



Charity Number 1158760

THE SHELTER PROJECT HOUNSLOW

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR TO 31 AUGUST 2023



The Shelter Project Hounslow was awarded The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2017

Context

The Shelter Project Hounslow (TSPH) was formed in January 2012. It brought together Christian churches of several denominations across the London Borough of Hounslow to cooperate and coordinate to provide a winter shelter for homeless men across the Borough.

Each night of the week over the coldest winter months, our volunteers welcomed rough-sleeping homeless men into their church or church hall and provided them with a warm welcome, a hot meal, a comfortable bed for the night and breakfast the following morning.

This initiative was funded by the participating churches, their communities and some generous individuals and local businesses. For many years the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) referred homeless men to TSPH and made a much-needed grant towards our engagement of a part-time project co-ordinator.

Our project co-ordinator worked with the guests and each church's venue co-ordinator to ensure the smooth running of the project. They also helped many guests to be housed.

Just before the October 2019 to March 2020 season, we learned that LBH would not be referring any homeless men to us, nor contributing any grant towards our costs of employing a project co-ordinator. Due to our financial policy of always retaining sufficient funds to be able to operate for the next season, we were still able to open our doors in December 2019 as soon as our then project co-ordinator had recruited sufficient carefully vetted guests.

As our volunteers' concerns about the risks of COVID-19 mounted over February to March 2020, we decided that we would have to end the season early. We would have to say goodbye to our guests after breakfast on the morning of Sunday 22nd March 2020.

Fortunately, we were able to reassure these anxious men that they would have safe accommodation from that evening as the government had just introduced an 'everyone in' policy whereby local authorities would accommodate the homeless.

The first Covid-19 lockdown was announced the next day on Monday 23rd March 2020.

Since that lockdown TSPH has not been able to operate as a shelter for the homeless. Initially, not knowing how long a pandemic would last, we had expected that we would be able to provide shelter again over the next winter season from December 2020 to March 2021.

However, communal shelters with shared facilities such as ours could not meet new government guidelines which were introduced just before the winter of 2020-21.

We expected that those guidelines would have been relaxed and we would be able to operate again by the following winter of 2021-22. Therefore, we retained our project co-ordinator under the government's job retention scheme (also known as the furlough scheme).

Nevertheless, the trustees, together with the part-time project co-ordinator, our sole employee, recognised the risk to our operating model. We were already exploring different ways of sheltering the homeless or, alternatively, if we couldn't provide overnight accommodation, how we might offer a warm welcome, a hot meal and assistance or 'sign-posting' to the vulnerable in society more generally, complementing the work of the LBH's Community Solutions team.

By the end of our financial year to 31 August 2021, it was becoming clear that we might not be able to operate as a communal night shelter over the next winter season from December 2021 to March 2022 either, nor for the foreseeable future. Eventually and reluctantly, we had to make our project co-ordinator's position redundant in January 2022.

Café Together, 2021 -22 Pilot

As recorded in the last TSPH Trustees Annual Report to August 2022, we had launched this new initiative as a pilot from 9th June 2022 at the Methodist church in Bell Road, Hounslow.

For one evening each week over the months of June and July 2022, volunteers from Bell Road Methodist Church and St Mary's Osterley hosted a café style supper where people could meet, enjoy a free home-cooked meal with non-judgemental and friendly company and, when necessary, be sign-posted towards agencies which might be able to help them.

LBH's Community Solutions Team were invited to all meetings of Café Together as it was always our intention to offer a service which helps them to meet a clear need in society.

This initiative is focussed on the vulnerable in society, including those at risk of homelessness, with the intention of helping them to address their difficulties before the crisis stage.

Café Together, 2022-23 Roll Out

Following the success of the initial pilot, Bell Road Methodist Church's volunteers, with the help of volunteers from St Mary's Osterley, reopened their Café Together from 6th October 2022 until its season closed with a festive Christmas dinner on 15th December 2022.

The second run at Bell Road had been another great success. The number of guests fluctuated widely from as many as 29 to as few as 12, particularly after some refugee/asylum seeker groups had been moved on to other parts of the country. There had been a good atmosphere every evening with guests and volunteers mixing well. The involvement of Hounslow Borough Councillors had been successful as had the regular attendance of both a representative of the Community Solutions Team and an elected member of LBH's Council.

We developed a new Café Together operating model based on what had worked so well over the pilot phase at Bell Road. Our ambition became to roll this out Café to other churches across Hounslow. Ideally, we would have two hubs, one in Hounslow and another in Chiswick.

So, in January and February 2023 we had two venues open for an evening each week.

From 9th January 2023 we operated a Café Together on Wednesdays at St. John's Isleworth until 1st March 2023. This venue is not very far from Bell Road so regulars at Bell Road could attend this venue. Other guests also came along. This venue has been a great success.

St Michael's Elmwood Road in Chiswick opened their Café Together on Mondays from 9th January to 26th February 2023. This venue was also successful.

Café Together opened again at Bell Road from 14th May until 20th July and enjoyed a further successful season. The number of guests fluctuated from a low of 14 to a high of 29.

We now have approximately 25 regular guests in Hounslow who have become well known to the volunteers and to other guests. This provides a very convivial atmosphere.

By the end of our financial year, we were able to show that Café Together meets a need and we were working on attracting other churches to take part.

TSPH Financial Accounts for its financial year from 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023

TSPH accounts consist of a Balance Sheet and a Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA).

Each is presented alongside the previous year's figures for comparison.

THE SHELTER PROJECT HOUNSLOW						
Balance Sheet as of:	31-Aug-22			31-Aug-23		
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Assets						
Fixed Assets						
Stock & Debtors						
Cash in bank	£16,965.77	£1,124.37	£18,090.14	£19,534.91	£824.37	£20,359.28
Cash to be lodged	£130.00		£130.00			
Total Assets:	£17,095.77	£1,124.37	£18,220.14	£19,534.91	£824.37	£20,359.28
Liabilities						
Creditors < 1 year	£395.00		£395.00	£395.00		£395.00
Creditors > 1 year						
Total Liabilities	£395.00		£395.00	£395.00		£395.00
Net Assets	£16,700.77	£1,124.37	£17,825.14	£19,139.91	£824.37	£19,964.28

As the above balance sheet shows, The Shelter Project Hounslow may have fantastic teams of volunteers at each venue and enjoy good relations with stakeholders, including local church communities and LBH, but its only asset in financial terms is the cash in its bank account.

This increased by £2,139.14 over the financial year from £18,220.14 on 1st September 2022 to £20,359.28 on 31st August 2023.

All TSPH's funds are unrestricted but for the £824.37 balance remaining of a donation received from Prêt a Manger for the purpose of funding the cost of providing meals.

TSPH's only liability was Housing Justice's membership fee which had been invoiced in arrears.

The increase in cash of £2,139.14 is explained in TSPH's Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) which is presented below (on the next page):

Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year ended:

	31-Aug-22			31-Aug-23		
Including a summary Income and Expenditure account:						
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Income						
London Borough of Hounslow						
Church communities	£916.63		£916.63	£1,409.96		£1,409.96
Individuals & businesses	£1,488.96		£1,488.96	£3,145.00		£3,145.00
Total Income:	£2,405.59		£2,405.59	£4,554.96		£4,554.96
Expenditure						
Charitable Activities	£15,880.03		£15,880.03	£1,235.70	£300.00	£1,535.70
Other	£1,246.08		£1,246.08	£880.12		£880.12
Total Expenditure	£17,126.11		£17,126.11	£2,115.82	£300.00	£2,415.82
Net Income	(£14,720.52)		(£14,720.52)	£2,439.14	(£300.00)	£2,139.14
Opening balance brought fwd	£31,421.29	£1,124.37	£32,545.66	£16,700.77	£1,124.37	£17,825.14
Closing balance carried fwd.	£16,700.77	£1,124.37	£17,825.14	£19,139.91	£824.37	£19,964.28

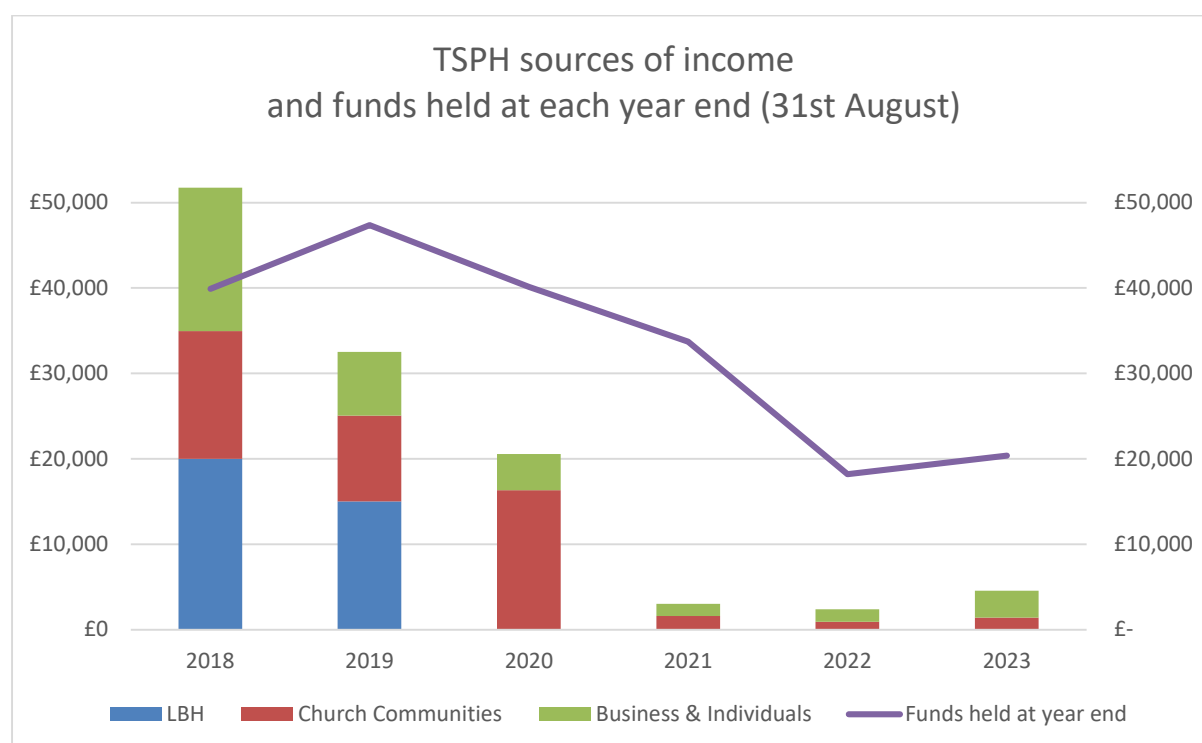
TSPH no longer receives funding from LBH and the level of funding received from participating churches, their communities, individuals and local businesses is much reduced.

However, we did receive a very generous donation of £2,250 via CAF (the Charities Aid Foundation) from one anonymous donor who we would like to be able to thank.

Costs are kept to a minimum. In the previous 2021-22 financial year, when we were inactive but for the Café Together pilot, most of the cost incurred under the Charitable Activities heading related to retaining and eventually making redundant our Project Co-ordinator. He had been retained until we realised that we would be unable to operate as a homeless shelter for the foreseeable future and that we would no longer be able to attract funding at the same level operating as Café Together as we had when we operated as a shelter for the homeless.

Café Together is a low-cost operation due to the generosity of our volunteers and their church communities which allow us to use their venues for free. Most volunteer cooks even provide the food they prepare for free.

Commentary on the TSPH Financial Accounts 2022-23



Since TSPH has not been able to operate as a homeless shelter, our income has been greatly reduced. The LBH grant in 2018-19 was reduced to 15k (from £20k) as we were late opening that season due to the sudden tragic death of our beloved project co-ordinator contractor.

A new project coordinator was then recruited as an employee.

The following 2019-2020 season, we received no grant from LBH but our church communities, local businesses and generous individuals continued to support us for that season over which we operated a homeless shelter from January to March 2020 when we had to close early due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The continued employment of our Project Co-ordinator while we still expected to be able to operate again as a communal shelter and the eventual redundancy cost in January 2022 depleted our resources significantly.

We are confident that our current level of resources at almost £20,000 will suffice for several years at the present level of activity. We enjoy good relations with the London Borough of Hounslow and with our church communities. If the scale of our operations and its costs were to increase, we are confident that we would be able to attract the resources to support this.

Trustees and Steering Group

The Steering Group members overseeing the operations of TSPH are:

Jennifer Corbin – Chairman, Trustee and Member of the Steering Group

Bill Hodgson - Trustee

Steve Joyce - Trustee and Member of the Steering Group

Mary Macleod - Trustee and Member of the Steering Group

Tony Mobbs – Trustee

Jack Emsley – Member of the Steering Group

Margaret Logan – Member of the Steering Group

Peter Simons - Member of the Steering Group and Treasurer

Contact details:

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April 2024