



Charity Number 1158760

THE SHELTER PROJECT HOUNSLOW

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR TO 31 AUGUST 2025

FINAL DRAFT 260504

Approved by the Trustees



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

Introduction

The story of the Shelter Project Hounslow (TSPH) has always been about the power in working together for the benefit of our less fortunate and more vulnerable neighbours.

The charity was formed in January 2012 to co-ordinate Christian churches across the London Borough of Hounslow. By working together, individual church communities, each operating a homeless shelter on just one night of the week could offer homeless men a warm welcome, an evening meal, a comfortable bed for the night, a cooked breakfast in the morning on every night of the week throughout the coldest months of the year.

This initiative was largely funded by the participating churches, their church communities and some generous individuals and local businesses. The churches made their venues available for free. In addition, their volunteers gave their time for free and claimed no expenses. Most of those who cooked meals did not even seek reimbursement for the cost of the food they had prepared.

To their credit, our biggest donor was the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) who referred homeless men to TSPH and made a much-needed grant towards our engagement of a part-time project co-ordinator.

By March 2020, we had grown fond of our guests who remained calm and well-behaved despite growing concern about Covid-19. Reluctantly, not knowing how they could cope, we would have to end our season and say goodbye to them on the morning of Sunday 22nd March 2020.

Luckily, that Saturday evening we learned that local authorities would accommodate the homeless from Sunday evening under the government's 'everyone in' policy.

The first lock down was declared the following day.

A communal shelter with shared facilities like ours was could never be Covid-19 compliant. By August 2021, it was becoming clear that we would not be able to operate as a shelter again for the foreseeable future. We needed to find a new operating model.

Café Together

This initiative was developed to align with LBH's community hubs. It is focussed not just on the homeless but on befriending the vulnerable more generally, including those at risk of homelessness, with the intention of helping them to address difficulties before the crisis stage.

Our guests are welcomed to a café style venue where they enjoy a hot meal in friendly, non-judgemental company and, if appropriate, are sign-posted to agencies which can help them.

Again, we coordinate the efforts of different churches so that we work together¹.

In June 2022, with the support of Minister Adam Nyawo, we launched our service as a pilot on Thursday evenings at the Hounslow Methodist Church. The Rev. Ellis Matthews, vicar of St Mary's Osterley (Church of England) whose community provide volunteers, was also a strong supporter.

Since then, the nearby Maswell Park Church started to offer a similar service on the same evening of the week. Therefore, we changed our evening to a Tuesday so that we do not compete. Independently, together, we can now offer a meal to our guests on two nights of the week.

Hounslow Methodist Church has appointed a Community Pastor, Rev Heflin Jani, whose role includes regular attendance at Cafe Together offering consistent support and pastoral care.

LBH's Community Solutions Team have been invited to all meetings of Café Together from the pilot and it is still our intention to offer a service aligned and consistent with their objectives. Local councillors, especially Ranjit Gill and LBH social workers have been regular attendees. Councillor

¹ An appendix to this report explains how we can help your church to run a Café Together

Jack Emsley serves on our Steering Group. The current Mayor of Hounslow, Amy Croft, has honoured us by attending twice recently.

Following our representation at the second meeting of the Hounslow Community Development Network in April 2025, on 17th July 2025, our chairman Mrs Jennifer Corbin attended a London Borough of Hounslow Area Forum at which the Rev Heflin Jani of Hounslow Methodist Church and Mr Steve Joyce esq. of St Mary's Osterley made a presentation about Café Together.

Steve told us how in the new year he had asked a guest how their Christmas had been. The answer was that Steve should know that it went very well as he had been there too. For this guest, the Café Together at which a Christmas meal was served had been the highlight of their Christmas.

Over the year to 31st August 2025, we served almost 1,000 free meals to our guests. Clearly, our Café Together is of great value to them, not just as a meal but as a social event.

Ideally, we would have two hubs in the borough, each offering a Café Together weekly: one in Hounslow and the other in Chiswick.

Café Together, September 2024 to August 2025

	Hounslow	Chiswick
September 2024	St Michael & Martin, RC Church Monday 30 th Sept. 6:30pm–8:00pm	
October 2024	St Michael & Martin, RC Church Mondays 7 th , 14 th , 21 st & 28 th 6:30pm–8:00pm	St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Thursdays 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th & 24 th Oct. 12:00pm – 1:30pm Lunch time
November 2024	Hounslow Methodist Church Thursdays 7 th , 14 th , 21 st & 28 th	St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Thursday 7 th 12:00pm – 1:30pm
December 2024	Hounslow Methodist Church Thursdays 5 th , 12 th & 19 th (incl. a Christmas meal on 19 th)	
January 2025	Hounslow Methodist Church Thursdays 9 th , 16 th , 23 rd & 30 th	
February 2025	St Michael & Martin, RC Church Mondays 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th & 24 th	St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Thursday 5 th at lunch time
March 2025		St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Wednesday 1 st at lunch time
April 2025		St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Wednesday 2 nd at lunch time
May 2025	Hounslow Methodist Church Tuesdays 6 th , 13 th , 20 st & 27 th	St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Wednesday 6 th at lunch time
June 2025	Hounslow Methodist Church Tuesdays 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th & 24 th	St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Wednesday 3 rd at lunch time
July 2025	Hounslow Methodist Church Tuesdays 1 st , 8 th , 15 th & 22 nd	St Michael's CofE Elmwood Rd Wednesday 1 st at lunch time
August 2025		

As this table shows, we managed to operate Café Together for ten months of the year at three venues, two of which now form a hub, both being located near the centre of Hounslow.

September - October 2024 at St Michael & St Martin, Roman Catholic Church, Bath Road, Hounslow. Mondays 6:30pm – 8:30pm on 30th September and 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th October

This run was a tremendous success.

The meals here are delicious and generous (four courses including soup before, and cheese after, a main course and dessert).

We are very lucky that there is a great team at SsM&M including a volunteer who is a qualified chef who cooks for us every week (despite holding very a senior professional role as a 'day job').

We are very grateful to Father Damian, Fr Ignatius, the parish council and the community at St Michael and St Martin RC Church who allow us to use their parish hall, provide volunteers and also make a significant donation towards covering the cost of providing these meals.

We promoted this run of Café Together by distributing A5 Posters and a Press Release.

In addition, our chairman issued personal invitations by email or text to all our regular guests. This was popular with our guests with many saying they liked receiving a personal invitation.

Numbers attending climbed over the month to 32 at the last Café Together on 28th October.

November 2024 to January 2025 at Hounslow Methodist Church, Bell Road with the support of St Mary's Osterley CofE on Thursday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm

The number of guests ranged from 17-18 initially up to 30+ guests as the season progressed.

The Christmas meal was fabulous. Thanks are due to all but especially to the Logan family.

For some guests, this Christmas meal was the main event of their Christmas. It was joyous.

We had 30 guests waiting outside when we re-opened on January 9th.

We are beginning to see lots of regulars. We have had mothers with young children, a few guests are homeless, but most guests are older adults who might be struggling with the cost of living or mental health issues or in hostel accommodation with minimal cooking facilities, or just lonely.

Our volunteers mingle with the guests and there is always lots of banter, laughing and joking.

When TSPH was awarded The Queens Award for Voluntary Service in 2017, the assessor had been particularly impressed by how guests and volunteers mingled like this.

The atmosphere is vibrant and harmonious.

February 2025 at St Michael & St Martin Roman Catholic Church, Bath Road, Hounslow, Mondays 3rd, 10th, 17th 24th

This was another excellent run at this venue which has a special atmosphere of its own.

Again, guest numbers climbed over the month, reaching 32 by the end of the season.

This venue runs for a month at a time, partly because the same volunteers attend every night.

Each venue attracts guests from its own catchment but, as Ss M&M is not far from the Hounslow Methodist church, our "Hounslow hub" works well. Several regular guests at Bell Road now dine at this venue too. And increasingly, Ss M&M guests dine at Bell Road.

This means that momentum in attendance can be maintained as we switch from one venue to the other and guest numbers tend to increase over the course of each run.

However, this year building works at Hounslow Methodist Church, and an ‘inter-regnum’ pause over the change of vicar at an alternative venue meant that we could not operate in Hounslow over March and April 2025.

May to late July 2025 at Hounslow Methodist Church on Bell Road with the support of St Mary’s Osterley CofE on Thursday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm

This was yet another successful run at Hounslow Methodist Church, the core of Café Together.

It has been good to see that many long-standing regulars at Bell Road being joined by new regulars from Ss M&M. This three-month run took us up to the school holiday summer break.

St Michael’s CofE church, Elmwood Road Chiswick, First Wednesdays at lunch time

This, our only venue in Chiswick, is different from the Hounslow venues as the meal is served at lunch time on the first Wednesday of the month since March 2025 (previously first Thursdays). There is a delightful atmosphere here. The church is busy with a pre-school group that meets at the back of the church, near where a Café Together lunch is served on a long table.

There is an excellent team of local volunteers who serve the guests a hearty, healthy meal with good cheer. Volunteers and members of the church congregation, including some mothers to children at the per-school group sit alongside the guests and everyone is entertained by the young children running about.

Financial Accounts:

1. The Shelter Project Hounslow’s balance sheet:

THE SHELTER PROJECT HOUNSLOW				Charity number 1158760		
	Balance Sheet as of:		31-Aug-24	Balance Sheet as of:		31-Aug-25
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Assets						
Fixed Assets						
Stock & Debtors						
Cash in bank	£19,906.48	£798.62	£20,705.10	£19,709.10		£19,709.10
Cash to be lodged						
Total Assets:	£19,906.48	£798.62	£20,705.10	£19,709.10		£19,709.10
Liabilities						
Creditors < 1 year						
Creditors > 1 year						
Total Liabilities						
Net Assets	£19,906.48	£798.62	£20,705.10	£19,709.10		£19,709.10

The only significant item on the TSPH’s balance sheet is the sum of money held in the bank.

The £19,709.10 net assets at the end of our financial year, on 31st August 2025 was all held as cash in the bank account. In the past we held some ‘restricted funds’ being funds donated for the ‘ring-fenced’ or restricted purpose of providing food.

Net Assets were £996 lower at the year-end than they had been a year before.

This £996 decrease is explained by Income being lower than Expenditure causing negative net income (or a loss) as shown in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) to 31st August 2025:

2. The Shelter Project Hounslow’s SOFA (Statement of Financial Activities) to 31st August 2025

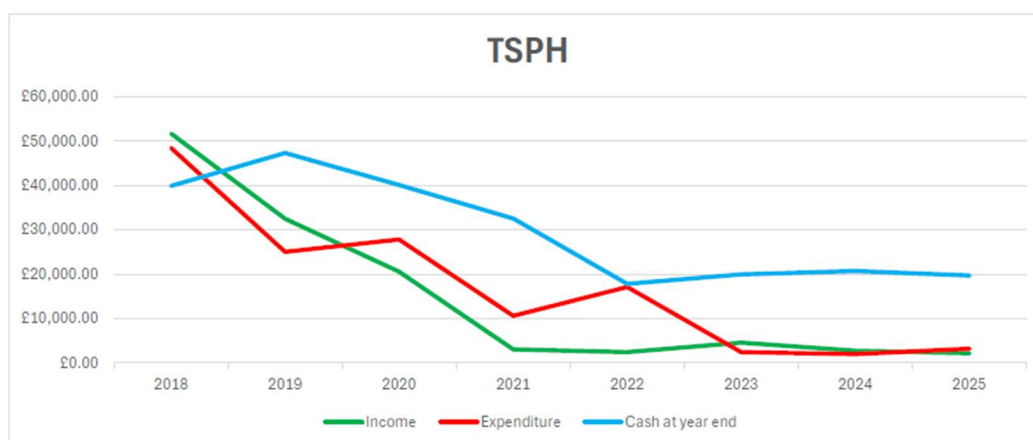
31-Aug-24				31-Aug-25		
Including a summary Income and Expenditure account:						
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Income						
London Borough of Hounslow						
Church communities	£1,409.96	£700.00	£2,109.96	£1,699.98		£1,699.98
Individuals & businesses	£613.72		£613.72	£485.00		£485.00
Total Income:	£2,023.68	£700.00	£2,723.68	£2,184.98		£2,184.98
Expenditure						
Charitable Activities	£866.30	£725.75	£1,592.05	£1,976.05	£798.62	£2,774.67
Other	£390.81		£390.81	£406.31		£406.31
Total Expenditure	£1,257.11	£725.75	£1,982.86	£2,382.36	£798.62	£3,180.98
Net Income	£766.57	(£25.75)	£740.82	(£197.38)	(£798.62)	(£996.00)
Opening balance brought fwd	£19,139.91	£824.37	£19,964.28	£19,906.48	£798.62	£20,705.10
Closing balance carried fwd.	£19,906.48	£798.62	£20,705.10	£19,709.10		£19,709.10

Operating costs are low because we have no employees as everything is done by unpaid volunteers. More often than not, the wonderful volunteers who cook the meals provide all the ingredients at their own expense. Hounslow Methodist Church also supports the evenings with donations from members of their church community and others, including financial support from local church funds and fundraising.

As we now provide about 1,000 meals to our guests each year and another 250+ meals to the volunteers who host and feed our guests, this benefit to the charity and in turn our guests would cost at least £5,000 per annum at a very conservative estimate of just £4 per meal.

This year the cost of “charitable activities” at £2,774.67 seems to be significantly higher than the £1,592.05 in the previous year. This is because this year’s figure includes £1,000 which we granted towards a major refurbishment project at Hounslow Methodist Church on Bell Road. This church community, with the support of volunteers from St Mary’s Osterley, has been the cornerstone of Café Together.

Year end 31 Aug	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Income	£51,711.56	£32,504.57	£20,549.48	£3,017.11	£2,405.59	£4,554.96	£2,723.68	£2,184.98
Expenditure	£48,498.38	£25,033.52	£27,807.85	£10,579.89	£17,126.11	£2,415.82	£1,982.86	£3,180.98
Cash at year end	£39,895.76	£47,366.81	£40,108.44	£32,545.66	£17,825.14	£19,964.28	£20,705.10	£19,709.10



Café Together does not seem to have the same appeal to donors as providing shelter for the homeless over the coldest months of winter. However, we have been sufficiently supported by our church communities and a few generous individuals to break even as evidenced by how we have managed to maintain a balance of about £20,000 in the bank over recent years.

This may be more challenging next year and in the future as some long supporting church communities seem to have chosen to support other causes instead.

Fortunately, the appeal to volunteers seems to be that working together to befriend and serve a meal to the less fortunate neighbours is a very satisfying way to put our different denominations' congruent teaching about charity and loving our neighbours into practice.

Conclusion

Café Together is now well established in Hounslow, but we do need to recruit another local church or two so that we can offer a year-round service, working together as a local "hub".

Sadly, despite St Michael's Church of England on Elmwood Road in Chiswick leading by example, we have yet to gain traction at that end of the borough.

We look forward to continuing to support the London Borough of Hounslow's community team.

Meanwhile, our financial position is satisfactory as volunteers provide so much labour and food for free. This allows us to conclude this year's report, looking forward to church communities continuing to work together to better serve our guests.