

together creating opportunity

opendoor

Mission statement

- Our mission is to make a positive difference in our community
- We aim to offer resources and support to individuals, promote hope for change, and help to improve life opportunities
- Our services are free, independent and confidential

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Open Door Centre, Exmouth

Volume 5 Issue 1

Visit www.opendoorexmouth.org.uk

The latest information about the activities of the Centre can now be accessed on our website.

Want to know who's who? Not sure what services we offer? Need to contact us? Would like to know more about supporting us? All is revealed on the site.

It's bright, it's informative, it's positive, and it's updated regularly.

We've included stories from our volunteers and visitors, facts and figures showing how our services are used, project news and reports.

Each issue of the magazine is available as a download, as are



Bright colours and clear graphics make our webpages easy to read

support forms, Gift Aid declarations, our Ethos statement and much more.

Whilst we're pleased with the site so far, we're always open to comments so if there are any improvements you think we could make, please let us

know.

So if you haven't logged on yet, why not take a look today?

This is an exciting step for us and gives us a chance to spread the word much more widely—we know it's been read in Australia!

And there's more to come as we develop the site further and add new features.

First Impressions

Graham & Val say, "As new volunteers at the Open Door Café we have been impressed by the courtesy, warmth and respect shown to the users of the Centre.

This is demonstrated by the way in which they are welcomed and offered the various facilities of the Centre

which cover a good range of perceived needs from showers, clean clothes, a good meal to using computers and help with benefit problems.

We have been impressed by the 'listening ear' friendship of the volunteers and the good relationship between members of the volunteer team.

As the 'new boys on the block' we've greatly appreciated the sense of mutual support and team work.

We look forward to our day a week at the Centre."

Graham & Val have recently joined our 100-strong volunteer team, champions all of them!

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Partnership works!



I work for the East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership as a Community Safety and Anti Social Behaviour Coordinator. Now that Nightshift has been operating for several months I feel it appropriate to carry out some sort of evaluation of it.

Daryl (Trustee at Open Door) approached me in early 2007, not only to see what I thought of the idea, but also to seek funding from the Partnership for a 'Pub Watch' radio and some reflective jackets. I could see at that stage

that he was very enthusiastic about the initiative, with the welfare of the public being at the forefront of his thinking.

I agreed that for a relatively small amount of funding the benefits could be great but I did not anticipate just how successful it would prove to be.

I researched Police logs of reported incidents of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in Exmouth Town Centre on Saturday nights from 19th May 2007, when Nightshift started, until Christmas Eve 2007. I then com-

pared those figures with the same period for the previous year.

In 2006 there were a total of 132 incidents reported whereas for the same period last year there were only 104. This represents a decrease of 21%.

There is no way that such a drop in reports can be attributed to any particular initiative or project, but one thing is certain:

Nightshift has undoubtedly played a major part in the fall in reports.

Briefings, biscuits and benefits...

From the time the volunteer team arrives at 9.30 for our morning briefing, it's all go.

Coffee, chat and updates, prayer together and personal news get us ready for the day.

From 10 till 2 we'll deal with what comes while kitchen staff prepare and serve the meals.

Maybe someone has a letter they don't fully understand and volunteer might talk over a cuppa to

try to resolve it—perhaps a phone call or a letter.

Or Frank, 38, from 'around' arrives after being sent to us from CAB. To start with it's a meal he wants, or he tells us his giro's been stopped, or he needs money to get somewhere, and as the conversation unfolds you realise his needs are more than practical. He needs help emotionally and spiritually; he's lost

connection with his family; he doesn't think he'll live very long if he keeps drinking two bottles of vodka a day but can't imagine life without booze.

Jane, in her 40's, returns after several years because she knows she'll find help here. No money because she missed an appointment at the Job Centre. 4 hours on the phone to DWP later we're finally able to sort it out

but she has to get to Exeter today to collect it, so we also buy her a bus ticket.

Someone asks where John is so we ask around and find out he's got somewhere to live now so doesn't need us. But we also discover that Mark hasn't been in town because he's been arrested.

But it's not all bad news—one of the volunteers had a really good conversation with Maggie today and she went away smiling be-

cause someone took the time to listen and understand. And Joe came in for his mail, too.

We welcome all sorts of people to the Café. Sometimes they just want a place to 'be' for a while; sometimes they're desperate for help but everyone receives the same welcome and we try to support everyone. If we can't sort it out ourselves, we'll work hard to find someone who can.

And all through, we serve tea

coffee and biscuits, take orders for meals, deal with washing and showers, sort out computer 'glitches', and help people work toward achieving their goals.

No wonder by the end of the day we're ready for a brew ourselves! (and we still haven't done the paperwork yet...)

(Names and details have been changed for obvious reasons but this could easily be any normal day for us).

"We welcome all sorts of people to the Café..."



Café open, Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10am-2pm

Partnership works (cont'd)

People who see at first hand the benefits of the project such as the Police, Pub and Club door staff and West Country Ambulance staff, all speak very highly of the professionalism of the volunteers out on the streets. The staff in the CCTV Control Room, are now confident enough to be able to send the volunteers to assist distressed people.

Special Constable Bridget Harris, supervising the CCTV Control Room, told me that Nightshift is having a big impact on the streets of Exmouth and people are happy

to talk to the volunteers. This goes for both youngsters and adults alike. "They have on many occasions assisted the Police with members of the public who for whatever reason have become distressed, either through alcohol or some other problem"

Not only do the volunteers on the streets play their part but also those volunteers who manage the 'drop in' facility at the Axis Centre. Persons who exit the pubs and clubs are using the Centre as a safe haven until the crowds have thinned out or they

literally drop in to find a friendly face to chat to. The use of this facility is also gathering momentum and compliments the work of the volunteers on the street.

On behalf of the Partnership and the many partner agencies that it comprises, may I take this opportunity to thank the many people involved in Nightshift. It does involve them giving up their time to work very unsociable hours. This is very much appreciated by us all. Please keep up the good work.

Gerry Moore



There's always a welcome and a chance to chat

Exmouth Child Contact Centre

Mandy was referred to us by her solicitors because though she was no longer living with her children's father they both wanted contact with them.

Each fortnight, Mandy and her new partner came to hand over her two children to their dad, Rob. She was clearly anxious about this and was reluctant to let her children go. Though there had been some difficult history

between her and Rob she was willing to take the risk because she knew our volunteers would be watching out for them.

The children were obviously pleased to see their dad. He was very good with them and we helped him find suitable toys and games so they could enjoy their time at the Centre.

After these tense beginnings we noticed there was a gradual

change in the relationship to the point where Mandy was able to trust Rob eventually to take the children home to his flat. Once this happened our role decreased and in the end we were no longer needed.

They may never get back together but we're glad to have been able to play a part in helping the children have a happier family life.

"She was willing to take the risk because our volunteers were watching out for them."

Just enough, just in time

On the day our freezer decided to give up, we heard that one of the local churches was holding a charity lunch for us. And guess what—they raised enough for us to buy a new one!

Time and again, we've found ourselves poised on the edge of our resources only to see the needed cash arrive just in time.

Last year we took the bold step of deciding to invest in new pro-

jects like Night Shift, we've upgraded some of our equipment and we've added new part time staff. On paper, the figures didn't add up - they showed a significant shortfall by the end of 2007.

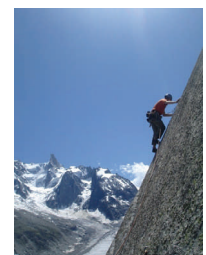
But thanks to some generous giving in the last month or so of the year we found ourselves only a few hundred pounds short.

This year, we're doing it again! A prudent budget aims at covering

our costs, but already we're expanding into some new areas.

Our fundraiser is hot on the trail of appropriate funds and we have some events lined up to help, but the confidence of our trustees is firmly placed in the generosity of the God who has called us to serve him.

And to all of you who support us so well because he's called you, too—thank you so much!



The view from the top is worth the challenge

The Open Door Centre is a registered charity, operating as a joint venture between local churches in Exmouth and district, engaged in community action, and acting as an expression of Christian compassion.

We work under an equal opportunities policy for the benefit of the community and though motivated by our faith we do not impose it on our clients who may have their own faith or none.

All our funding comes through voluntary donations, largely from the local community and from supportive Trust Funds.

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cosmic success!

Project Cosmic, an IT social enterprise company based in Ottery St Mary, have arranged to run a 7-week introductory course to get people started on the basics of computer use.

Andy, course tutor, says, 'It's been great fun coming down to Open Door. I enjoy teaching so much when I see keen students, learning and enjoying themselves!'

Both volunteers and clients have

got involved and been encouraged to try new things and develop new skills.

But what do participants make of it? Here are some comments:

'I've found it really interesting.'

'I had a basic knowledge of letter writing but since I've been on the course I am able to not just write a letter but prepare a file and save my work.'

'Very enjoyable and informative.'



Team Talk



Two new Trustees have joined us—Noel Harrower from Glenorchy Church, a retired Careers Officer, and Adele Atkinson from Brixington Community Church who brings her passion for Night Shift to the board. We welcome both and look forward to working together.

During the year John Osman has started overseeing our meals and menus especially now we are open three days a week.

Details of all these people are on the website so you can get to know them a little better.

Debbie Harris joins us as fundraiser, stepping into Liz Cottingham's shoes. Liz contin-

ues to work for us as assistant to Treasurer John Wynne so we have not lost her skills entirely. The funding world is constantly changing and always a challenge but we look forward to working with Debbie to build on the good work Liz has already done.

Our Friends of Open Door scheme remains a huge success and we are tremendously grateful to everyone who donates on such a regular basis. That's part of the reason we can attempt new things so confidently. If you would like to join this scheme, there's information on the website for you to download.

Following the success of the

MegaBite voucher scheme at Harvest we have been able to support a number of individuals in need of emergency help. Thank you for your support.

Gary has started work on a new approach to our visitors to the Café. He is using an outcomes based interview process that helps people identify their goals and begin to work toward them. There's more work to be done on this but we'll keep you in touch with progress via the website.

Across all our projects we now have over 100 volunteers, without whom none of this could happen, so again, a huge thank you!