



# WEST BERKSHIRE HOMELESS (Newbury area)

## AGM 2024 – Chair's Report

### **New Trustee**

This year we were most fortunate to welcome Richard Hazell on board as an additional trustee. Richard has been with the charity since it was founded and whose legal experience and compassion for the homeless has been a great asset to us.

### **Rehab Support**

Our changing lives project including a Rehab pilot was launched and has been a success. I am pleased to announce that we are working alongside the council and have sent one individual into rehab. The feedback to date about this is encouraging. We also continue to use Betel which is a Christian rehab service which is in our 3rd year and is a wonderful partnership.

### **Befriending Service**

Our befriending support continues to grow and offer human friendship support for those who attend Loose Ends. The relationship we have with Loose Ends is working very well as our volunteers continue to support those in need who need emotional support. One of our volunteers is a retired lawyer and a trustee.

### **Half-way Houses**

We currently have two rental properties which have experienced a range of clients moving in and out. We have already handed back one flat located at the top end of Newbury. Although rental properties have served us well in the past, we have discovered that due to the lack of direct support for tenants, it is not something that we do as well as we would like. For this reason we are planning to remove ourselves from the direct rental of properties and focus on what we do best, which is emergency support for the homeless. When alternative accommodation can be found for the present tenants, the properties will be returned to the property owner.

### **Christmas Hampers**

As usual we have provided a large number of Christmas hampers to those in need, a tradition we have implemented for many years and intend to continue, bringing some cheer to those in need for whom Christmas can be a difficult time.

### **Other information**

At our trustee meetings we discuss risk and compliance to ensure the charity is as safe as possible.

The charity attends local rough sleepers meetings and we have good relations with all related charities to reduce duplication of effort.

We offer a special thanks for Marj our administrator and Lynda who keeps our accounts and a special thanks to Erica, who does so much on the frontline and works endlessly to distribute direct help giving food vouchers, emotional support and much else to those on the poverty line. West Berkshire Homeless is in the unique position to offer rapid help to those who have immediate needs, filling a gap that others are not able to fill.

None of the above work would be possible without the support of our committed volunteers and donors and for this we offer you all our heartfelt thanks as we all work together in reaching out to those most in need, those who are so easily forgotten.

With best wishes,

Catherine Knight



