



## NOAH Winter Shelter Reopens

It's that time of year when most of us turn up our heating, glad to get indoors as the night draws in. For people forced to sleep outside, winter time can present a far more serious threat. We all know how being cold feels, but prolonged exposure to extreme cold overnight can truly be life-threatening. High winds can cause injury to those sleeping rough, in insecure derelict buildings at best, whilst heavy rain can make people ill and damage their difficult to replace items such as identification papers.

NOAH's Emergency Winter Shelter is there to help local people in this most desperate of situations. For its ninth consecutive year, the Shelter is opening throughout the Winter on nights when the temperature drops to 0°C. This will give people who are homeless and rough sleeping a place of warmth, comfort and safety to sleep during the coldest of nights. Over the last three winters, 228 individuals have used our winter Shelter. NOAH CEO Jim O'Connor MBE makes it clear how essential the Shelter is, saying "if we did not provide our Winter Shelter we would lose people, they would die of the cold".

Based at the Central Baptist Church, Luton, the Shelter opens after NOAH's evening Soup Kitchen, those with no accommodation make the short journey along Park Street to bed down for the

night. The Shelter offers facilities many of us take for granted - heating, access to toilets, warm drinks, duvets and sleeping bags. After a secure night's sleep, Shelter users return to NOAH's Welfare Centre for a substantial cooked breakfast, shower and clean clothes, and advice from our welfare support team.

**"If we did not provide our Winter Shelter we would lose people, they would die of the cold".**

This marks the beginning of the pathway to recovery for some. NOAH Outreach workers and Welfare staff see the Shelter as an opportunity to engage with men and women who may be traumatised, in poor health, and outside the usual safety net of services there to protect vulnerable individuals. NOAH Welfare Manager Paul Prosser says: "We find that 7 hours safe, uninterrupted sleep makes a huge difference in how people can



approach the following day. Proper rest gives them much better chance of making long term changes to improve their circumstances".

A recent cold winter (2012/13) saw the Shelter open for 102 nights, over which 75 individuals were given a place to sleep. Last year, 46 individuals used the Emergency Winter Shelter, over a winter which saw lows of -4°C. The busiest night had 30 homeless people sleeping in the Church. This year with a particularly cold winter forecast by experts, we expect the Shelter to be open for longer.

Costs of the Shelter are met by NOAH through generous donations from Luton Borough Council, individuals, groups, businesses and charitable trusts.

Volunteers provide essential support on a rota system alongside trained NOAH employees. Welfare Centre Supervisor Phil Crawley advises, "We've been donated sleeping bags, toiletries and winter essential packs. We are appealing for donations of snacks, hot drink provisions, and roll mats. If anyone can help with these items it would be massively appreciated".

Both the Soup Kitchen and Emergency Winter Shelter are traditionally staffed by a combination of trained NOAH workers and volunteers, and this year is no different. The more assistance we receive, the better the support for the most disadvantaged members of our community. If you would like to contribute material items for the Shelter, help with funding, or find out more about volunteering, please contact the NOAH team on **01582 728416** or go to our fundraising page on [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com)

**We would like to thank the Central Baptist Church, Luton Borough Council, all providers of food, and all volunteers for supporting this important, life-saving project.**



**A view from NOAH Chief Executive, Jim O'Connor MBE**

In a world beset with recession and its attendant poverty, this season really places the goodness and generosity of people, individually or as group in the Christmas shop window. We see this first hand all year round in the generous support that we get from our community, support that enables us to help people who are destitute, rough sleeping, homeless and otherwise on the margins of society.

Your empathy, concern and care have helped make a difference to so many, not only in 2016, but over the last 29 years of NOAH's existence.

I wish each and every one of you the peace and joy of Christmas and I want to thank our volunteers, donors, partners and supporters for what you do to make our work possible and effective. That is a message that I also extend to the NOAH staff team and our trustees.



# Thank YOU!

NOAH's work is made possible by fantastic community support and a superb team of volunteers. It costs **£1.5m** to provide our services.

**In the last six months we have received:**

**£136k**

from individuals, community groups, churches, and charitable trusts



**Around 500 individual donations of food (incl. from harvest festivals)**



**3172**  
bags of clothes



**720**  
furniture donations



support of over **90** businesses



**344** volunteers

## NEWS IN BRIEF



**NOAH people have won three categories in the Community Learning Awards for Bedfordshire: Tutor, Learner and Volunteer of the Year!**



Our website is currently under development through the voluntary efforts of one of our branding and technology expert trustees. It is due for relaunch in the new year.



We have embarked on another Government funded mental health research project in collaboration with Luton Adult Learning.



**We are working with Syrian refugees living in Dunstable teaching them English and providing work experience, as part of the 'Building Better Opportunities' project**



**We have retained our 'Excellence in Business' status with the Furniture Re-Use Network.**



We are partnering with CLG (Change, Grow, Live) in delivering an exciting opportunity to make a real change in the lives of people suffering addiction. We are very pleased to be part of the new Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service for Luton.

For up-to-date news about NOAH, please visit:

[www.noahenterprise.org](http://www.noahenterprise.org)

[/NoahEnterprise](https://www.facebook.com/NoahEnterprise) [@noah\\_luton](https://twitter.com/noah_luton)

We would like to thank each and every person who has helped us deliver crucial services to vulnerable and severely disadvantaged local people. There are many of you - individuals, businesses, groups, churches and faith communities, universities and colleges, schools, charitable trusts and Dave who lives across the road from us and stands in for Father Christmas each year on Christmas Day at our Welfare Centre. You are all so valued.



## BEFRIENDING MANOR PARK GARDENS

NOAH has partnered with a local community group, the Friends of Manor Park, to begin work on a collaborative gardening project. The project sees NOAH service users helping to tend a historic former rose garden, 'Manor Park Gardens', which is adjacent to our Welfare Centre in Park Street, Luton.

The project is led by Max, a NOAH Welfare Support Worker, supported by other Centre team members. Max is organising groups of service users to help with gardening tasks such as

weeding, clearance of scrub, tidying of flower beds and litter picking. Work has already begun around the 'wildlife' section of the Gardens, which has been planted to promote biodiversity.

Max tells us, "We are really looking forward to clearing the area by the side of the walkway and sprinkling this with wild flowers seed ready for the spring". Bill Burton, Chairman of the Friends of Manor Park, is supervising work and instructing NOAH clients in basic gardening skills, such as seasonal pruning and planting.

The project has been made possible through Luton Borough Council's 'Your Say Your Way' programme. Local residents of South Ward met and voted for this project to receive funding. Project lead Max says, "The clients find this work very satisfying - they can see the progress and know it's going to be appreciated by someone". We thank the Friends of Manor Park, Luton Borough Council, and residents of South Ward for supporting this project.



## BOUTIQUE, c'est chic...

Our boutique store has had a makeover! NOAH's flagship charity fashion store in George Street reopened recently following a full refurbishment, giving it a fresh, modern look.

The revitalised store stocks our highest quality range of women's designer and vintage clothing, with items by Per Una, French Connection, Monsoon and Diesel amongst the finds. The shop sells everything needed for an on-trend winter, including coats, knitwear and scarves specially selected by our talented Donated Textiles Manager Michelle Waudby.

Christmas party dresses nestle cheerfully amongst costume jewellery and elegant evening footwear. Premium second-hand items, generously provided by our network of donors and church groups share space with brand new handbags and home-wares. We also stock a range of handmade cushions and bags (lovingly created by the NOAH Sewing and Craft group) that are perfect for gifts!

With menswear being catered for at our High Town shop, and new retail outlets in the pipeline, NOAH's charity shops are playing an ever increasing role in our operations. All profits from the stores are channelled into our welfare services, making all customers a supporter of the work we do. Our retail volunteers are key to making this possible.

We would like to thank all our clothes donors, church groups, the NOAH Sewing and Craft group for their support stocking our charity shops, and our volunteers and customers for continuing to support NOAH's work.

# NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND HORIZONS ACROSS BEDFORDSHIRE

NOAH's service is growing, so that we can offer hope and support to more people struggling with severe disadvantage and exclusion across Bedfordshire. We are now active in Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough!

Central Bedfordshire Council has commissioned a Rough Sleeper Outreach project for the region. This work is being led by our specialist worker **Nick Jordan**. Nick is mobile throughout the area, with work concentrated in Dunstable, Biggleswade and Leighton Buzzard.



Through our training and employment arm, we have established courses for the long-term unemployed in Bedford, Biggleswade and Houghton Regis/Dunstable. These courses aim to support a further 350 people into work, in addition to the 200 local people NOAH has already helped into employment in the last two years.

Nick is taking action to ensure those sleeping rough have access to housing advice and support to move from the streets. Many referrals come from **'StreetLink'**, a website and smartphone app that enables the public to alert agencies about people sleeping rough in their area. Alternatively members of the public can call **0300 500 0914**. In the last four months we have provided 59 rapid response visits to StreetLink referrals in Luton and Central Bedfordshire.



Warren Edwards, Head of Training and Employment said, "At NOAH we are so lucky and privileged to do the work we undertake with the support of so many funders and partners who see great value in what we do".

Our track record for helping some of the most disadvantaged people in our communities has led to many new training initiatives starting this year, including a series of Mental Health projects for people with mild to moderate conditions. These projects are proving to be

very successful and we have now been commissioned to develop and deliver additional courses this year. It is very pleasing that they are being referred to as examples of best practice, and have been the subject of wonderful testimonies at a recent Progressing Into Work programme launch.

Following these recent successes, we are launching a new NOAH Community Hub in Bedford town centre. This exciting development combines a social enterprise shop and Academy training in one building. The shop will offer high quality household goods at an affordable price for customers on low incomes, and placement opportunities for those interested in gaining retail work experience. The Academy training facility will run courses to improve the prospects of disadvantaged adults, in combination with work experience to improve confidence and real-world skills. People interested in courses can access the Hub through various pathways, including self-referral and referral through third sector and statutory agencies.

**For further information, please contact our Academy direct on 01582 726 152**

## WE TRULY VALUE YOUR SUPPORT!

The donations we receive from individuals, groups and businesses make NOAH services possible. Our charity shops raise money to pay for critical, life-giving local support services. We would love you to join us in our work

### VOLUNTEERING

Our fantastic volunteer team has vacancies in the following areas: **Shop Assistant, Warehouse Furniture Mover, Driver's, Assistant, Fundraiser, Administrator, Cleaner, Mentor**. We also warmly invite corporate volunteer groups. Please contact **Joy Surridge** on **01582 726 152** [joy.surridge@noahenterprise.org](mailto:joy.surridge@noahenterprise.org)

### FUNDRAISING

We thoroughly appreciate one-off or regular donations through our **'Friends of NOAH'** scheme, or as your **'Charity of the Year'**. We would also be delighted to support you with your own fundraising event. Please contact **Helen King** on **01582 728 416** [helen.king@noahenterprise.org](mailto:helen.king@noahenterprise.org)

### FOOD & GOODS DONATIONS

We gratefully accept good quality clothing, shoes, furniture, kitchen appliances, small electrical items and household items. Donations can be dropped at any of the locations below, or we offer a free collection service for larger donations. Please call **01582 484 001**

## CONTACT NOAH

**WELFARE CENTRE**  
01582 728 416  
141 Park St.  
Luton LU1 3HG

**FURNITURE STORE**  
01582 484 001  
54 Church St.  
Luton LU1 3JG

**NOAH ACADEMY**  
01582 726 152  
20-22 Hightown Rd.  
Luton LU2 0DD

**THE NOAH SHOP**  
01582 736 751  
20-22 Hightown Rd.  
Luton LU2 0DD

**NOAH BOUTIQUE**  
01582 723 146  
3-5 George St. Luton  
LU1 2AA