

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



maidstoneshelter.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1156735



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INTRODUCTION

Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter (MCWS) first opened its doors in December 2013 and has been operational each winter since then. We have just completed our 7th successful winter shelter.

MCWS opens for 3 months each winter, providing a hot meal, a bed in safe, warm surroundings for the night and a listening ear to the street homeless population of Maidstone. This year, the Shelter was opened for 80 consecutive nights with 612 beds being allocated over the period.

MCWS brings together churches, church members and volunteers (both secular and non-secular) to provide a safe environment for Maidstone’s homeless community, throughout the coldest months of the year.

Our ‘rolling night shelter’ model means that the load is shared between church venues and teams. The shelter is hosted by 8 churches across Maidstone. Seven churches each offer their buildings for one night per week, where our guests are provided with a hot meal, a listening ear, a bed for the night and breakfast the following morning. The eighth church building is used to register our guests each afternoon. During registration guests are offered drinks, snacks and a time to just ‘chill’ in a warm, comfortable setting.

This winter, Maidstone Borough Council were once again able to provide temporary accommodation to many of our local homeless community over the winter months, following a Government grant, so the guest numbers in the shelters were a little lower than they have been in previous years. We were able to provide an evening meal and hospitality for some of those who were living in this temporary accommodation.

Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 (Coronavirus), we had to close our doors a week earlier than planned this winter to protect the health of our guests, staff and volunteers. However, we still registered 57 guests, 49 of whom stayed in the shelters overnight.

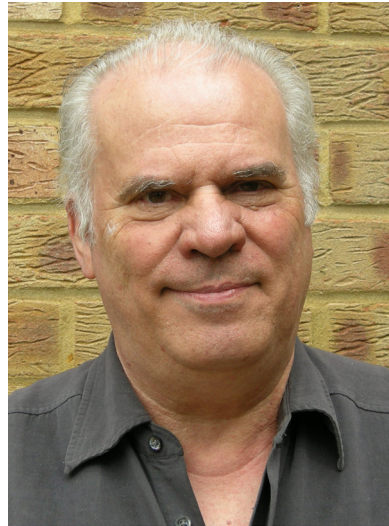
We also had the support of over 250 volunteers who gave their time, dedication and experience to enable the shelter to open each night and to provide the help and support needed by our guests. We simply could not run the Shelter without the amazing support of our volunteers and Venue Leads, who gave their time so generously.

This winter, the shelter project was once again led by Gwyn McPherson as Project Manager. Gwyn was also the Project Manager last year and had previously been a Project Worker & Venue Lead for MCWS, so she brought with her a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Also joining the team were Les Ellis, Claire Kehily & Sonya Okubule as operational Project Workers. The team were supported by the Office Administrator and Volunteer Co-ordinator, Mandy Fuller, who provided invaluable and tireless support for both staff and volunteers.

We love because he first loved us
1 JChn 4:19

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



GORDON MACKLEY

Gordon has been Chairman of the Trustees since March 2018. Gordon retired from work in 2016, after a 43 year-long career in railway operational management and transport information systems. He is a Licensed Lay Reader in a Church of England church near Maidstone. He has served as a Street Pastor in Maidstone since the start of the scheme in October 2008 and is currently a Team Leader. He became involved in the Shelter from the first year, serving as a volunteer.

This was our seventh year operating the Shelter and the year has been an extremely challenging one. As I write this, the whole world is in the grip of the Coronavirus pandemic. We endeavoured to keep the work of the shelter going to the end of March but in the light of the increasing restrictions and the medical advice, we decided that for reasons of safety we needed to close one week early. On the good side, our very close working relationship with Maidstone Borough Council (something we had made one of our priorities for the year) has resulted in there being less guests at the end of the Shelter than in previous years and arrangements have been made to assist those.

One priority from last year's review was to have the best working relationship with Maidstone Borough Council, referred to above. We shall again review the year to ensure that we provide the best service we can to our guests. Many of those who were earlier guests were provided with accommodation and all the relevant figures are in the report. Whilst figures are useful, it is the relationships that are forged and maintained which are of greater significance. Guests, volunteers and the paid staff have found the

experience very worthwhile and it is gratifying that new volunteers (of which we have had many this year) continue to find the experience uplifting. The groups of people involved have come from a variety of backgrounds including those with various religious beliefs and those without any such beliefs. Such fellowship has benefits for all concerned well beyond the Shelter itself. Some stories and comments can be found elsewhere in the report.

Another challenge, which in the present situation almost seems an era ago, was funding. Our funds had diminished to the extent that we were not sure we could finance the 2019/20 Shelter but it is amazing just how many Trusts there are out there working to fund organisations such as ours. After many applications were submitted a number bore fruit and we started this year's Shelter with enough money.

A future objective is to set up partnerships with businesses to maintain continuity of funding and to enhance understanding of homelessness within that community.

The end of the Shelter is always a time of mixed feelings and perhaps even more so this year. Whatever happens, the UK and indeed the world will be a different place by next winter. However many people have been housed this year, we know that there will always be those who become homeless in the future for many different reasons so I believe we shall need to open again next year in some manner and we shall need staff, volunteers and funds.

It only remains for me to say a very big thank you to the individuals who have supported us this year: as members of staff, volunteers, by donations, or by raising funds and to the various organisations who have contributed financially or by providing the venues for the Shelter and for the storage of our equipment. Very special thanks go to those still working in whatever capacity in the last weeks of the Shelter as the scale of the Coronavirus became more obvious, but also to those who felt that in their particular personal circumstances they had to step down. For everything you did:-

Thank you all!

OUR TRUSTEES



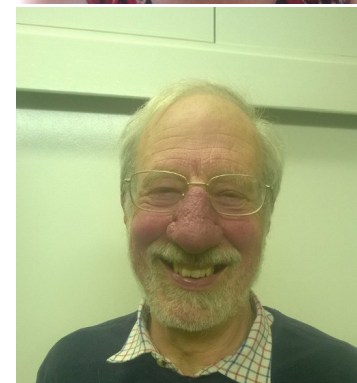
MARTIN HINCHLIFFE

Martin has a strong desire to help others less fortunate than himself. He is saddened by regularly seeing the homeless on the streets of Maidstone, London and other cities and attempts to play his part in supporting and reducing the number of street homeless. He has previously volunteered for Crisis at Christmas in London and has volunteered for seven years with MCWS. He has been a Trustee of the charity for 4 years. He has experience in managing operations following a career in engineering and is the lead Trustee for shelter operations.



WENDY TULL

Wendy has over 30 years' experience as a senior Human Resources practitioner and is the lead Trustee for this specialism. She is an active Christian and has good links with local faith-based groups. In addition, Wendy is a Trustee for Maidstone Citizen's Advice Bureau, a role that led to her increased interest in support for the homeless in Maidstone.



REVEREND JOHN TAPPER

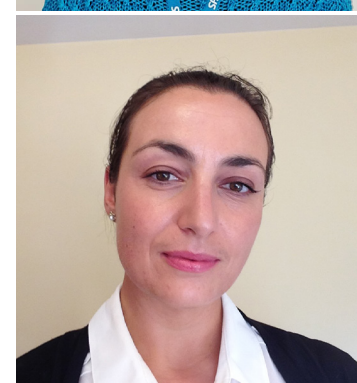
Rev Canon John is a Chartered Accountant and is the charity's Treasurer. John has assisted the Shelter both as an overnight volunteer and also collecting items for the guests.



KERRY FAULKNER

Kerry, who was a project worker for the shelter is now a registered mental health nurse working in forensic psychiatry services, specialising in the assessment and treatment of adults with complex mental health needs in a secure setting. She will be standing down as a Trustee in 2020.

We would like to say a huge thank you to Kerry for her dedication and commitment to MCWS during her time as a Trustee.



ZOFIA GRZYMALA

Zofia has substantial knowledge of the homeless sector and brings this to her role as Trustee. She is currently the Manager of Homeless Care Maidstone Day Centre, which is one of the Shelter's key partners.

FROM OUR PROJECT MANAGER



GWYN McPHERSON

Gwyn was the Project Manager for Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter (MCWS) during both 2018-19 & 2019-20. She has been involved with MCWS since its inception and has undertaken roles as a Volunteer, Venue Lead (volunteer in charge of the venue), Project Worker and now Project Manager. Gwyn is an authorised Lay Minister in a Church of England church in Maidstone and has served as a Street Pastor in the town since 2011.

As Project Manager for Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter (MCWS), my job was to oversee the entire running of the shelter, along with the Trustees, to ensure it could open on time with sufficient volunteers and that everything was in place to enable the whole project to run smoothly.

I have been involved with MCWS since it first began in December 2013. I volunteered at the Quakers meeting House in Union Street for 2 years covering evening and overnight shifts, then became Venue Lead there for the next 2 years.

I found this experience very rewarding and eventually applied to be a Project worker for MCWS, a role which I undertook during the winter of 2017/18.

Following on from this, I was asked to consider being the Project Manager for 2018/19, a post which I accepted and I have been the Project Manager for the last 2 winters.

I feel that the benefits of the shelter are immense for our guests and it's great that we can provide a warm, safe place for them to sleep each night during the 3 months we are open. We also provide a hot dinner for our guests each evening, plus we provide additional meals for some guests who have been placed into temporary accommodation by Maidstone Borough Council. We also sometimes have dinner guests who've been in the shelter in previous years and just like to come back because they benefit from the company and support our volunteers provide.

That leads me on to thanking each and every one of our volunteers. The giving of your time, energy, support and patience is invaluable to the success of the shelter and we simply couldn't run without you.

Thanks also to our Project Team – Les, Claire, Sonya and Mandy, for their support, hard work and sense of humour.

I won't pretend that each evening in the shelter always runs smoothly, as there are most certainly difficulties sometimes. That's just part of life though and with the gathering together of so many people with so many different stories to tell, sometimes things go a bit awry!

This year's Shelter brought the new challenge of the Coronavirus pandemic, causing us to make the difficult decision to close a week early. Our volunteers were amazing and readily complied with the extra precautions we had to bring in to keep everyone safe. We were very blessed that the guests staying with us at the end all had somewhere to move on to – private rental, temporary Council accommodation or friends.

On the whole, I feel that this year's shelter was, once again, a success. The statistics for the shelter are included within this report and I hope you enjoy reading the stories some of our guests have shared with us about how they came to be in the shelter and how its support has impacted on their lives.

With best wishes.

Gwyn

STORY: KEAN



PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW/WHY YOU BECAME HOMELESS?

Unfortunately, I was a victim of abuse who had no choice but to be safer homeless. I also had a tough time with CPTSD (Complex Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) which affected my whole life and ended my 4-year career. I couldn't quite find the motivation in my situation to continue.

HOW HAS MAIDSTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER HELPED YOU?

When I came to register for the shelter I was anxious. I was listened to and accepted as 'me', someone worth helping.

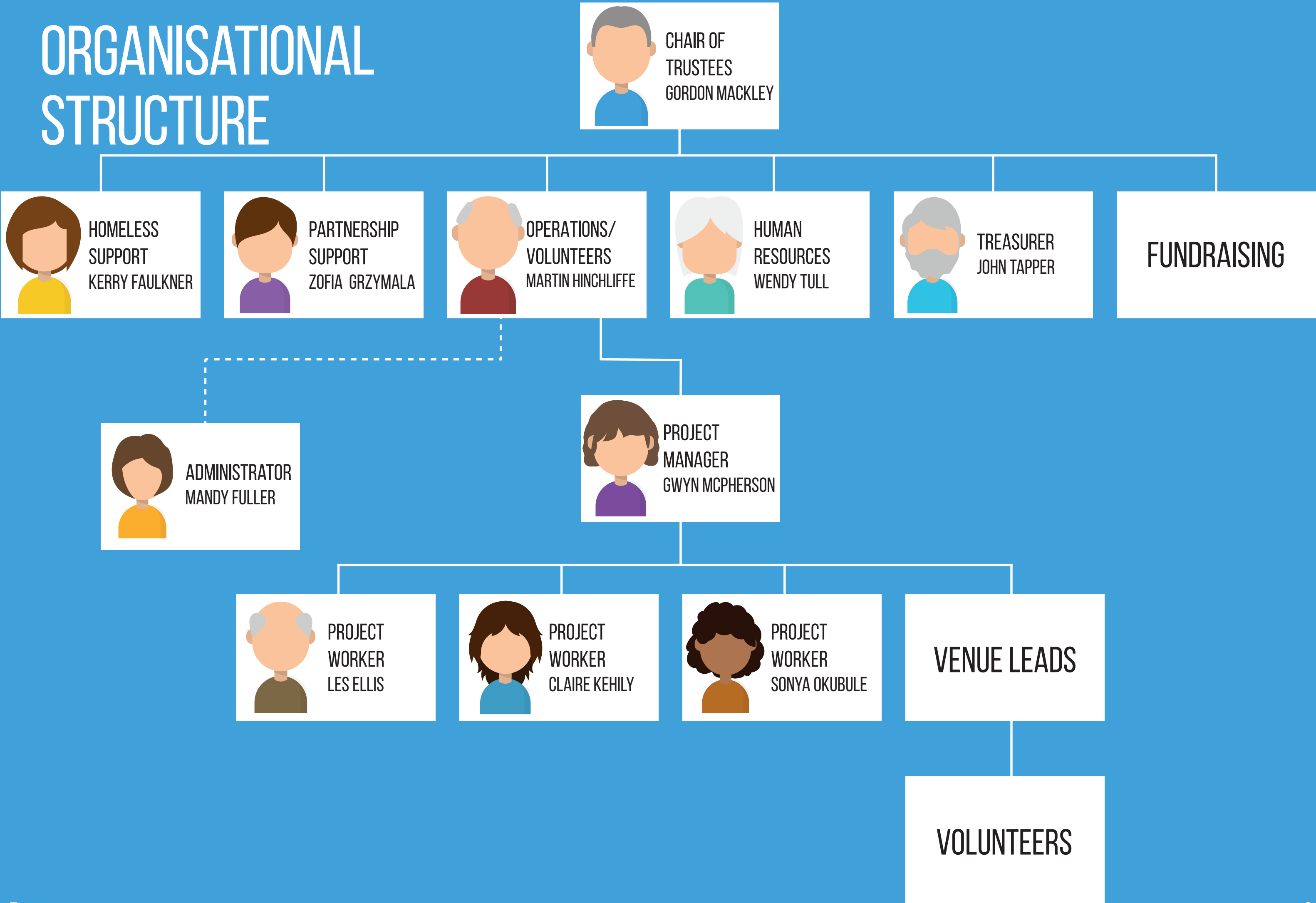
They have completely changed my life. I could never repay the work of the amazing people who do what they do. Some would say a real first family.

DID YOUR STAY AT MAIDSTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER SUPPORT YOU WITH THE NEED TO ENGAGE WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES, TO OBTAIN MORE PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION?

Yes, they supported me through the whole process.

As Kean was willing to engage with our local authority, through his support from MCWS, he was placed in temporary accommodation. He continued to come into the shelter each night for his dinner, company and continuing support though!

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



OUR AIMS AND HOW THEY WERE FULFILLED

PROVIDING HOSPITALITY AND OVERNIGHT SHELTER FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE WINTER MONTHS.

Shelter /'ʃeltə/
(noun) A place giving temporary protection from bad weather or danger.

Once again, Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter went way beyond the dictionary definition of the word shelter. Whilst we provided overnight shelter for our guests, we also ensured they were treated as individuals with varying needs, likes and interests.

MCWS met its first aim in many ways thanks to a team of passionate and enthusiastic volunteers and staff, who went above and beyond the call of duty. The Shelter supported 57 homeless people, 49 of whom became overnight guests. MCWS provided a service which included more than just evening hospitality and a bed, by giving assistance, support and encouragement that led to access to housing and employment opportunities.

ENGAGING MEMBERS OF CHURCHES IN MAIDSTONE AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS IN BUILDING SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOMELESS PEOPLE IN MAIDSTONE, WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF RACE, GENDER, DISABILITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, OR RELIGION.

Our dedicated church members and volunteers alike extended a warm welcome to our overnight guests and some of those placed in temporary accommodation for an evening meal. During many conversations, new friendships were made as our volunteers humbly, attentively and caringly listened to the concerns, hopes and aspirations of our guests.



UNDERTAKING SUCH OTHER PURPOSES IN RELATION TO THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AS THE TRUSTEES MAY FROM TIME TO TIME DETERMINE

MCWS worked closely with Maidstone Borough Council once again this winter, with meetings held to ensure that both organisations could support each other, in order to complement the support provided to our local homeless community. We also continued membership of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and contacted many local employers to seek support for the winter shelter, both financial and physical (volunteers).

SUPPORTING HOMELESS PEOPLE TO FIND LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION.

Collaborating more closely with Maidstone Borough Council and Maidstone Day Centre, we were able to support our guests with accessing services including health and housing, applying for the right benefits, contacting and reconciling with family.



Christmas

Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter didn't open over the Christmas period during 2019, due to the experience of the last couple of winters where our guests have found family/sofas etc for comfort and support over the festive season. However, a hot meal was provided at Maidstone Salvation Army on Christmas Day, for any of Maidstone's homeless community who wished to attend.

Then on Boxing Day, MCWS and Maidstone Day Centre (Homeless Care) prepared dinner for our local homeless guests to enjoy. This was attended by 15 guests, all of whom enjoyed the food and shared company.



Joy to the World

GUEST COMMENTS



ANNE

I became homeless due to fleeing domestic violence. Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter helped me in every way possible. I now have a room in a hostel and actually miss it [the shelter].

ANNE'S PROGRESS: ANNE IS IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO MOVING INTO SOMEWHERE MORE PERMANENT.

DEREK

I really appreciate what you have organised and thank you very much to all the volunteers.

DEREK'S PROGRESS: DEREK HAS MOVED INTO ACCOMMODATION IN BIRMINGHAM WHERE THERE IS A NEW PROJECT SUPPORTING HOMELESS PEOPLE WITH HOUSING AND WORK.

HILTON

I was dropped in Maidstone by Medway Police, to my daughter's house. I went to Maidstone Council for help and that's how I'm here now!

The Winter Shelter have been a Godsend. They have supported me all the way through my ordeal. I would say they are a credit and doing such a good job.

STORY: DIONNE



PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW/WHY YOU BECAME HOMELESS?

I'm 32 years old and a mum to 3 children, aged 13, 6 & 4. My younger two children were adopted due to social services having no faith in me, so they didn't give me a chance. In 26 weeks my children were taken, separated from me and I won't see them again 'til they decide if they ever do want to see me.

This led to eviction, as 'my housing provider' didn't tell me about the arrears, over £800 worth of bedroom tax 'til I was already in debt with it. I was a broken woman!

In there (the shelter) I've found some of the kindest people. I was very lonely, now I feel I have places to turn and people to turn to. I felt safe and have found access to grief counselling through these kind-hearted people.

HOW HAS MAIDSTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER HELPED YOU?

They saved my life and I have found great friends.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY?

Thanks for doing what you did. You're all very kind beyond belief. Your help and caring calmed me down and gave me soothing relief. Thank you for listening to me without judgement, speaking to me without prejudice, helping me without entitlement and understanding me without pretension. Thank you all so much!

Dionne is now in temporary accommodation, as MCWS helped her to engage with our local authority. She continued to come into the shelter for her dinner each night though, so that she could have a hot meal, company and continuing support from our staff and volunteers.

STORY: KING JULIAN



PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW/WHY YOU BECAME HOMELESS?

To get straight to the point, bad decisions taken at the 'right' moment led me to the point in which I had to ask for help.

HOW HAS MAIDSTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER HELPED YOU?

First of all, I've been impressed by how well everything was organised. I would like to thank them all for their support.

Julian stayed in the shelter overnight and worked during the day. This enabled him to save towards a deposit on somewhere to live once the shelter closed.

*No act of kindness, no matter
how small is ever wasted.
-Aesop*

STORY: STEPHEN & JASMINE

PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW/WHY YOU BECAME HOMELESS?

We were homeless for years before being housed by 'Housing First'.

When we were homeless the Day Centre was our lifeline for food, support and advice. The Day Centre encouraged us to use the shelter after years sleeping in a tent.

HOW HAS MAIDSTONE CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER HELPED YOU?

The Winter Shelter gave us a safe place to sleep and stay with kind people. The Day Centre kept us alive with food and helped get us housed by 'Housing First'.

As Jasmine & Stephen were willing to engage with our local authority, through their support from both Maidstone Day Centre & MCWS, they are now in permanent housing. However, since being in accommodation they sometimes came into the shelter for dinner, as they enjoyed the company and the continuing support from our volunteers.

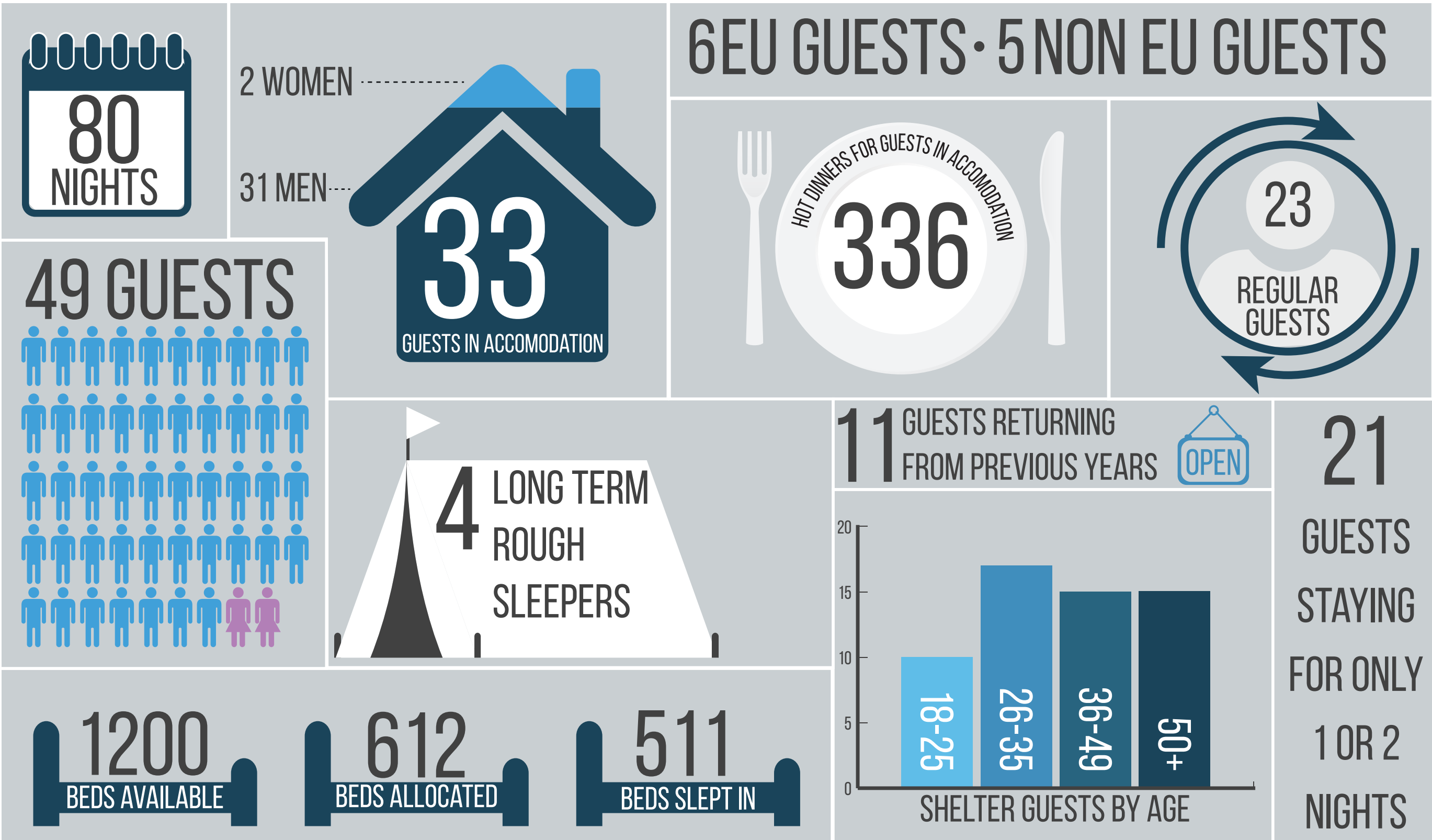


IMPACT OVER THE YEARS

	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020
NUMBER OF BEDS	15	15	15
FEMALE GUESTS	7	13	6 assessed, 2 stayed in the shelter
GUESTS RETURNING FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	0	3	11
NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASSESSED	58	60	57
OVERNIGHT GUESTS	46	48	49
GUESTS NOW IN LONG/SHORT TERM HOUSING	14	15	33
LENGTH OF SHELTER	13 weeks	13 weeks	11 ½ weeks. *
DATES	Opened: 23rd Dec Closed: on 26th March	Opened: 21st Dec Closed: 23rd March	Opened: 3rd January *Closed: 23rd March
NUMBER OF PAID STAFF	5	5	5

*The shelter closed one week earlier than planned, due to the unprecedented effects of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) and the need to protect the wellbeing of our guests, volunteers and staff. See further details on page 22.

THE SHELTER IN NUMBERS



OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Trustees of Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter would like to thank all of our volunteers for your contribution and support once again this winter. We truly appreciate the fact that you freely donate your time to show love and support to help Maidstone's street homeless community.

There is no kinder act than helping someone less fortunate than yourself and our volunteers bring their own uniqueness and energy, for the benefit and success of the Shelter.

Our volunteers work together in teams to ensure that the shelter runs smoothly each night. The tasks covered include:

- Setting up beds
- Setting up the dining area
- Cooking meals
- Welcoming our guests into the shelter and serving their meals
- Listening/chatting to our guests, if they want to talk.
- Playing games or watching DVD's with our guests
- Staying awake throughout the night, to ensure that our guests remain safe and comfortable, sometimes just listening or making a cup of tea if that is needed.
- Preparing breakfast
- Tidying away the beds/tables each morning

All of these jobs are essential to the smooth running of the shelter and couldn't be achieved without the support, communication skills and teamwork of our volunteers.

Volunteering has always been a core value at Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. Words cannot begin to express how grateful we are for the dedication, care and kind-heartedness of our 251 volunteers who have given so much to ensure that the Shelter opened safely each night. Our successes this year would not have been possible without you!



VOLUNTEER STORIES

This is my first time volunteering at the winter shelter. Jan and the team at the Union Street Methodist Church really made me feel part of the team. Unfortunately I could only do the morning tidy ups due to other life commitments but I found it really lovely to see that the people using the shelter had a warm and dry nights sleep.

I work for Maidstone Borough Council in the Housing department and heard some really positive comments about how the improvements to the outreach/temporary accommodation team is making a difference to the waiting time for housing and reducing numbers using the shelters.

The main thing I took home from this experience is what a vital role this charity is performing. The winter shelter really does have a positive impact on the guests' lives.

I hope to return next year.

MICHAEL, VOLUNTEER

The shelter was a joy to be a part of, given that everyone would rather it wasn't needed. It was well run, safe and had an increasingly positive vibe throughout.

KATY, VOLUNTEER

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 1st year as a shelter volunteer and will be back next year (if you will have me). Great to meet so many amazing volunteers, workers and guests and so pleased those remaining have been found somewhere to sleep.

CLAIRE, VOLUNTEER

I have valued enormously the experience since January and feel sad that I cannot complete my obligation [due to the outbreak of coronavirus and its subsequent restrictions]. Thank you and all your team for making me feel welcome and valued and I hope to see you next January.

MARGARET, VOLUNTEER

I have had such an amazing experience helping out, didn't realise how it would make me feel. It's wonderful knowing that a few hours of my time can help others who have such tough lives and meeting some very interesting, kind people along the way. I've loved every minute of it and Cara, Claire and Les were great in every way. I'll miss my Wednesdays, but really hope I will be fortunate to be accepted as a volunteer next year.

CLARE, VOLUNTEER

I've really enjoyed being part of it all and hope to volunteer again next year.

RACHAEL, VOLUNTEER

I thoroughly enjoyed my time working with you all. I will not hesitate to volunteer again. What an amazing team. Would like to thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart.

LORRAINE, VOLUNTEER



VENUE LEADS

Each year it simply would not be possible to open the Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter without the fantastic commitment and support of our Venue Leads (Volunteers in charge of the Venues).
 Once again, this winter our incredibly amazing Venue Leads gave their time and commitment to ensure that MCWS opened its doors each night to the street-homeless population of the town, throughout the coldest weeks of the year.
 They ensured everything, volunteers, beds and meals were in place for the evening to run smoothly and were always there to welcome their volunteers and guests alike, providing any support that was needed.



COOKS

A huge thank you goes out to the many people who provided food and meals throughout the winter shelter.
 At some Venues the meals are cooked on site by our volunteers, but in other places we are reliant on cooked meals that are provided by a number of willing volunteers who then deliver the meals ready for serving.
 Thank you so much for the time and effort that goes into this preparation. Our guests have been very appreciative of their hot meals every night!

OUR VENUES

Each year we are incredibly grateful for the support from our Venues for the purposes of providing shelter for our guests.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to our host venues, for opening your doors and supporting the Shelter for yet another year.



United Reformed Church
(Registration)



Union Street Methodist Church
(Mondays)



Maidstone Baptist Church
(Tuesdays)

ST FAITH'S CHURCH

St Faith's Church
(Wednesdays)



Maidstone Family Church
(Thursdays)



Quaker Meeting House
(Fridays)



The Salvation Army
(Saturdays)



Tonbridge Road Methodist Church
(Sundays)



CORONAVIRUS

Due to the outbreak of coronavirus in China in December 2019 and its subsequent spread across borders, extra precautions were taken within our shelters to ensure the safety of our guests, volunteers and staff.

In accordance with the guidance supplied by the NHS, we ensured that everyone attending any of our venues received regular reminders to wash their hands and a Coronavirus poster describing precautions to be taken was displayed at each of our venues.

18 March 2020 – As the virus progressed and news of the spread increased, all of our volunteers were contacted to explain that the shelters would remain open but that, as we were in a rapidly changing situation, we would be reviewing the situation regularly and would make decisions based on Government advice and the local situation. We explained that, as far as possible, we would keep the shelter open until the planned finish date of 30th March, but would need to be in a position to plan ahead. We therefore asked volunteers to let us know asap if they felt unable to continue volunteering in the current circumstances, so that we could reorganize volunteer rotas as appropriate. We also provided a link to the current government guidelines regarding who should self-isolate and giving advice for people over 70.

19 March 2020 – As Government advice was changing daily, in response to the increasing spread of Coronavirus and the most up-to-date information available to them, our Trustees made the difficult decision to ask 'any of our overnight volunteers who are aged 70 or over and/or have any underlying condition that may impact their resistance to Coronavirus to not do their rostered overnight session.

We also reiterated that those in the 70+ age group and/or those with any underlying condition that may impact their resistance to the Coronavirus seriously consider whether to attend their remaining rostered sessions' and to let the office know if they were unable to volunteer any more this season.

22 March 2020 – Unfortunately, the spread of Coronavirus was increasing swiftly. Following Government advice to enforce Social Distancing and to close pubs/clubs/theatres and Venues where people choose to gather, our Trustees made the very difficult and sad decision that the shelter should close on the morning of Monday 23rd March, one week earlier than planned. This decision was necessary in order to follow current Government advice and to protect the health of our Guests, Volunteers and Staff.

However, Maidstone Borough Council had been working very hard in order to find accommodation for our remaining guests and, at this stage of the shelter, our overnight guests had reduced to between 3 and 5 each night. Of these, only two guests had nowhere to go, but managed to arrange to share a property with a friend for a few days until their rental property became available. Although it was very sad to close early, we are pleased to report that our remaining guests all had other places to go by the time we closed on the morning of 23rd March!

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

As in previous years, we have worked alongside local agencies in developing services and partnerships that are so vital to the success of the Shelter and the benefit of our guests.

The needs of our guests are complex and often require a bespoke multi-agency approach. Pivotal to the success of the Shelter is the work of our Project Team in building trust with our guests and providing additional support through our operational partners such as the Maidstone Day Centre and The MBC Street Homeless Outreach Team.

The agencies worked alongside the Shelter, on occasions attending registration and venues, to ensure that our Project Team could access their proven expertise in working with the local street-homeless community and that our guests could benefit from their professional support and advice.

We know our guests are particularly grateful to the Day Centre for providing the opportunity to use their shower and laundry facilities as well as food and clothing, without which the daily experience of living on the streets would be all the worse. Also for the support they receive from the staff there, with all the help they need to engage with other agencies.

Our partnership with Aylesford Priory has also continued to thrive as, along with a number of other wonderful people and churches across the town, they laundered our many sleeping bags.

We also worked with:

Kent Police

Kent Probation

Community Mental Health Workers

CGL – Change, Grow, Live Addiction Counselling and support

Kent County Council

Lily Smith House – Temporary supported accommodation

MaidSAFE – a working partnership between the police, local authority and local businesses to make Maidstone a safer place.



FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

Last winter we, once again, saw many examples of people's compassion and commitment to raising awareness of the issue of homelessness in Maidstone and also in helping MCWS generate funds to run the Shelter for next winter and beyond.



Hannah & Rachel celebrated their 11th birthday with a whole year disco party and, instead of presents, they asked for donations to Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. The children & parents in their year raised £361 for MCWS!



Henry (age 8) sold bookmarks to raise money for homeless people, following which he donated £126.04 to MCWS!



All Saints Youth Group, Loose enjoyed an interactive chat with our Project Manager, Gwyn, following which they held a fundraising sleepover in their church to raise money and awareness about the work of MCWS. They also visited one of our shelters and helped set up the beds/tables etc before our guests arrived, bringing with them toiletries they had collected for the guests. Following their fundraising efforts, the group raised £659 for MCWS.



A group of children from year 4 kindly spent time collecting donations and putting together some rucksacks for the homeless, to help make the colder months a bit more bearable for those sleeping rough or spending a lot of time outside.



Also, many thanks go to the pupils, their parents/families and the staff at Valley Invicta Academy Trust for their amazing and generous donations, including funds raised from their Christmas play 'Jingle Bell Rock' to which one of our Trustees was invited. We are very grateful for their continued support of the winter shelter.

We are very grateful for all the wonderful donations the Shelter receives, including those of sleeping bags and food, which are such a reflection of the incredible spirit of generosity that exists within the Maidstone community. Thank you so much to everyone who has donated to the Winter Shelter, both financially and otherwise. Your donations enable the shelter to keep running each winter and they are all very much appreciated!

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

WREATH MAKING



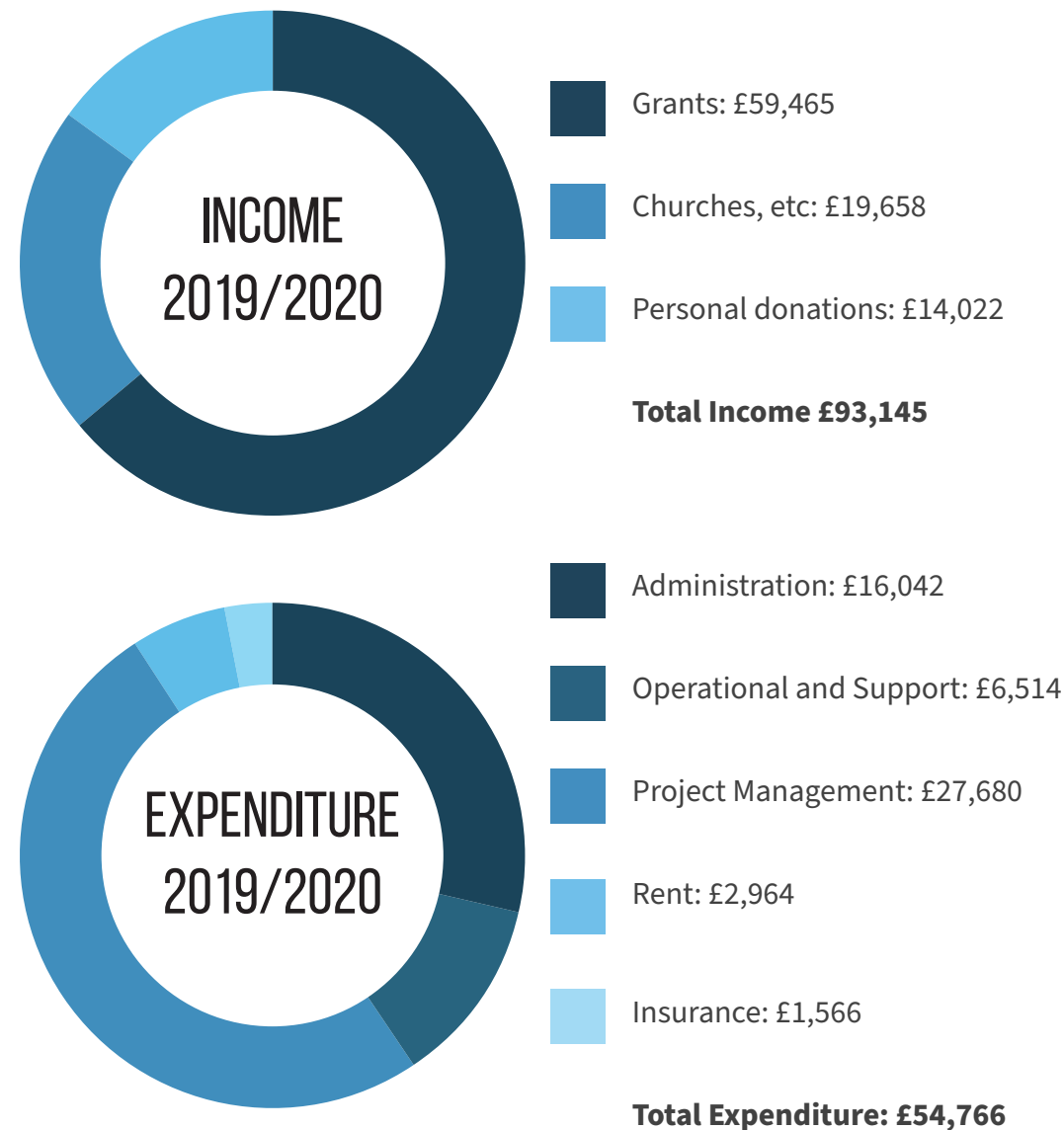
On Friday 6th December, some of our volunteers enjoyed sharing together in a Christmas Wreathmaking workshop led by one of our volunteers, Pauline Coppard. Step-by-step guidance was given and some beautiful wreaths were created. The evening raised a total of £225 for MCWS. Thank you!

FUNDRAISING DINNER

Due to the spread of Coronavirus, the need to keep our volunteers and staff safe and the closure of public buildings/restaurants, our Annual Fundraising dinner was postponed from the planned date of Tuesday 21st April. The re-organised date for this meal is Tuesday 29th September and we hope many of our volunteers and supporters will be able to join us for another enjoyable Fundraising meal at Frédéric's Bistro.



FINANCES



Surplus of Income over Expenditure: £38,379

The above figures show a dramatic change from the previous year, where the accounts showed a deficit of £9,560. Whilst the expenditure between years is similar, our total income increased for 2019-20. Thanks for this goes to the incredible efforts of Gordon & Martin (Trustees) & Mandy (Administrator), in the absence of a Fundraising Trustee.

THANK YOU'S

VOLUNTEERS & CHURCH MINISTERS

To all our Venue Leads, Lead Cooks, Volunteers and Ministers of our host venues, we thank you for your whole-hearted support of the Winter Shelter.

OUR STAFF

Our staff team this year consisted of Gwyn McPherson (Project Manager), Les Ellis, Claire Kehily & Sonya Okubule (Project Workers) and Mandy Fuller (Administrator and Volunteer Co-Ordinator), who all went above and beyond the call of duty from start to finish to ensure that the Shelter not only opened but was well-coordinated. Thank you!

OUR TRUSTEES

To our Trustees, thank you for your passion, commitment, and leadership!

All of our Trustees are volunteers who generously give their time and a high level of dedication behind the scenes. Some of them also volunteer at various venues during the Shelter.

... and many thanks go to Kerry Faulkner

Kerry was a project worker for the shelter during the winter of 2015-16 and became a Trustee the following year. She is a registered mental health nurse and her knowledge, dedication and commitment to the shelter has been invaluable. However, Kerry has decided to stand down as a Trustee at the end of March 2020.

We would like to say a huge thank you to her for all her support and wish her all the very best for the future!

THANK YOU FROM OUR TRUSTEES

The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to highlight the fantastic support from all of our host Venues, Venue Leads and Volunteers. Thank you so much for all you have done to provide food, warmth and shelter to all of our guests this winter.



OUR FUNDERS & DONORS

Allington Baptist Church	Cuerden, P	Kent Smile Studio	R G Hills Charitable Trust	Smith, Mr P
All Saints Church Loose	Cunningham, C	Kingswood Christmas Trees	Richards, R	Smith, Mr S
All Saints Church, Loose Youth Group	Darling, P	Knight-Olds, M	Rogers, H	South African Congregation, The
Ambler, D	Dave	Knott, A	Rogers, K	Spragg, Peter
Amphlett, Rachel	Davis, L	Ledger, P	Rotary Club of Maidstone, The	Starling, J
Arts Society, The – Mid Kent	Day, B	Life Church, The	Rutland, P	Steer, D
Auwah-Asamoah, P	East Farleigh Parochial Church Council	Linda Hogan Community Fund, The	Rutter, R	Sure Foundation Assembly
Aylesford Parish Church	Elder, Mrs E	Lindley, S	Sage, A	Swan Public House, Maidstone
Baker, N	Ely, Miss H & Miss R	Linton Road Free Church	Sprigmore, Mr & Mrs	Thomson, M
Bancroft, L	Endersby, J	Loose Primary School	St Andrew’s Church, Barming	TIF Group
Bath, C	Essex, Mr G	Lythgoe, P	St Luke’s, The Mission Fund of	Tovil Christian Fellowship
Bearsted Golf Club (the ladies of)	Ewence, R	Macgregor, D	St Luke’s Parochial Church Council	Trefoil Guild, The - Staplehurst
Bearsted Methodist Church	Field, Mrs S E	Mack, P	St Margaret’s PCC, Barming	Van Boolean, M
Bell & Jorrocks, The	Follett, B	Maidstone Baptist Church	St Michael & All Angels Church, Maidstone	Valley Invicta Academies Trust
Benenden Tennis Tournament	Garfield Weston	Maidstone Borough Council	St Michael and All Angels, Marden	Viner, J
Beswick, C	Garton, C	Maidstone Lions Club	St Nicholas Church, Allington	Weatherly, Mr
Blakeborough, S	Glanfield, P	Maidstone Relief in Need	St Paul’s Parochial Church Council	Westmancott, S
Bole, C	Golding Homes Community Chest Fund	Marden ‘Come and Sing’ group	St Peter’s, Bearsted & Good Shepherd, Harrietsham	Whitehead Monckton Foundation
Boucher, A	Golland, R	Marden Medical Centre	St Peter’s Church, Boughton Monchelsea	Wilkins Kennedy Startup
Brachers Charitable Trust	Gould, C R	Marsh Christian Trust	St Peter & St Paul’s Church, Yalding	Willington Players, The
Brakes Frozen Foods	Hair Professional	Martin, J	St Theodore’s Catholic Church, Cranbrook	Willmott, Mrs S
Bridges, E	Hand, J	Mason, Henry	Shirley, S	Worley Day Trust, The
Brook Trust Fund for Kent, The	Hannigan, N	Mead, H	Slipper, G	...and for many individuals who have given online and in other ways.
Brookes, Mrs V	Harvey, Miss M	Moore, Mrs P A		
Brown, N	Henson, Mrs G	Mundell, Mr B & Mrs S		
Burch, S	Hilden Charitable Fund, The	Nelson, L		
Cantium Business Solutions	Hill, Mr & Mrs	Noakes, A		
Centrepont	Hillier Trust, The	Oates, R		
Charities Aid Foundation	Hitch, D	Obrien, R		
Clark, R	Inakshi & family	Oliver, Mr T		
Cobtree Charitable Trust	Invicta Grammar School	Oscar Engineering Ltd		
Coburn, C	James, S	Parish of St Mary & All Saints, The PCC for – Boxley		
Cochrane, C J	Jollies Socks	Palace Wood Primary School		
Cole Charitable Trust	Joyce, Mrs C	Patrick, I		
Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust	Judd, T	Pezzato, M		
Cranbrook and Hawkhurst Rotary Club	KCC – Combined Members Grant Scheme	Premier Foods		
Cross, R	Kent Community Foundation	Property Admin Ltd		

Those Who Supported In Other Ways

- Carol Hemmings – for her tireless support in so many ways!
- Downs Mail for publishing a report about MCWS and the need for volunteers
- Frederic’s Bistro, who will be hosting our postponed fundraising dinner.
- Nicola Randall for providing haircuts for our guests.
- Insight magazine – Maidstone Borough Council publication
- Laundry Angels – St Margaret of Antioch Barming, Aylesford Priory, St Paul’s Church, Holy Cross Church, Maidstone Baptist Church, Jubilee Church, Hair Professional and all who helped with the weekly laundering of sleeping bags, pillowcases and towels.

Donations received in memoriam

- Donations received in memory of the late Brian Clifford
- Donations received in memory of the late Mrs Julia McCluskey
- Donation received in memory of the late Sharon Dwyer

The unknown donors:

A HUGE thank you to you all!

DONORS



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