



## Cambridge Churches Homeless Project

Dear Volunteers,

At the closing of this winter, I write to you to provide a further update on CCHP.

Whilst CCHP has been unable to run as normal due to COVID-19 we have been successful in supporting 17 vulnerable people who have not been able to be housed elsewhere. Further details of this have been provided to you through updates from Stephen Barwise, however I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generous donations which has enabled this support.

CCHP was still able to work alongside our partners to support the emergency response that was needed in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. For 6 months, volunteers have sorted laundry at Masters House, checking for needles, before bed linen and towels could be sent to Swiss Laundry.



*Ko Minnaar, CCHP Volunteer, checking for sharps at Master's House where up to 70 homeless people were placed into temporary accommodation this winter. May 2021*

We have faced several changes within CCHP, of which more below ...

Firstly, some of you may be aware, the Rev Jon Canessa, an original founding member, our recent Chair, and an invaluable part in the CCHP family for many years, has now stepped down. Jon is moving to Newcastle with his family where he will be taking up a new position at Newcastle Cathedral to work with ex-offenders and homeless people. I am sure you will all join me in expressing our sincere thanks to Jon for his diligence and commitment to CCHP and wish him the very best for the future.

As a result of Jon vacating the position of Bishop's Officer for the Homeless, and after some re-arranging of the role, CCHP is delighted to welcome Rev'd Sophie Young, curate at St Philips church, into this position. The post is a self-supporting role that will be licenced by The Right Rev'd Stephen Conway, Bishop of Ely and hosted by CCHP, as her new employer. Sophie will work alongside several organisations to provide pastoral care to the street-life and homeless community and to enable people of all faiths and none to explore faith and spirituality. Sophie will also work on supporting college chapels and the wider faith community to develop their response to supporting people experiencing homelessness. We are very excited that Sophie will be joining CCHP and I am sure that you will all join me in welcoming Sophie in her new role.

We have also recently welcomed the Rev'd Dr Robert Mackley, Priest in Charge at Little St Mary's church as a CCHP Trustee. Fr Robert was one of the original founding members of CCHP and Little St Mary's has been a hosting church since CCHP first began. We are also thrilled to announce that Gavin Howard, who established the Cambridge Besom, will be offering external line management to Sophie.

After many hours of dedicated voluntary service to CCHP Jackie Cottingham has stepped down from her volunteer position as Volunteer Co-ordinator. Many of you will have received emails from Jackie in the past as she has spent countless hours working to manage the volunteer shifts for CCHP. Even late at night when a volunteer did not turn up as promised, Jackie has worked tirelessly to find a last-minute replacements and to resolve any volunteer difficulties. CCHP would like to thank Jackie for all her hard work and dedication. If you have an interest in offering your support to help us co-ordinate our volunteers in the future, please contact us at [info@cchp.org.uk](mailto:info@cchp.org.uk).

Finally, I would like to advise that I am now in the role as Chair of CCHP. I have been involved with the organisation since 2015, initially as core team member and then as Trustee since CCHP became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you whilst working on the front desk at several churches over the last seven years. I am privileged and excited to take up this role and I would ask you your prayers for the future of CCHP, specifically please could I ask you to pray for the following:

- For those people, who despite the concerted efforts of the homeless and faith sectors, are struggling to find a place they can call home.
- For the local authorities and homeless charities as they continue to adjust to a different way of working, particularly as we look to move out of the pandemic lockdown restrictions.
- For the many individuals and voluntary organisations that have been providing practical support for those who are in the process of moving from temporary accommodation provided in the past year to more permanent housing. These wonderful organisations include It Takes a City, the Salvation Army, Caring for Cambridgeshire's Homeless, Cambridge Street Pastors, Cambridge StreetBite, Cambridge Homeless Outreach Programme and the Cambridge Besom.
- Please pray for us at CCHP as we transition into this new period and continue to plan towards what this coming winter will entail.

We intend to host a face-to-face meeting this coming Autumn with our coordinators and interested volunteers to discuss our plans for Winter 2021/22 and will make further contact about this shortly.

Until then, please accept our sincere thanks for your ongoing support at this time.

Heather Simmons  
Chair of the Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project

Dear All

Jon Canessa, May 2021

I am writing to thank you for your support for CCHP during my time as its chair.

I have been very blessed to have worked with an incredible team of Trustees, both past and present. The current team are a dedicated, diverse, compassionate and gifted group of people and I am grateful to each one for all they bring to CCHP. The late and much missed, Barrie Woodman, Lucy McKitterick, Julia Smith, Marie Bull and Chris Jenkin, have all made huge contributions as Trustees in recent years and their efforts have enabled CCHP to flourish.

I am also deeply grateful to Jemma Strachan for her energy, dedication and hard work, not only during the winter night shelter, but for the way she continued to support homeless individuals throughout the rest of the year too. Stephen and Judith Barwise have been a huge presence for CCHP during the past year in particular; I and all the trustees are indebted to them for all their recent efforts.

There are so many people I would like to thank, but of course, the problem here is there are just too many people to name! The truth is, CCHP would not have been possible without the collective efforts of our church congregations and that is why I am writing to thank you as I move on from CCHP. So many of you have worked hard, and your efforts, by and large, will have been unseen and unnoticed by others, but your contribution – together with everyone else's – is precisely why CCHP has flourished each winter and it is why some many homeless people look at the churches of this city as somewhere where they know they are made to feel welcome.

Thank you to each of you, who over recent years have given your time to buy and prepare food, to cook, clean toilets, wash bed linen, offer a warm welcome, pray, stay awake for half a night (if you were lucky!!) and so on . . . Thank you for doing this, because it matters. I have been fortunate enough to see numerous people go flourishing after they have spent a winter or two on our church floors. Many of those who have experienced the warm hospitality of our churches, regardless of their situation, will not forget the loving kindness they have been shown by you.

I am sad to be leaving Cambridge and the many, many wonderful people I have been blessed to know through CCHP, but I am thrilled to be moving on, in the knowledge that Cambridge has a recognised Chaplain for those who are homeless in the city. I know that, with your support and prayers, both Sophie in her role as Chaplain to Homeless People, and Heather as CCHP's new Chair will lead and inspire the work in the future.

I will sign off with the 'Blessing of St Frances' which has been adapted and adopted by the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project. I hope that you feel able to pray it and continue to support CCHP in the future.

*May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,  
so that we may live deep within our hearts.*

*May God bless us with anger at injustice and exclusion,  
so that we may bring hope, build community and seek reconciliation.*

*May God bless us with tears  
shed for those who feel lost to their addictions, compulsions and poor mental health.  
so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them.*

*And may God bless us with enough foolishness  
to believe that we can make a difference in this world,  
so we can do what others claim cannot be done,  
to bring justice and kindness to all we meet.  
Amen.*