mwananshiku): Anne let the meeting know that the new arrangements had been trialled last summer and they had given staff the opportunity for more flexibility in planning their own leave. She explained that if staff had concerns about these new arrangements, Ian would review the new system and work with them to find a satisfactory resolution.</p> <p>Could staff and volunteers be assured that there were adequate health and safety measures in place regarding the number of volunteers that were allowed to help at any one time in the Centres as it often seemed very crowded, especially around the cooker area? (Asked by Sister Madeline McCann): Anne assured Sister Madeline that this issue had been previously addressed and had not since been highlighted as a concern. She further assured Sr. Madeline that Ian would review this issue if he felt that there were still concerns. Ian commented that at times, the Centres were busy with volunteers, but this was very encouraging, and it was in everyone’s interests that volunteers had a positive experience.</p> <p>Acknowledgement: On behalf of the trustees, Anne wished to thank Anthony Hamilton, third year student from the University of West London for all his hard work in designing the 30th anniversary brochure.</p>
9.	<p>Further Thanks and Closing Prayer: Anne thanked those present for attending and invited everyone to stay for refreshments. Father Fergal Maguire closed the meeting with a final prayer.</p>

TRUSTEES REPORT

As we reach the end of this anniversary year trustees are aware of the gratitude we owe to you all for the support and commitment you have given to the charity and its clients over the past 30 years. Some of you have been involved with Acton Homeless Concern since the beginning and know that there is as much demand for our services now as there was when the priests and parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes decided that they had to find a solution to the problems of people suffering from rough sleeping, mental ill health and poverty in the area. An article from The Guardian in at the time read:

“In Acton a group of volunteers work around the clock to run a soup kitchen for the homeless at Emmaus house. Johnny is an epileptic and an alcoholic. He has been living rough for over twenty years, spending most of his days roaming the streets and most of his nights sleeping rough. ‘Coming to the centre has helped. I get clean clothes, a bath and a hot dinner.’ He is just one of thousands of people who roam the streets.” [The Guardian]

30 years later the problems are the same, the people are the same, the only thing that has changed is the numbers

8,855 people were seen rough sleeping by outreach workers in London during 2018/19. As we know from our own experience these are the people who are willing to be found. From July to September 2019, an average of 22 people became homeless and slept rough for the first time every day (**data collated by the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN).**)

Sleeping rough has serious consequences.

An estimated 726 people died while homeless in England and Wales in 2018 - an average of two every day. The average age of death was just 45 for men and 43 for women,

A homeless rough sleeper is 9 times more likely to commit suicide than the average person.

Six in ten rough sleepers surveyed said they had been insulted by a member of the public, and one in ten said that they had been urinated on. Homeless people are 17 times more likely to be a victim of violent crime than the general public, and 47 times more likely to be a victim of theft. More than one in three have been deliberately been hit, kicked, or experienced some other form of violence while sleeping rough.

Three in ten female rough sleepers experience sexual violence at some point while homeless.

Every working day for 30 years staff and volunteers have dealt with clients who are living with all of these problems and more. They have given their time, energy commitment and respect to a group who are some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded people in our society.

We would like to thank all of those people who have worked with us over all those years. We cannot name each one, but we are eternally grateful to all of you

Anne Gray

TRUSTEES REPORT

Objectives and activities

The Aims of the charity remain:

- To ensure the delivery of a holistic range of basic needs services to homeless, poorly housed and otherwise impoverished people across the London area.
- To make a further contribution in raising levels of awareness to the problems of the group
- To increase, wherever possible, opportunities for rehabilitation and settlement
- To improve accessibility to counselling and medical services
- To enable clients to take control at levels which are acceptable to them
- To ensure equality of opportunity and to promote inclusion for client's staff and volunteers
- To investigate and further utilise other supportive groups and share good practice
- To provide good quality services and continuing value for money to funders and benefactors

The principal objectives of the charity are:

- Fitter healthier clients who are better equipped to deal with the problems of their lifestyles and who recognise the benefits of self-care
- Inclusion for clients, creating improved confidence and social skills, appreciation of the benefits to be gained through contact with peers and trust in support groups and agencies
- Earlier intervention is possible long-term health problems, for the benefit of both the client and the community at large
- Improved access to advice on emergency housing, drug and alcohol problems
- Greater understanding and acceptance of clients and their problems amongst the local community

SERVICES

EMMAUS HOUSE

Hot lunch at midday

Distribution of clothing

Hot showers and hairdressing facilities

GP Surgery once a week, (at Brook Green Health Centre, transport arranged for clients if required)

Health checks and testing (Fortnightly Checks for HIV, Hepatitis C, Diabetes, High Blood pressure)

Exclusive Women's day once a week

Access to Optician, Dentist and Chiropodist as required

Guidance and crisis counselling (provided by partners): including:

Advice on emergency hostel accommodation

Alcohol and drug counselling

Benefits advice and assistance

Fortnightly Legal advice clinic (advice on housing, benefits and other issues) Assistance with hospital visits, Benefit appeals and prison visits.

Irish Support and Advice (Provided by partners)

Elderly Irish support group

THE DAMIEN CENTRE

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 2019 the charity recorded delivery of the following services:

EMMAUS HOUSE

Hot lunches at Emmaus House 38050
Provision of Clothing 3143 Requests (11,000 items)
Household items 250 (Requested and provided)
Showers and Haircuts 1350
Health Services 250
Holistic Health 276 People attended for various treatments
Women's Day 1117 Visits
Advice Sessions 900
Damien Centre 20762
Volunteer Hours 13380

DAMIEN CENTRE

21000 visits to the centre for
Breakfasts, tea, coffee and snacks throughout the day

Food is always the most important service we provide; it is the reason most clients make their first visit to the charity. We have seen a reduction in the number of meals we provide over the past two years which we know is as a result of uncertainty over whether the UK leaves the European Union. Many the Polish and Eastern European clients who visited the centres every day for food have either returned to their homelands or to other countries in Europe. Most of these clients did not usually avail of other services on offer resulting in a reduction in the number of meals served that is not reflected across all services. We provide between 150 and 175 hot lunches each day at Emmaus house and between 60 and 80 light breakfast and light meals throughout the day at the Damien Centre.

Partnerships established with food distribution organisations have enabled the charity to further reduce an already very low food bill by almost 50% to an average cost of less than 10 pence for each meal provided. We receive free food from The Felix Project and City Harvest who source otherwise unwanted produce. All bread and dairy products, milk, eggs cheese, yogurt and cream that we require has been provided by Freshway Dairies in Acton for more than ten years. We also receive large amounts of food from churches and schools during the winter and especially at Harvest Festival time. Local faith groups provide "meal days" when representatives come to the centres and provide and cook meals for our clients. Kitchen staff have become adept at preparing meals on a large scale from donated produce.

Numbers for all other services remains unchanged. Demand for referral for emergency shelter accommodation is at an all-time high as is the need for access to medical services and advice on benefit entitlement. Online benefit application is a problem for many clients as is the requirement for bank account details in order to receive payment. By providing Mailbox facilities at the charity's address for post and the use of computers for applications we are able to help with the benefit process and with opening of basic bank accounts to receive the payments.

TRUSTEES REPORT

During the year our partners have included

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 (referral of rough sleepers for winter accommodation)

Ealing Food Bank (assessment and referral for food vouchers)

Inisfree Housing Association

Aisling for holidays in Ireland for homeless Irish clients

Ealing Homeless Programme

GPs Homeless Awareness Forum

Ealing Broadway Repatriation Service

The newly refurbished shower rooms and clothing distribution areas are in constant demand as is the visiting hairdressing service. The charity benefits from large amounts of donated clothing, towels and toiletries and with the help of a number of dedicated volunteers we are able to offer these services at no cost to our clients.

There is an ongoing programme in place for repair and improvement works at the Emmaus House Premises. Shower rooms, clothing rooms and offices have already been refurbished and redecorated and it is planned that work to the rest of the building will be completed by mid- 2020. Funding has been sourced for these works

Demand for GP services and optician, dentist and chiropodist is also constant. Doctors at Brook Green Medical Practice see our clients on an emergency referral basis or in a dedicated clinic once a week at their premises. We also promote and encourage clients to visit the health check clinics provided at the charity's premises by an outreach team from St Charles Hospital in London. The team checks clients for signs of HIV and Aids, Hepatitis and some cancers and they also do regular checks for blood pressure problems and diabetes. A female member of the team provides advice on Women's Health to female clients. We host twice yearly mobile screening for Tuberculosis through Find and Treat, an NHS initiative to tackle the growing problem of TB in the UK. Our Centres Manager is active in advocating for more accessible registration for health services for people who are homeless.

The new service provided by Neighbourly Care Southall, mentioned in last year's report is now operating providing counselling and advice for our elderly clients on housing, benefits and health problems. The service is popular and runs at full capacity once a week. We are in discussions with this group regarding the expansion of this service.

Our partnership with University of West London resulted in the production of a brochure to celebrate the charity's 30 Year anniversary by design students. A group of students also carried out a management consultancy exercise for the charity. The students met and spoke to trustees, staff, volunteers and clients and produced a full report on their interpretation of our work with suggestions on changes we might implement in the future. Legal advice for clients is provided by a professor from the university's Law School assisted by final year students

A new and updated website has been commissioned and will be launched at our Annual General meeting. The brief to designers for this new site was that as well as providing a useful information and communication resource for the interested public, it should also be accessible and user friendly for clients and anyone looking for the services we provide.

TRUSTEES REPORT

Volunteers have made a significant contribution throughout the year. We recognise that we could not deliver such a high level of services without their support and commitment. Our volunteers work in every area of the charity assisting with the preparation and delivery of food, sorting and distribution of clothing and household goods and performing some office and IT assistance when required. We have a team of 80 regular volunteers and this number is boosted by regular “corporate” volunteers who come to the charity in groups, supported by their employers. Volunteers worked 13,000 hours in the year. All volunteers receive full induction and training. A dedicated trustee has been appointed to ensure that volunteers have a greater opportunity to participate in the charity’s work. A programme of more regular meetings with volunteers is planned for next year. The programme will be volunteer led with staff and trustee support when required.

WE are grateful for the continued support we received from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs through the Emigrant Support Programme, the Willow Trust and The Batchworth Trust. As important as the funding we receive is their affirmation of our work.

We would not be able to provide our services without the support of the priests and parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes in Acton. We thank them once more for free use of the Emmaus House premises, valued at £65,000 a year.

We need to especially thank our local supporters who have organised successful fundraising events throughout the year. Ciaran Casey and Tommy James organised this year’s Golf Day and exceeded all of our expectations, raising more than £30000, reflecting the huge amount of hard work put into it by them, their family and friends.

And Jim and Betty Scully have organised our annual fundraising dance for many years. They have finally hung up their hats, but we thank them for the huge boost they have given our finances and the enjoyment we have had through their efforts.

We can’t forget the small army of volunteers who stand in the cold year after year to rattle their buckets for our street collection.

Thank you to the local community and local business’ for donations and free of charge goods and services and especially the food donations that keep our costs so low. We thank:

Freshways Dairy - Acton
 City Harvest
 The Felix Project
 Marks and Spencer PLC
 Sainsbury’s PLC
 Tesco PLC
 Waitrose
 Mrs McCloud and her daughter Carmen
 Maurice and Audrey Long for their ongoing support of our Christmas celebrations

The many churches, schools and individuals who support us year on year.

St Vincent’s School, Sacred Heart High School, Mount Carmel School,
 St Augustine’s Priory School, Greenside School,
 St Mary’s Church, St Peter & Paul Church, Berrymead Evangelical Church, West London Islamic Centre,
 St Andrew’s Reform Church, Chiswick Catholic Centre, Little Company of Mary Sisters, Saint Vincent De Paul Society – Amersham, The London Buddhist Vihara – Chiswick.

SERVICES AT EMMAUS HOUSE

Meals	Alternate Sunday/Monday, Tuesday to Friday. 11.45-2.00 pm
Clothing	Wednesday (Women and children) 12noon-2.00 pm Thursday (Men) 11.45-1.30 pm and on request in an emergency
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	on request
Optician	2nd Wednesday of the month 12noon-2.00 pm
Women & Children's Group	Wednesday at No.3 Berrymead Gardens Wednesday 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: (020 8993 6096)

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



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