

Acton Homeless Concern



Advice • Support • Hope

A.G.M. REPORT 2011

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Mural Painted by Clients at The Damien Centre in Church Road

***(This is just a small part of the painting which covers
one whole wall at the centre)***

MISSION STATEMENT FOR ACTON HOMELESS CONCERN

The Mission of Acton Homeless Concern (The Charity) is to be a living reality of God's Kingdom by respecting the dignity of the poor. The purpose of The Charity is not just to "do something for the poor", but to work in solidarity in a growing relationship which is mutually enriching.

The Charity evolved as members of the Sacred Hearts Community listened to needs expressed by the local community. This was highlighted by the many who sought food, clothing, friendship, counselling, professional advice at the church door, and who were stark reminders of the need of the church to make a practical response in the light of the Gospel.

The factors that make The Charity quite distinctive are:

- It is located at the heart of the local community
- It has been supported from the beginning by the local parish, local churches, and the local community in conjunction with Local Authority grants and grants from other providers.
- The buildings are conducive to developing friendships that extend onto the streets where clients continue to befriend and be befriended by those who work at The Charity.
- As well as providing material needs, The Charity works to change unjust structures and systems that degrade the dignity and quality of life of homeless people.
- It is a place where people feel it is all right to feel vulnerable. All are welcome.
- It is a source of networking that is accessible to the homeless where their needs are recognised and their human rights are respected.
- It acts as a political advocate for the needs of the marginalized.

Many needs are presented: lack of housing, poor accommodation, broken families, unemployment, mental illness and substance misuse etc., but The Charity is honest with itself in what it may respond to at any given time or place.

The ethos of The Charity is shaped by listening to the needy themselves, and being at the service of and in solidarity with homeless people. The spirit of The Charity is encapsulated by the following: Mission of Christ, "being sent to bring good news to the poor", befriending, empowering, transforming, social justice and truth.

THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Anne Gray	Chairperson
Simon Makepeace	Treasurer
Fr. John Leahy	Secretary
Fr. James Alcock	Trustee
Mairead Cassidy	Trustee
Mary Foster	Trustee
Tito Pereira	Trustee
Vivienne Duggan	Trustee
Ian Breen	Centres Manager
Kim Bobsin	Secretary to Trustees

REFLECTIONS OF THE PARISH PRIEST

The King will answer, "Truly I say to you: whenever you did this to these little ones who are my brothers and sisters, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40)

This year we have heard a great deal from politicians of all parties about the 'Big Society'; a term which we have now become familiar with, and learned to associate with people working and serving to help the local community. As the economic situation has tightened and it has become more and more difficult for local government and other benefactors of Acton Homeless Concern to maintain their donations to the Charity, we have seen an increased importance in bidding for funding in the part and value that volunteers add to the charity. The work of the volunteers has always had the highest value in the everyday life of Acton Homeless Concern, but now what has always been the heart of the work of Emmaus House and Damien Centre is appreciated in monetary terms too when the Charity bids for the funding that enables the work to continue.

When Acton Homeless Concern was the response of the priests and people of Our Lady of Lourdes Church to the teachings of Jesus passed down to us through the Church. *"The Catholic social vision has as its focal point the human person, the clearest reflection of God among us. Scripture tells us that every human being is made in the image of God. Christ challenges us to see his presence in our neighbours, especially the neighbour who suffers or who lacks what is essential to human flourishing. In relieving our neighbour's suffering and meeting our neighbour's needs, we are serving Christ. For the Christian, therefore, there can be no higher privilege or duty."*(The Common Good) So the idea of the 'Big Society' is already enshrined in Catholic social teaching and, indeed, has always been the Christian ethic, and it is wonderful to see this being increasingly reflected more and more not only in individuals donating their time and talents but in local businesses too serving the poor with great generosity.

Freshways in Acton have continued to give wonderful food donations throughout the year (for example 100+ loaves of bread at a time – all well within date). The lunch time meals at Emmaus House and the food provided at the Damien Centre continue to be essential sustenance for so many of our clients, and also provide the opportunity for community to form and for clients to learn of and access other services.

One of the Directors of Kier Housing, which has the contract for Social Housing in Ealing, despite his enormous schedule and pressure on time, came down from Sheffield to visit Emmaus House. Dan Maher, together with Matt Smith who is in charge locally, and Martin Clifford, undertook the painting of Emmaus House as a gift. They have been really great and their work has been enormously appreciated. It is so hard for a small Charity to find the money for these essential works. And Poore's on the South Acton Estate made a paint donation of £300 for the work

And all this generosity has come at a time of ever increasing need and even more funding cut-backs.

We cannot live outside God's Providence. Our Lady of the Poor, pray for us.

Fr John Leahy ss.cc - Parish Priest

MINUTES OF AGM 17th NOVEMBER 2010

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Welcome | Mairead Cassidy |
| | Opening Prayer | Rev. Tito Pereira |
| | Introduction | Mairead Cassidy |

2. Reflections of Parish Priest – Father John Leahy

Fr. John thanked everyone for coming, despite the cold weather

Reflecting on the past year, his thoughts have been on the generosity of those that serve and volunteer – they have a gift.

He highlights the atmosphere in both centres', which is terrific, with a sense of fun, of Co-operation while serving those most in need. Everyone who visits AHC is bowled Over by the work done & the atmosphere in which it is achieved. The work that Ian, Rose and the team do is tremendous.

A special mention of Anne Gray and the work that she does in such a business-like and professional way.

Reading and Approval of Last Year's Minutes Approved

Matters Arising – none

3. Trustees' Report – Anne Gray

Anne opened by announcing that income has increased yet again and puts the centre in a good position going forward

Anne thanked The Damien Centre staff have worked very hard – the centre now has a client art group and a band. Many thanks to Maureen and Carol and to Sr. Helen Bosquette who started much of the work that is now taking place.

Thanks to Rose, Emira and Mary who delivered services at Emmaus House so Magnificently within an extremely tight budget, to the trustees who have provided amazing support throughout the year, to the volunteers who are the backbone of the centres. Particular thanks to Ian Breen, the trustees are aware that he has taken more of the workload. has developed the centres, and is loved by clients, staff and volunteers. Next year will be financially testing, with cuts already announced by Ealing Council and Possibly from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, our two major sources of funding. Trustees are aware of the charities reliance on the support of private fundraisers and grateful for the money raised by the annual golf day, dance and the projects organized by Vanessa Canzini throughout the past year.

Cont/d.....

MINUTES Cont/d

4. Centre's Manager's Report – Ian Breen

Ian opened by thanking everyone for attending

He pointed out that everyone has worked twice as hard as the previous year

He extended his thanks to the volunteers and expressed his gratitude for their help.

He also thanked Carole, Maureen, Emira, Mary and Rose for their help and support this year.

5. Treasurer's Report – Simon Makepeace

The accounts were presented by Simon

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Lola and seconded by Sr. Helen Bosquette

He expects next year to be financially hard.

He explained a new format of the accounts this year showing the value of donated goods.

6. Any Other Business – Mairead Cassidy

Sr. Helen asked that we remember the three people who were part of the charity and who had passed away during the year.

Ian Breen was acknowledged formally by Ealing Council as Volunteer Manager of the Year.

Thank you to Kim Bobsin for taking the minutes

7 Closing - Mairead Cassidy Mairead extended thanks to all attending. Fr. James Alcock led the closing prayer.

KIM BOBSIN

TRUSTEES REPORT

All charities are currently dealing with the effects of the current economic downturn and the reality is that recession always has most impact on those who can least afford it. For our clients in particular, often seen as undeserving of help and support, financial cutbacks can be devastating.

Acton Homeless Concern has continued to provide a high level of services to clients this year despite the need for continued financial restraint. The trustees are aware of the efforts made by management and staff to maintain these services within a tightly controlled budget and we thank Ian Breen and his team for their hard work and commitment. .

This year the charity has seen an increase in the number of new volunteers at both centres. We are, as always, indebted to this magnificent workforce who make it possible for us to carry out our work in Acton.

We need to thank our main funders, The London Borough of Ealing and The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs for their continuing financial commitment to the charity. We also need to acknowledge the magnificent work done by our many regular, private fund raisers who are responsible for 50% of our annual income.

Despite the current climate and the threat of further cuts to funding the charity remains positive about its future plans. Our work programme for 2012/14, which is included in this report, demonstrates the level of support we intend to provide for clients and the expansion of services and the acquisition of larger premises is our next major target.

We know that this charity makes a difference to people's lives, with your support it will continue to do so.

ANNE GRAY

ACTON HOMELESS CONCERN DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012-2014

The charities development plan for 2012/14 has changed very little from plans submitted for previous years. The unchanging need for our services is dictated by a client base which is probably one of the most excluded and marginalised in our society. This dictates that we provide a level of consistency in the services that we deliver and that we continue to recognise the necessity for the provision of basic needs requirements.

Maintain first point of contact facilities for the targeted client group by providing daily basic life services, food clothing, hygiene facilities and access to medical care and advocacy, giving us the means to signpost available support services to clients.

Provide alternatives to street activities with the provision of 2 centres open 5 days a week

Link directly to local and national objectives for clients by providing weekly clinic facilities and daily telephone contact and referral to other agencies

Provide facilities for outreach workers from other organisations to have easier access to clients, enabling them to identify new rough sleepers in the borough and to offer referral to persistent rough sleepers for admission to emergency hostel accommodation.

Expand on existing referral rights with local authority housing offices, housing associations and emergency housing providers.

Provide facilities at two centres for Alcoholics Anonymous and Ealing DAIS to offer regular clinics providing counselling and support through individual and group activities.

Assist with sourcing new funding to enable the continuance of step up programme providing Works and Learning facilities focusing on Essential Skills and Vocational Guidance and geared to clients individual needs. London Councils funding for this project will not be available after 2011.

Continue to work in partnership with local Primary Care Trust and Hammersmith and Fulham Health Authority (Healthy Living Strategy). These partnerships enable weekly access to GP services and ongoing annual screening for Tuberculosis and Mouth Cancer

Work in partnership with all agencies in the borough dealing with the effects on both clients and the community of rough sleeping and street drinking, begging and drug abuse which is a continues to be a problem in some areas of the borough.

Maintain partnership with Ealing Voluntary Services Council to recruit, train and support volunteers and extend number of volunteers working in the borough.

Develop clinic facilities in partnership with age concern agencies to offer support and advice for isolated elderly residents.

The services we will provide to implement this plan will include but are not limited to:

Provision of hot midday meals five days each week
Distribution of men's, women's and children's clothes each week
Provision of showers and hairdressing/barber facilities
Regular weekly Doctor's surgery
Regular screening for TB, Mouth and other cancers which are on the increase for this client group
Chiropodist, optician and dentist referrals on demand
Advocacy, advice and crisis counselling
Access to legal advice when required
Outreach clinics by Contact Assessment Team
Drug and alcohol counselling
Dedicated Women's Day
Basic skills training geared to client requirements
Irish Advocacy and resettlement advice for elderly Irish Clients
Opportunity to rest, eat and relax in a separate environment (Damien Centre)

Measuring Outcomes

Statistics:

All services are monitored on a daily basis and take-up of each service delivered is recorded. Attendance at the Damien Centre is broken down in accordance with the council's requirement for statistical information on equality impacts and the charities requirement to ensure that care and service delivery is geared to cultural and ethnic differences. Separate statistics are recorded by the visiting doctor and by outreach workers from emergency housing agencies and these are included in the charities own analysis. National statistics for the group are regularly monitored in order to assess new trends amongst the client group (i.e. There is currently a marked difference in the perceived social status of some new clients)

Client satisfaction:

Clients are regularly involved in assessment of services. Written or verbal feedback is provided by clients and when necessary, services are adapted to ensure satisfaction. Services are measured against proven client need and provision by other voluntary agencies throughout the capital.

Partnerships

Services are assessed on a regular basis in consultation with our partners and outcomes from these services are measured against the objectives of all organizations working with our clients.

Compliance

Regular assessment of local and national strategy for the client group provides a guideline for trustees and management that ensures that the charity is meeting accepted standards of service and delivery and reaching set targets.

CENTRES MANAGERS REPORT

It's been a very busy year for everyone at the charity this year. We have seen more and more homeless people appearing from nowhere - all having very sad stories of how they became homeless, and all desperate to get roofs over their heads. Once more the charity and volunteers have been stretched to the limit in helping them, but everyone has gone the extra mile to help them try to solve their problems.

Dealing with the individual needs of so many clients is never easy, but the charity recognises only too well that everybody is different and needs to be treated in the way that feels most comfortable to them so that they can trust in the help we are trying to provide.

When people are living rough, on the streets there are many potential dangers for them. Questions like "*where will I sleep tonight?*", "*when will I eat again?*", "*who will help me in if I get attacked tonight,*", "*how will I keep warm?*" Homeless people have these thoughts running through their minds all the time. Add to that the fact that they probably haven't slept properly for some time and the world becomes a frightening place to be in.

Acton Homeless Concern and the people who work here recognise the particular vulnerability of the homeless and their need to be treated and supported in a positive way. This positivity helps to restore confidence and to give hope that life is going to get better and that life is not always going to be so hard.

Acton Homeless Concern is proud that we all work in unison to provide the care and support to all those who use the service. Each person contributes their own personal talents and abilities for the purpose of helping others. The charity has the highest volume of volunteers in the Ealing area, and this speaks volumes about our credibility and about the importance of the work that we carry out in Acton.

Of course next year will be another challenge! But for now the volunteers and workers of Acton Homeless Concern and the Damien Centre can certainly be proud of the fact that they have served, given, supported and risen to every challenge that has come their way.

Food, warmth, a roof over your head and supportable way of life should be a foregone conclusion in our society. Unfortunately there are people who fall by the wayside and don't get a chance to pick themselves up. That is why we are here, to offer support and encouragement and the opportunity for them to get back on their journey.

IAN BREEN
Centres Manager

A Tribute to our Founders

Acton Homeless Concern was founded by the priests of the Parish of our Lady of Lourdes in Acton in 1988 as a practical response to the needs and problems of a large community of homeless people sleeping rough on local streets. Touched by the hopelessness felt by most of the group the three resident priests, Father Joe McGeady, Father Pat Lynch and Father Peadraig Lyons, decided that they would, with the help of the local community, find a way to provide at least a daily hot meal for this impoverished group. The meal would be provided each day at a house the parish owned in Acton and inspired by the story of the hopelessness, abandonment and despair felt by two travellers on the road to Emmaus, the charity would be called Emmaus House. The priests and their helpers persuaded the local business community, parishioners and residents to contribute finance for a mid-day meal and clothing for the clients. But as the numbers coming to the centre grew it became obvious that more than food and clothes was needed.

The priests with the help and support of their parishioners responded to the problem and soon the charity was providing access to showers and other hygiene facilities as well as food and clothes. An advocate was appointed to publicise the plight of clients and to counsel and advise them and money from donations was used to employ a project worker but if you are homeless and sleeping rough you are often sick without access to a doctor, have toothache without access to a dentist, cannot read without glasses and have no access to an optician. Partnerships were formed with local health professionals in order that clients could access all these services through the charity.

The charity was now providing for most of the clients basic physical needs but Emmaus house could only open for a limited number of hours each day. There was nowhere for people to go in the early morning and late afternoon and they had no opportunity for social interaction. This became a matter of great concern for father Pat Bradley, the then parish priest of Our Lady of Lourdes. Heads were put together and begging bowls came out again and they found the wherewithal to open a second centre, a café style premises where clients could rest and relax before facing a night sleeping rough and where, most importantly, they could socialise with their peers and supporters. The café premises was rented for a period of time until Father Chris AcAneny, the new parish priest, sourced a lump sum that enabled its purchase by the charity..

The current financial downturn creates difficulties for all charities but particularly for organisations like Acton Homeless Concern whose clients have a high level of basic needs. The cost of providing services is increasing at a time when funding at all levels is being reduced. Father John Leahy the current parish priest and his colleagues work tirelessly to source free of charge food, furniture, equipment, building repairs and refurbishment for the charity. He ensures that the homeless and impoverished in Acton benefit from any surplus funds available to him. His vision for the future includes a bigger centre with more resources that will provide help and support to clients 24 hours a day and will ensure that no one will have to sleep on the streets of Acton. We offer our thanks to: Fathers Joe McGeady (*RIP*), Pat Lynch, Peadraig Lyons, Tom Mullins, Kieran Murtagh, Fintan Crotty, Chris McAneny, Pat Bradley (*RIP*) John Leahy and Deacon Tito Pereira and to all the many priests, brothers and their associates who have worked so tirelessly in Acton for so many years .

THANK YOU

Acton Homeless Concern would once again like to acknowledge and offer it's thanks to the following for their continued financial support. .

Organisations

London Borough of Ealing
The Emigrant Support Programmes Irish Department of Foreign Affairs
The Forgotten Irish Fund
Fr. John Leahy and his team at The Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Acton
Kier Construction Limited
Marks and Spencers PLC
Freshways Dairy in Acton
Barclays Bank
The Parish of Our Lady of Grace and St Edward in Chiswick who yet again made us beneficiaries of proceeds from their Annual Summer Fair.
Schools and churches, including St. Vincent's School, Mount Carmel School, St. Mary's Church – Acton, St. Peter & Paul Church – Northfields.

Individuals

Jim Scully who once again organised great fund raising dance.

Kieran Casey and Tommy James for the annual golf day which has become our main, private source of funds.

Vanessa Canzini who ended her fund raising year with a fantastic quiz night in Chiswick.

The Frozen Army of supporters who stood in the snow for our December street collections.

Maurice and Audrey Long for their ongoing support each winter..

The catholic community of great Missended for their contributions to the clients Christmas Dinner

Our numerous private benefactors.

Our volunteers, without them it would not be possible to provide such a high volume of services for our clients.

SIMON MAKEPEACE
Treasurer

ACTON HOMELESS CONCERN - LIST OF SERVICES**EMMAUS HOUSE**

Meals	Alternate Mon, Tues to Fri, and alternate Sun	12.00–1.50 pm
Clothing	Wednesday (Women and Children) Thursday (Men)	12.00–2.00 pm 12.00–2.00 pm
Showers	Tuesday to Friday (and on request)	12.00–2.00 pm
Barber/Hairdresser	Thursday	12.00–2.00 pm
Chiropodist	First Friday of the month	12.00–2.00 pm
Doctor	Friday	12.00–2.00 pm
Optician	First Wednesday of the month	12.00–2.00 pm
Women & Children group	Wednesday (Nr. 3 Berrymead Gardens)	12.00–2.00 pm
Alcohol/Drug Counsellor		Advise and referral on request
Dentist		On request
Referrals/advice		On request
Benefits Agency	Alternate Tuesday	
Life Skills Training	Thursday	2.00-4.00 pm
AA Meetings	Saturday (Emmaus House) Sunday (Nr.3 Berrymead Gardens)	11.00 am 8.00 pm
Irish Advocacy	First Tuesday of the month	12.00–2.00 pm
Irish Group	First Tuesday of the month (Nr. 3 Berrymead Gardens)	12.00–2.00 pm

DAMIEN CENTRE

Refreshments & Social Activities	Monday Tuesday to Friday	11.30 am – 8.00 pm 10.30-12.00 am; 2.00 – 8.00 pm
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USE OF SERVICES FOR 1 APRIL 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2011

EMMAUS HOUSE

SERVICES	2010	2011
Meals	43879	43091
Showers & Haircuts	*****	804
Clothes	*****	1825
Doctor	305	311
Chiropodist	61	52
Optician	31	27
Accommodation Advice	438	450
General Advice	790	795
DAMIEN CENTRE	28371	29374

VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR THE YEAR

Emmaus House	11954.5	12525
Damien Centre	1898	1753

***** Statistics for these services were not included in 2010 report

Emmaus House and Damien Centre close for alternate two weeks in August

Volunteers to serve at Emmaus House and Damien Centre are always welcome.

Please ring Emmaus House (020 8992 5768) or Damien Centre (020 8993 6096)

Should you require information about any of our services.

Ian Breen, staff and volunteers would be happy to help you further.

Our Thanks to Tower Systems Limited in Watford for their help with the production of this report

*ACTON HOMELESS CONCERN (Emmaus House and Damien Centre) 1 Berrymead Gardens, London W3 8AA
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