

OCTOBER MORNING WORSHIP - THE LEAMINGTON NIGHT SHELTER

In October we were delighted to welcome and have a conversation with Margaret Moore and Chris Johnson, joint co-ordinators of the Leamington Night Shelter, at the service of Morning Worship. It was particularly timely in view of the onset of winter, as I write, and the number of rough sleepers we see in doorways on the Parade.

This Christian initiative, arising from the 2008 Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and Hope Leamington, has gone from strength to strength. From early beginnings one night a week in Bath Place until it burned down, they relocated to the Radford Road church and were subsequently able to offer accommodation for Wednesday and Sunday nights. They aim to provide a Night Shelter for the homeless - for rough sleepers and vulnerable adults - a place that is a safe and caring environment, where people are not judged but rather offered acceptance, unconditional love and compassion in a warm, dry environment. They aim to provide food and a place for the night.

There are all sorts of people who go to the Leamington Night Shelter, with all sorts of problems. The helpers find that offering hot food at the start of the evening has a calming effect on their clients. At the moment they have about 47 volunteer helpers, who each provide some aspect of the provision of welcome and hospitality. They have few rules but ensure that none of their clients is equipped with a knife. All are searched on arrival, which makes for a safe environment. The number of clients is naturally quite variable.

I have put the latest (Feb 2016) newsletter on the porch noticeboard, together with some further information about the operation of a typical evening at the Shelter. If you are able, you can find further information on their website:

www.leamingtonnightshelter.org.uk.

Of course money is always welcome! Away from Christmas, donations can get a bit thin. The food bill alone is around £60 each night. A Hepatitis B vaccination for a volunteer is £135. Currently, total running costs average about £150 per night (just £5 per client).

In writing to thank Margaret and Chris for coming to us, I was able to enclose a cheque for £200 from the PCC, which was part of the annual charity allocation agreed at their October meeting. I am also hoping that we can organise a collection of suitable goods to donate on a regular basis. Apart from socks (thin), gloves and underwear - deodorants, combs, tins of meat, sugar and coffee are suggestions.

Finally, please do remember the volunteers and their clients regularly in your prayers.

Kathleen