



November & December Newsletter

Merry Christmas Eve! And... happy belated bonfire night?

If you're confused, it's because we have decided to combine the November and December newsletters in order to unpack all the updates and information in one very merry little package.

Last month's newsletter focused on introducing the Housing Project and explaining what it's doing, what our mission is, the process of how it all came together – and the work that went into refurbishing and redecorating the house so the residents could move in. This month, our newsletter will focus on introducing the incredible team that has been working to build up so much of what this project has already achieved.

The need for housing is huge and we see a lot of suffering because of it. Ann and Simon Waters have always felt passionate about the community and tackling homelessness, but within the last 5 years, they began to look and think more about providing safe housing to people in need.

In the last team meeting, Ann acknowledged that the biggest issue is that we risk doing nothing because we think it takes too much risk or effort. Ann said, "we want to provide safe accommodation where healthy relationships can be built. Long-term, we aim to purchase more properties to develop ways to offer work experience and social enterprise". With starting and building up a project like this, "the team is the biggest thing."

With such a considerable vision, it's a community effort to improve the state of homelessness – and this is where the work of our amazing Support Team comes in.

Meet the Support Team



From the left: Marie, Margaret, Peter, Ann and Gillian during this month's team meeting

Most of the people who have volunteered to be a part of the Housing Project come into it with amazing backgrounds; whether currently involved at the Acorn Community Centre or experienced through other support environments.

While Covid-19 has made volunteering almost impossible for some of our team members – there are currently 14 people supporting the household and even more who have helped it come together.

Marie (to the very left in the photo) is a volunteer who works at the Acorn Centre, running the job hub – and so she has volunteered to work with the residents in sorting out their benefits paperwork and looking for work. While speaking about her motivation in volunteering for the Housing Project, Marie said she was already very active within the community and has a definite passion for it - and so wanted to get involved.

John and Sarah (also featured in the photo) have known Ann and Simon previously and wanted to join the team in order to make a difference to the serious issue of homelessness. John has helped with the maintenance of fire doors within the house – fitting and painting them. Sarah has been part of the rotation in cooking and weekly house meetings with the residents on Fridays. The current restrictions have prevented them from being as involved as they'd like – but so far, they have made up an integral part of our Housing Team. In answering what made her want to be part of the Housing Team, Sarah said: "I felt like I said no to a lot of things and it was time to say 'yes!'"

Janet and David are other volunteers who have offered to be a point of contact for the Housing Project Team. Janet has a background of facilitating the support for people working in the frontline of the NHS who need someone to talk to. Janet said, "I hope it will be a safe space where those working with the guys can come and speak about things that have happened; challenging or amazing, and how they handled it. A place where they can think about what's happened and learn from it and perhaps change next time if necessary."

Recent Events

WE HAVE FILLED ALL FOUR ROOMS!

From the last newsletter you will know about the first three tenants to have moved into our supported housing: Jordan, Daniel and Aaron. Since then, the house has welcomed it's fourth and final tenant, Reece.

The residents have been volunteering at the local Acorn Centre, spending around two days a week building skills and friendships within the community.

While volunteering, they have been painting walls, building the shed shown in the photo and working with the Billy's Lake Project.



HOUSE MEETINGS

Every Friday, members of the team alternate between being in charge and running the house meetings. Together, they cook and catch up with each resident. This also functions as a great opportunity for the residents to spend time with each other and form a solid bond.



BEFORE



AFTER

This was a wardrobe that was left by the previous owners of the house and was originally too large to fit into the space of the bedroom. However, one of one of the residents divided it in half to optimise space – one of the many DIY projects the residents have been doing to feel more at home and learn new skills.



CHRISTMAS



The current Tier 4 restrictions make it challenging for the residents to spend their Christmas with their families, but Ann and Simon will be able to continue to provide support.

Marcus and Lacey have arranged to spend time during the evenings to play board games and watch Christmas movies with the residents.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Thank you to all for your help and dedication over the past year. None of this would have been possible without your prayers and support. We appreciate your time and look forward to a new year which we are sure will include many blessings to come!