

Gravesham
Sanctuary
Helping the homeless of Gravesham



Annual Report: 2019 - 20

Sanctuary

Sanctuary Annual Report 2019-20

The report reviews the activities of Gravesham Sanctuary
during the period May 2019 – April 2020.

May 2020

***“... for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me”***

Matthew 25 (NIV)

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1. About Sanctuary

Gravesham Sanctuary is a registered Charity (No.1181817 in England & Wales) whose objective is to support and befriend the homeless community living in Gravesend. Currently we do this by providing an overnight shelter during the coldest months of the year where we also provide:

- Hot food and drinks
- Showers
- Help in getting paperwork identification
- Pointing them to the relevant agencies who can help with their individual situations.

We do this in partnership with Gravesend Methodist Church who provide a daytime hub during the week where the homeless can get showers, clothing and laundry done; Gravesham Council who provide us with our overnight venue and where we are a part of the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPE), Churches Together in Gravesham, and the amazing support of our many volunteers.

We also work closely with various local agencies including Porchlight (housing charity), North Kent MIND (mental health), House of Mercy (temporary hostel accommodation), Change, Grow, Live (West Kent drug and alcohol wellbeing Service), Gravesend Job Centre (employment opportunities), NHS Services (health) and The Home Office (documents and repatriation to a home country).

This document contains our review of the year from July 2019 until the end of April 2020.

2. Night Shelter Review

Project Manager – Stephen Nolan

This year saw a departure from what we had done in previous years. We were still looking after homeless people who through difficult circumstances had found themselves rough sleeping on the streets of our Borough. So, what had changed?

Partnership Working.

One of the major changes was our partnership with Gravesham Borough Council within the national government's Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) programme. The aim of this program is to reduce rough sleeping in the United Kingdom.

This meant working with the Housing Options team to accommodate those on the streets while in the short term allowing them to stay at the winter shelter. As already mentioned, we continued to work with homeless charities such as Porchlight, Look Ahead, House of Mercy and CGL the drug/alcohol addiction service as well as the daytime hub at Gravesend Methodist Church.

Venue

We had moved into our new venue at Longferry Court in February of 2019 just prior to the last season finishing. This new facility was provided by the Council, who over the summer, installed a brand-new kitchen and showers at no cost to us. Gravesham Sanctuary, then purchased white goods such as a new cooker, new carpeting, blinds for all windows, and new beds for our guests. This was only made possible through the very generous giving of individuals and churches for which we are most grateful.

Opening Hours

Previously, Sanctuary operated three shifts, evening, overnight and breakfast over three nights per week, normally between December 1st and end of March [4 months]. Outside of those times we would operate an evening meal service October to November and April to June.

Working with the Council under the new Rough sleeper Initiative Scheme this changed, and we were asked to consider opening all three shifts from the end of October through to end of April [just over 6 months] for seven nights per week.

This was always going to be a challenge as we were unsure whether this was even achievable given the number of volunteers that would be required. With the help of two local churches - Eastgate Church who took on Friday evenings/overnights, and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) who did the same for Monday nights, - we were at least able to achieve most of that goal by getting to six nights each week. We are so grateful for the sacrifice of time given by all.

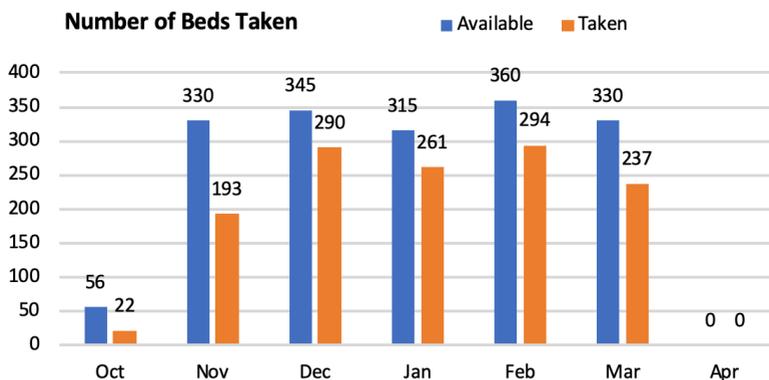
Unfortunately, we were unable to run through the month of April due to enforced closure caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, working with the council we were able to get most of our guests into temporary accommodation. Similarly, we felt that we could not run the evening sessions until the end of June.

Statistics

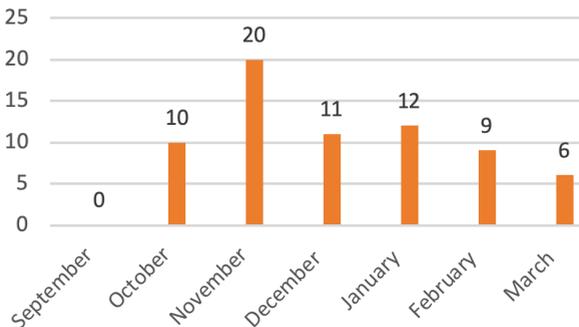
Much of the data provided here comes from our partnership working with Campaign Kent. We provide them with information on who comes into the shelter from which they then produce a detailed report. This is published on our website at www.graveshamsanctuary.uk/reports/

From this report, the following summary was taken:

- Between October 2019 and March 2020, 1736 beds were made available of which **1297** were taken giving a 75% take-up of available beds. This number would have been much higher but for guests booking a place and then not showing up.

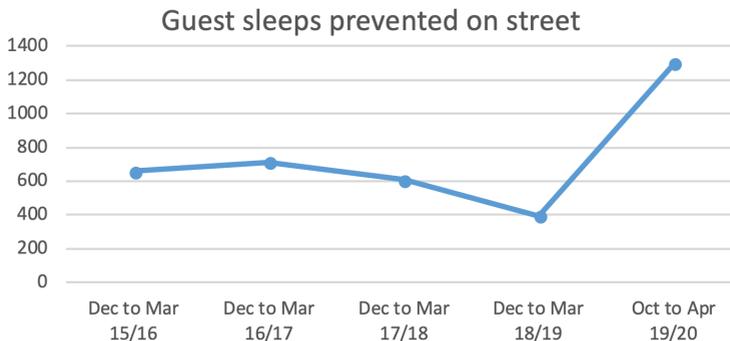


- 84 individual guests registered with us, out of which 68 individuals used the shelter.



New Guests

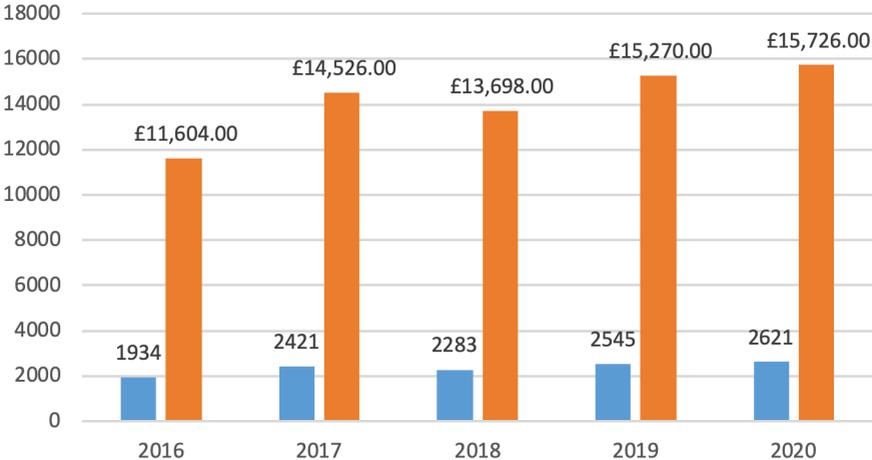
- Compared to previous years, the amount of sleeps prevented on the street shows a huge increase, but this is because we were open longer and for more nights.



- The cost of putting those individuals into a room at £35/night would have cost the taxpayer £45,395.
- Since Gravesham Sanctuary opened its doors in November 2015, we have had a total of 888 guest visits and have been able to prevent 3669 sleeps on the street of the borough. Using the same criteria above, this would have cost £128,415.

- Our cooks have been amazing in that they provided 2621 meals. Using £6 per head as a guide for an evening meal with desert, breakfast in the morning, packed lunch to take with them, as well as copious amounts of tea/coffee, comes to a total of £15,726.

No. of meals provided and their cost over the past 5 years



Volunteers

Our 200+ volunteers are the real backbone of what makes Sanctuary work. We could do very little without them. They are selfless and compassionate people who give of their time to serve those less fortunate than themselves. We applaud you and thank you.

This year our volunteers gave 19,796 hours. It would have been more but was cut short by the enforced early closure. If we paid them at the minimum wage, this would amount to over £162,525. But what they do is priceless and I'm sure they cannot even begin to imagine the difference they make to the lives of our guests.

A special thanks to Mike Collins who organises our volunteer recruitment, training and rotas. This task can be a logistical nightmare, even though we have the benefit of computerised systems. Mike came in partway through the year, understood quickly what was needed, and has done a great job in keeping the shelter resourced with volunteers.

3. Guest Review of the Year

Guest Welfare Manager – Lorna Nolan

The welfare of our Guests is extremely important to us. To this end we provide support and advice, where possible, to those who stay with us. We also signpost our guests to services within the locality for addictions such as alcohol and drug misuse, plus mental health.

Working alongside our colleagues from CGL (Change, Grow, Live) and North Kent Mental Health Services, enables guests to be referred to the relevant services and clinics for support. We ask our guests to sign up to local doctors' surgeries, so they can receive medical advice and help, plus the wider NHS with dental and hepatitis screening so they can be supported by medically qualified practitioners.

Our volunteers provide a vital role in this rehabilitation as they listen and engage with our guests. When training our volunteers, we stress that listening is a priority, so that our guests feel welcomed and supported.

Guest Registration

We have a registration team that provide support for guests coming into contact with us for the first time. The registration form is quite detailed, but it does allow us to indicate the direction and support our guests will require. This means our pastoral team can start to work with other professional colleagues in seeking the right support, which includes placing the guest into housing options, and a long-term solution to their current situation.

Reasons for Homelessness

Tackling homelessness is never an easy or a straightforward issue. The current national figure is thought to be well above 250,000 homeless individuals sleeping rough. Far more than tends to be reported officially. The Gravesham area is no different in this respect, with a higher proportion of rough sleepers than official figures would suggest.

Our guests vary in their home backgrounds, represent all ages and stages of life, and more importantly reflect the growing trend that homelessness can affect anyone in society today. Reasons for this include:

- Excessive high room rents and lack of affordable housing within the borough has amounted to more sofa surfers and short term lets where individual guests are moved around.

- Breakdowns in relationships and within families has increased our numbers as many guests were asked to leave their place of accommodation.
- Prison to street homelessness has also increased. We work closely with the probation service who use Gravesham Sanctuary as a first port of call. It is difficult to place a person just released from prison as our figures show, with a notable increase in guests coming straight from prison directly or via probation services.

Other issues

It was disappointing to find that some of our guests with debilitating conditions such as Type 1 Diabetes, Epilepsy, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) being released from hospital straight back onto the street.

We stepped in where we could and made sure that they were registered with the local Gravesend Medical Centre unless already registered with a GP surgery in the borough. We also made sure that hospital / doctor appointments were attended, and treatment followed up.

Guest Behaviour

Unfortunately, a minority of guests were excluded from the shelter this year, owing to unacceptable behaviour. However, some of these have maintained their contacts with other agencies such as CGL, Porchlight and the council, with some being given opportunities to be housed outside of the area.

Looking to the future

Like many boroughs, Gravesham is short on affordable, local accommodation where guests can sustain a tenancy, can access employment, and be supported by statutory agencies to maintain a reasonably healthy lifestyle. Our relationship with the council and related agencies has been excellent and we look forward to continuing our work into the future.

4. Finances

The following figures are from July 2019 – April 2020

INCOME:

Public donations	£32,353
One-off donations	£4,474
Corporate donations	£15,638
Grants	£11,877
Gift Aid reclaimed	£2,041
Total Income	£61,909

EXPENDITURE:

Admin (phone, printing, paper, postage, etc)	£3,557
Insurance	£929
Promotion (leaflets, adverts, banners, booklets, etc)	£407
Supplies (sleeping bags, sheets, beds, etc)	£364
Catering (food, drink, etc)	£2,764
Volunteer expenses (petrol, etc)	£234
Staff costs	£37,591
Premises - one off purchases	£6,856
Other	£629
Total Expenditure	£53,331
Income less Expenditure	£8,508

This year we employed people for following positions:

Project Manager – responsible for the smooth running of Sanctuary.

Volunteer Administrator – responsible for the recruitment, training of volunteers and administering the volunteer rota

Overnight Coordinators – responsible for the overnight shifts. This position was partly funded by a grant from Gravesham Council.

We are so grateful to those who give. The surplus will be put towards our plans for next winter where our operating budget is in the region of £80,000.

5. Corporate and Church Support

As well as receiving finances from our many supporters, we are also pleased to receive support from a number of local businesses. These included:

Breyer Group	Marie's Tea Room
Chalk Plumbing	Mulalley and Co
Kuflink Financial Institution	Northfleet and Ebbsfleet Lions
Danslow Butchers	PA Group
DGP Logistics	Rotary Club of Gravesend & Meopham
Gravesend Art Club	St. Botolph's School St Georges School
Gravesham Borough Council	St Joseph's School
Howdens Joinery	Taylor & Ditung
Huggens College	Tesco Gravesend
Inner Wheel Club of Gravesend	Thee Scarecrows
John Lewis Partnership	UCARGO
Kent Police	United Living
Langer Serva	
Lidl Gravesend	

In addition, we are supported by a number of local churches including:

Chalk Church	St Botolph's, Northfleet
Christ Church Milton	St George's, Gravesend
City Praise Centre	St John's, Gravesend
Eastgate	St Margaret's, Ifield
Emmanuel Baptist Church	St Nicholas, Southfleet
RCCG	St Pauls, Gravesend

We apologise if we have left anyone out – do let us know and we can include you in our website tribute.

6. Plans for Winter 2020/21

Our plans are well underway for the coming winter. We hope to open 7 nights each week, starting in November 2020 through to the end of April 2021.

Changes in place include a more comprehensive training program for our volunteers, new sleeping arrangements at Longferry Court, and, hopefully, a new rota system, where volunteers can select their days.

If you are already a volunteer, we will be in contact to let you know about the new arrangements. If you would like to volunteer, then do get in contact at:

www.graveshamsanctuary.uk/volunteer

7. Supporting Sanctuary

Sanctuary is predominantly a volunteer organisation, where a large number of people give their time to the project for no charge. Where we do have costs, it is in the provision of resources to help the homeless and in paying key staff to ensure the project is managed and continues to run well.

We are fortunate that we also receive many gifts such as food and clothing which greatly reduce the items we need to purchase, but even with these the cash requirements of running Sanctuary are large.

This coming year (May 2020 – April 2021) these costs will rise again to an estimated £80,000 as we employ people for vital, specific roles. We have some reserves but need to secure regular donations to stay open, and even more if we are to see our vision come to reality.

We are looking for individuals, churches, and local businesses to support us financially on a regular basis. They can do this directly or by setting up a regular standing order using the following details:

Account Name: Gravesham Sanctuary CIO

Account No.: 00032523

Sort Code: 40-52-40

We have two options for giving on line:

- You can donate through our Facebook page at:
www.facebook.com/graveshamsanctuary/
- or create a fundraising page to share with friends and colleagues at Virgin Money Giving. Full details are on our website at:
www.GraveshamSanctuary.uk/donate

We also receive cheques made payable to 'Gravesham Sanctuary CIO' which can be sent to our registered address shown on the cover of this report.

For individuals who are tax payers, please let us know so we can claim Gift Aid on your behalf.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers who can help us, particularly when the shelter is running overnight. For more details and applications, visit:

www.graveshamsanctuary.uk/volunteer

APPENDIX I: Sanctuary Governance Structure

Gravesham Sanctuary is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered in England and Wales [No. 1181817]. It has developed out of a project started by City Praise Centre CIO in partnership with Gravesend Methodist Church (GMC) and in association with Gravesham Churches Together that seeks to bring comfort and hope to the homeless living in Gravesend.

The charity is primarily a voluntary organisation that provides an overnight shelter during the coldest months of the year. We work closely with other organisations including Gravesend Methodist Church who run a daytime hub for the homeless where they can access showers, clothing and laundry services.

Key members of the Sanctuary team are:

Trustees:

- Michael Coveney (Chair)
- Eric Davis
- Carol Webster (Safeguarding Officer)
- Vicki Clarke
- Peter Field

Other key members of the executive:

- Steve Nolan - Project Manager
- Lorna Nolan - Guest Manager
- Mike Collins - Volunteer Management
- Sue Terry - Prayer support
- Kwamena Becham - Finance

The day-to-day running of the project is the responsibility of the Project Manager (Steve Nolan) who is directly accountable to the Board of Trustees.

A full copy of our governance can be obtained on request or from the Sanctuary website at www.graveshamsanctuary.uk/about-sanctuary/

c/o The Maltings

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