



Christmas 2021



A message from our guest Lindsay Eynon

Me and my partner got made homeless when the Covid restrictions were easing and were sleeping rough on St Marks Road in a church doorway.

We had nowhere to go and was feeling really down and depressed with everything that was going on. We had only the clothes on our backs and no blankets or anything to keep us warm at nights. No food or drink as everything was shut due to Covid and nowhere to get clean clothes or even wash the ones we were wearing. We both felt so lonely and didn't know what to do.

Luckily we heard one morning that the Methodist Centre was open and gave out hot food and drinks so we went to find it.

I can remember the warm welcome we got when we came in, everyone was so friendly and went out of their way to help. Debbie came over and asked if we were okay and I told her our situation, she told us they were back open again for hot food, drink and that we could book a shower and get our clothes washed and dried which was a massive help.

If it wasn't for this place I don't know what would have happened. I am so grateful to everyone there, they are brilliant.



A note from the manager

Hello dear readers, I hope you are sitting comfortably; good, very good; now let me tell you a little story....

That's how this last year has felt, as if we've been playing parts in a story of fiction; science fiction or horror I can't decide which at present – but however you slice it, we experienced something we never thought would happen, but it did, and it's been a tough time for everyone, especially those that rely on the work and support of the centre.

We've lost a great many people during this pandemic; personally (family and friends) and also in our work here at the centre (guests) due to Covid and its far-reaching stranglehold that it has had on, and in our lives since it first surfaced all those moons ago.

But here at the centre we have been ever-present. We had a week to collect ourselves (as I've mentioned in previous newsletters) and then we hit the ground running and when I look back at that time, it comes back to me in blurs and flashes. I likened it to a disaster relief programme rather than the running of The Methodist Centre, where I expected government officials to turn up with Hazmat suits on at any moment and clear the centre (something like the ending of ET) and roads of any potential carriers.

But with all of this blurring at the edges, one thing that comes across crystal-clear and in technicolour is the gratitude of our guests. How relationships have been forged in the fires of a pandemic we never saw coming, and hope to never witness again. I look out of my office door whilst writing this and see a building nearing full capacity. I see our guests eating not from takeaway boxes as they had for 16 months, but sitting with metal cutlery and china plates, with hot drinks in their hands. They have smiles on their faces and I can hear conversation spilling from their lips, they are back where they belong, in an

environment that is both safe and nurturing. Things have changed, it's a new normal that we have adopted (with Corona Virus precautions included of course) but the core of the building remains as it always has - person-centric – with staff and volunteers that care for every person that walks through our doors.

I also get an overwhelming sense of the gratitude our guests have to staff for standing alongside them through this most unprecedented of times.

We are starting to see new life enter these dry bones of a centre, and it did feel like that at times, a husk of what it was. I worried that we would never return to normal, that what was happening would be our final bow, that this pandemic was the curtain call to end all curtain calls. But it wasn't. It's only looking back now that I can see how far we've come already, but there is still some way to go, but myself and my staff team are ready for the challenges that lie ahead because all we ever strive for, and do at the centre, is for the betterment of our guests.

This is a new and exciting chapter for The Methodist Centre. With each month that passes our service grows again. We are now, once again, looking at extending our opening times (this has been a staggered approach, but soon we will be open to our usual times and I for one am very excited to get back there), and we are now welcoming other services back into the building (Homeless Health Service and St Mungos) – but we're not content on just stopping there, we will continue to develop, we will continue to serve and we will continue to be a beacon of hope for those who need us.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers and thoughts as we move into the next exciting chapter of our service to Bristol's homeless. We will be resuming our full operating hours on January the 10th and would really love this time to be covered in prayer and your ongoing support!

Ross Jeffery Manager of the BMC



shelter, sanctuary and
support for homeless
and vulnerable
people



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Opening times

From the 22nd November we will be open from 11am – 2:30pm Monday – Wednesday with Thursday being still dedicated to showers and laundry services on a booking system (this is an extension of our current opening times by an hour). We will be serving food and refreshments during this time and from 1:30pm (Monday – Wednesday) will offer three shower slots to guests who are rough sleeping.

From the 10th January 2022 we will be back to our usual opening hours of 10am – 3:00pm Monday – Wednesday and Thursday will remain a shower and laundry day but we will open for drinks and somewhere warm to stay between 1:15pm – 3pm. Returning to our old times will enable us to get our computer access to guest up and running, serve hot meals and refreshments, enable even more 1:1 support to guests and offer showers to guests each day (but limited due to Covid restrictions in the numbers we can offer) – we will also be welcoming back the homeless health team and other support agencies.

It has been a long road to get us back to this place and with the restrictions on our service from Covid 19 I believe we have done a fabulous job in keeping guests and staff safe during a very unsettling time.

(The above times and dates may change if circumstances around the pandemic should worsen)

A word from our guest 'Tin-Tin'



I have been using the Methodist Centre for a number of years. I am on Universal Credit and had a bad back and other health issues so could not work. Due to Covid the Centre had to close (for a brief time) and this had a massive impact on me, as I relied on the Centre for my meals, and emotional support and friendship. This got me up and out, and without this I wouldn't have been able to cope.

When the Centre was closed, I felt really down, and had nowhere to go.

With the food take-away – I found it very useful, had a hot meal each day, got to talk to staff, which was a great encouragement. I found it difficult not being able to come into the building, which everyone felt.

Now the Centre is open again, it is a great relief. There is more time to talk and relax. Outside we had to queue, socially distance and it wasn't the same.

Although we can now come into the Centre, it is so much better. It's warm and we can now sit down to eat. I can spend more time with the staff, which we couldn't do before (during Covid) because of social distancing and limited time and once we had our food we had to move on.

I now feel the staff have more time to spend helping me with my emotional well-being and the everyday issues we all have.

I respect the staff for going out of their way, to listen to other people's problems, being patient with each individual and their stresses. I would like to think we won't have to go through that again, as we need the support, and all that the Centre can offer.

Thank you to the staff for their loving kindness and support. God Bless.



A message from our guest Craig Davis

What it meant when the Methodist Centre was closed during the Covid 19 pandemic, well one thing I can say is that me and my partner struggled very hard and we were also homeless at the same time. There were days where we did not eat for a few days. We also had only a select amount of clothes with us. We knew that by the Methodist Centre closed down that we knew we were going to struggle with food, washing, and showers too. It was a blessing when we found out that the Methodist Centre was reopening again, we were both thrilled as it meant that we could go and have a warm welcome by all the staff and volunteers and spend time in a warm and safe place, to have conversations with the staff over a hot meal and a coffee and even on select days you can go and have a warm shower and drop your clothes off to be washed and dried.

What I like from the Bristol Methodist Centre is that the staff are always willing to talk to you and they are very kind and welcoming. If this place wasn't open I would most likely be either nearly in prison or in prison as I would have to shoplift to support me and my partner.

Items of need

Men's M boxer shorts
Small packets of tissues
footwear men's 7-9 size
Women footwear 6-7 size
Waterproof coats men/women
Backpacks
Camping rolls

Cuppa soups
Hoodies
Jogging bottoms men/women
Jeans 30 and 32 size men's
Spray on deodorant
Sleeping bags
Pop-up tents

