



Manager's Report 2010



This has been a very exciting year for the Night Shelter with expansion, improvement and stability being key issues for the year. This time last year the shelter was under construction and much needed and improved facilities were being erected. Our thanks to Macdonald and Wright for a speedy build, and to supporting people Somerset for allowing the grant application to improve the service facilities.

We had just signed for a building to run as a dry house and were in the process of painting and decorating that, so we had a lot to do, the pressure was condensed by the fact that we were in the local paper as local residents didn't believe the concept of our dry house.

Much has changed over the year and the team and I are very proud of the achievements of the shelter and dry house, the Group and all the individuals that have come through it.

We reopened the shelter on the 30th November 2009 with an open day that was really well attended by individuals and agencies alike who were keen to see the way we intended to work both projects. At around the same time we had our first client move into the dry house. By Christmas we had a full dry house and a distinct lack of volunteers to keep the shelter open, the magnificent team dug in and Christmas 2009 was one of the best we have seen to date. The new year brought one of the coldest spells that we have seen in a long time, The shelter remained open for the duration of this providing 7 day accommodation for anyone who needed to be in until the end of January.

At the same time we managed to register the shelter to be able to claim housing benefit on the shelter bed spaces and this has provided a significant income for the Shelter making it more self sustainable, to give you an idea of how much of a difference this has made, shelter income is up 100%. Although this sounds a lot it is an amount of around £200 per week. This is good and makes a difference, however we still need to fundraise and put on events to be selfsustaining.

With Spring arriving we were offered nextdoors garden to purchase. At the time the weeds were 6ft high with various electrical, lounge and kitchen furniture scattered around. However, We felt that this would be a good asset to the shelter and everyone who uses it. We have had many clients and volunteers working on it and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in getting it looking so good. If you haven't had chance to see it you should come down and have a coffee with us.

With new facilities and up beat mood Aimee, one of our volunteers took on LPA (Learning power award) training and has been helping clients to achieve better self motivation and self worth through this skill based training. Sadly, LPA has stopped due to a change in government, but Aimee and I are looking into equivalent training modules. My thanks to Aimee and to the Foyer.

We have also been working closely with the DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) who have been to see the Shelter following a homeless count we did unofficially last year. The meetings have been positive to a degree in that the shelter was praised for the work it has done over the years and currently having the foresight to address issues around Drugs and Alcohol.



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However, the message they brought from whitehall was that they want to see some significant changes around privacy, safeguarding and policy. Although we have made many alterations to working practice there is a strong chance that the shelter will run more as an evening 'drop in service' to feed and support clients, in turn this will help voluntary hours go further. They also brought other recommendations asking that we have a minimum age of 18, that all volunteers undergo CRB checks to safeguard clients, we are currently working closely with South Somerset District Council on these matters. I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Sally and Rick for all your support over the past year without which I couldn't have achieved as much.

During the summer the group added a fundraising week to their agenda and shortly after organised a sponsored walk all proceeds to the Night Shelter, they raised a staggering £680.00 for completing their 6 miles around the town. More recently they organised a funday at the shelter that raised a further £120.00. well done all of you and keep the faith with your recoveries. You are an inspiration to others.

The night Shelter has also welcomed AA to use the facilities at the shelter and we have a strong group attending at lunchtimes every Wednesday, which adds continuity and stability to our groups run at the Shelter, we are in the process of starting an NA group soon.

I would like to thank the Trustees for your guidance and direction this year, The Committee for your help and support. Racheall Welsh and Karen Smith for your assistance, knowledge and persistence with me. Thanks to Chris Mounsher for giving your time and skills full time for prior to going to Peru. To all the volunteers who have made this last year achievable and possible. And finally to everyone for believing in me enough to keep pushing the organisation forward.

Chris Gibbons

Manager