

Windsor Homeless Project Sleep Out Fundraiser 2019

Press release: Sleep under the stars at The Sleep Out to support the homeless

Windsor Homeless Project is calling on supporters, and others who want to help rough sleepers, to sign up to their annual Sleep Out fundraising event.

The Sleep Out gives fundraisers the chance to show their solidarity for rough sleepers and sleep out under the stars to raise money for the work of the project in supporting and protecting homeless people in Windsor.

The Sleep Out on Friday, April 5 is held at Alma Road Youth and Community Centre and includes food and entertainment. Some people will then go home for the night but the sponsored sleepers will then settle down for the night in their cardboard box. Fundraisers must wrap up warm and bring pillows, sleeping bags and gloves.

The minimum age to take part is 14 but children aged between 14-17 years old must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

People can come as a team from work or a family or as individuals. Suggested donation for the evening is at least £15 and sleepers are asked to commit to a minimum of £200 sponsorship.

WHP manager, Nick Roberts said: "Homelessness and rough sleeping won't go away this day or the next, but with your help we can make a difference".

All money raised will help the charity to provide support for rough sleepers and other vulnerable people in Windsor and help them overcome challenges.

For more information, to register for The Sleep Out or to donate visit www.windsorhomelessproject.org or email Benta@WindsorChristianAction.org

Note to Editor

Windsor Homeless Project was set up in 2009 after a homeless man was found dead on a bench by a church in Windsor.

Local churches reacted by collaborating and setting up the project to try and prevent that from happening again.

The project offers empathy and practical support to the homeless and vulnerable in a non-judgemental and compassionate way.

Staff and volunteers run two drop-in centres four times a week providing guests with a cooked meal, showering and washing machine facilities as well as access to donated food, clothing and toiletries.

Guests are also signposted to help for addiction and trauma, housing and the causes of their homelessness. Windsor Homeless Project helps around 25 people every day.

In 2013 Windsor Christian Action was set up as a registered charity to oversee the work of Windsor Homeless Project and Windsor Street Angels.

Windsor Street Angels is a team of volunteers who go out on a Friday and Saturday night providing support to vulnerable rough sleepers or revellers after a night out - providing access to phone chargers, a listening ear or basic first aid, as well as a safety hub at Windsor Baptist Church. Windsor Foodshare distributes food parcels (donated from local businesses and residents) to people and families in need. Around 50 people receive food help every month.

History in greater detail

In 2009 a homeless man was found dead on a bench by a church in Windsor. In response local churches collaborated and set up the Windsor Homeless Project to do whatever it could to prevent this from ever happening again.

The project started as a Saturday soup kitchen until a regular guest asked one of the volunteers if they could help him find somewhere to live and they realised they could put volunteer's skills to other uses than cooking!

By 2011 the Windsor Homeless Project had a clear vision: prevention of homelessness, helping its guests into housing, supporting guests as they became tenants, and helping them deal with the causes of their

homelessness. Trust amongst the vulnerable can only be achieved by creating compassionate and non-judgmental engagement where possible. At the two drop-in centres, now run four times a week, guests come for a cooked meal, and showering and washing machine facilities as well as access to donated food, clothing and toiletries

In 2013 a registered charitable body, Windsor Christian Action, was set up to oversee the work of the Homeless Project and Windsor Street Angels (both of which had formerly been under the 'umbrella' of Churches Together in Windsor)

The Windsor Street Angels are a team of volunteers who go out in Windsor on Friday and Saturday nights. They work with those who are vulnerable or in need of support at night: From providing soup for the homeless, access to a phone charger for revellers who have lost their friends, to a listening ear or basic first aid.

Windsor Foodshare has also become part of Windsor Christian Action. They distribute food parcels made up of donations from businesses and individuals. About 50 Windsor families take up this offer each month - often just needing help to get through a tough few weeks. Records show that most families only need a few weeks support showing that this makes a long term difference to families on the edge.

Fast forward to 2019 and the Street Angels have also opened a night time safety hub and the Homeless Project has assisted over 60 genuinely homeless people into housing. Countless more have been encouraged to enter treatment for addictions, and most impressively, three Guests have entered employment.

On a typical day the Homeless Project team of wonderful volunteers will help around 25 people. Each guest is assessed when they first arrive at the project and resources are focussed on how best to get them back on their feet and into a normal way of life as quickly as possible. Our guests typically had a significant trauma that triggered their situation, and / or may be suffering from addictions that not only mask the deep rooted causes but greatly affect their chances of leading a normal life.

The project has very close ties with a local GP practice, and together they have succeeded in helping guests receive necessary medical treatment. With close ties to housing associations the project can help guests through the housing benefit application (something not usually possible without a home address). Guests are supported with counselling where available.

The Windsor Homeless Project is a very small team, with limited space, and this sometimes makes the acceptance of offers of furniture, clothing and even new volunteers impossible to accept. This is why we run an annual Sleep Out

event where all well-wishers are invited to support the project. This year the event will be on Friday 5th April

Members of the public can show their solidarity for rough sleepers in the town by taking part in the Windsor Sleep Out. The Sleep Out is based at the Alma Road Youth and Community Centre and everyone is invited to join the project for food and entertainment before up to 60 sponsored members of public set up makeshift beds (fundraisers will need to wrap up warm and bring pillows, sleeping bags and gloves) and sleep out under the stars for the night. NB 14-17 year olds must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

This is a fully supervised and carefully planned event (no drugs or alcohol is permitted). This is not a protest event - rather a relaxed community get-together to enjoy each other's company and support a good cause.

Windsor Homeless Project is looking for businesses to get involved: come for the entertainment, make a donation, spread the word, encourage a staff team to get sponsorship and sleep out or donate food and drink for the event.

We ask that guests for the evening event donate at least £15 and each sleeper commits to achieving a minimum sponsorship of £200.

WHP manager Nick Roberts said: "It's by no means stepping into the shoes of the homeless but it gives fundraisers an idea of what rough sleepers experience. It's a good way for the community to show some solidarity."

Money raised at this year's event will help the charity continue to provide support for rough sleepers and other vulnerable people in Windsor and help them overcome their challenges.

Email Benta@WindsorChristianAction.org or Info@WindsorHomelessProject.org for further info, or visit <http://www.windsorhomelessproject.org> and click on the Sleep Out tab to register, or the donate tab to donate