

Medway Night Shelter

Annual Report for the year ending December 2023

Charity Details

Medway Night Shelter

Salem Church of the Nazarene,
Nelson Road,
Gillingham,
ME7 4LH

Charity Number: 1180990

Trustees

Martin Earle (elected 25th October 2021, Chair from 23rd September 2022)

Amy Brown (Secretary ex-officio, appointed 2nd March 2021)

Martin Fielder-White (Treasurer ex-officio, appointed 2018)

Gayley Horne (from 12th March 2020, resigned 18th March 2024)

Tracy Read (from 12th March 2020, Chair 25th October 2021 to 23rd September 2022,
resigned 20th May 2023)

Natasha Beckhelling (elected 23rd September 2022)

Rev Liz Cox (elected 23rd September 2022)

Andy Millest (elected 23rd September 2022)

Martyn Bellshaw (elected 23rd September 2022)

Christopher Lindo (elected 20th May 2023)

Pamela Grunwell (elected 20th May 2023)

Activities and objectives

The Medway Night Shelter is a local charitable organisation, which was incorporated in 2018. It was originally set up in 2015 as a result of close collaboration between Medway Churches and concerned local groups in response to a perceived need to support and champion those sleeping rough, especially in the winter months. It was the first such facility in the Medway Towns. The shelter works with the local authority and other housing providers to help house those that are newly homeless and re-house those rough sleeping; and to help those vulnerably-housed to sustain their housing and to develop networks through engaging in activities within the local community.

Winter Night Shelter

The 2022-2023 Shelter Season opened on Monday 9th January as a static dormitory style shelter and closed on 31st March 2023, being open for a total of 81 nights. The venue was a church, which had been successfully used in previous years as one of the venues for our roving shelter. Now, owned by the Salvation Army, the venue was renovated and made available for the sole use of the Night Shelter. The Salvation Army was extremely generous and ensured the Salem Centre was fit for purpose, providing Internet access and also lockers for the guests. The security of the shelter was assured because of the lockable gates and the forecourt parking was useful not only for the volunteers but also for the guests, some of whom owned and ran cars, needed to sustain work. The venue was easily accessible for guests with mobility problems and not far from a main bus route.

Ten beds were offered for use, following a risk assessment in the light of the new guidance post-pandemic, in two large rooms. Men and women were offered their own spaces, and a small room with its own bathroom facilities was available in case of the need for isolation. A number of testing kits had been sourced. These were not needed and the shelter remained Covid-free again. Sincere thanks to all the volunteers who were very diligent about staying away if they felt unwell to any extent.

The shelter opened at 4pm each weekday afternoon to register new guests referred by Medway Council or Caring Hands. Once admitted guests were able to come to the shelter from 5.30pm, where volunteers were available to chat over a cup of tea and cake and engage in some leisure activities. Support with the use of IT in looking for accommodation was provided. A cook and a kitchen helper prepared a nutritious two-course meal each day, taking into account dietary needs and all the guests and volunteers sat around the table to eat together. At times the guests requested that Grace be said. Guests expressed how much they enjoyed the variety of meals and puddings, and also the company. Breakfast was made to order by breakfast volunteers each morning and guests were provided with sandwiches for the day. On particularly cold days the guests were permitted to return to the shelter for 4pm, and when it snowed the shelter was staffed throughout the day so that the guests did not have to leave. The shelter session typically began at 4pm with registration on week days and 5.30pm at weekends and continued overnight through till 9am the next morning.

Staffing of the shelter was mainly by a group of 48 volunteers and two staff members. Registration involved at least one staff member or volunteer experienced in registration; and the night duty was covered with a volunteer and at least one staff member or Trustee.

Total number of volunteers hours was 2761 hours, which at minimum wage of £9.50per hour in 2022/2023 is a cost of £26,229. Just under a fifth of the volunteers (9) were new to the shelter this season, fewer new recruits than the previous season. There was a

particular shortage of male overnight volunteers and the lead cook role was difficult to fill and needed covering by staff members. Volunteers provided cover for each other as they were able. One church volunteer took on the role of providing cake for afternoon tea and another signed up through social media to do the laundry.

Seventeen guests were admitted to the shelter. All but three were referred by Housing Options at Medway Council (the three by Caring Hands). In total Housing options referred around 45 guests to the shelter which were followed up with a phone call, and sometimes a text to give them an idea of where they needed to register. But fewer than a third of those who were referred presented at registration. Some had work and said that a dormitory style shelter would not support their work, others had places where they could sleep the night, a few agreed to attend but did not show up. This was disappointing. The shelter was therefore never fully occupied on any one night.

The shelter began very promisingly, with a number of the earliest guests registered moving into accommodation mainly supported housing. However the later guests had more complex needs and were more difficult to place. Four guests chose to return to the streets for a number of reasons. One moved back home, two moved on and into work, two into Private Rented Sector and five were assisted into supported or temporary housing. The shelter developed a close working relationship with a Supported Housing Provider KSH and were able to facilitate two guests to move to this type of accommodation. Sadly two guests were forced to return to the streets as the Local Authority said it had no statutory duty towards them (although there were nominal housing plans in place). Efforts by staff were thwarted due to their complex histories.

A quarter of the guests admitted were female, and were placed much more quickly than the male guests. Three quarters of the guests admitted to having poor mental health, some of whom were medicated to help them. Guests were all of British nationality.

The shelter assisted two guests with their first months top-up payment, around £68 each and also assisted a few guests with a start-up pack for their new homes.

The support from Housing Options was minimal this year. No visits were made to the shelter and apart from referrals, communication was limited to providing Housing Plans. It was not clear what was being done to actually assist the homeless people with finding suitable accommodation. Links with the RSI team and the Housing Strategy Team has been strained.

Overall the shelter did what it aims to do, but there is huge sense of disappointment and a sense of unease that in this day and age the shelter has closed with two of its guests, who wish to be housed, back on the street because the local authority has deemed it has no statutory duty towards them, failing even to provide temporary housing. The shelter staff did all that was possible for them to be placed. I note that there is a distinct lack of

the personal touch and empathy for these vulnerable people within the Local Authority since the COVID pandemic and offering and insisting on phone interviews/appointment systems and phone calls when many of these people do not possess a phone or struggle to make themselves heard, makes the whole system harder for them to navigate, even with support. The whole issue seems to me to have become more de-personalised and therefore easier to dismiss.

For the guests that did take up the spaces, there was a sense that the shelter offered them a space where they were not judged for past mistakes, where they were treated with care and respect and genuinely welcomed. Volunteers have commented on the transformations seen in some guests, in the way they relate to each other and hold themselves and the care they showed towards each other, the volunteers and the place which was their home if only for a few weeks.

There was never a sense from any of the volunteers that any of their efforts were wasted even if it benefitted just one guest.

Thank you to all shelter volunteers - for the value they put on every guest's life and nothing was too much for them. Thank you.

Weekly Drop-in Throughout the year

The Drop-in which runs each Monday evening all year, ran throughout 2023 with on average around 17 guests per session, though for some sessions there have been 23. The guests are generally those who are vulnerably housed, though some homeless people have also attended.

Volunteer support for this venture needs developing further.

Governance Structure

Trustees

The charity trustees manage the affairs of the Medway Night Shelter ensuring the activities are in line with the Objectives of the Charity outlined above. Decisions taken by trustees throughout the year has taken into account the commission's public benefit guidance.

It is the duty of each of the trustees to exercise their powers and to perform their functions as a trustee in the way they decide in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the charity.

Eligibility for trusteeship

- (a) Every charity trustee must be a natural person.
- (b) No one may be appointed as a charity trustee:

- If he or she is under the age of 16 years; or
- If he or she would automatically cease to hold office under the provisions of re-election requirements outlined in clause 13.1.f of the charities constitution.

(c) No one is entitled to act as a charity trustee whether on appointment or on any re-appointment until he or she has expressly acknowledged, in whatever way the charity trustees decide, his or her acceptance of the office of charity trustee.

(d) At least one of the trustees of the CIP must be 18 years of age or over. If there is no trustee aged at least 18 years, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee.

Appointment of trustees

There should be not less than 6 nor more than 10 elected trustees and 2 ex officio trustees.

One elected trustee resigned at the AGM in 2023 and the Secretary of Trustees also resigned at the AGM. Two new Trustees were recruited and appointed at the AGM, bringing the number of trustees up to 8. At every AGM a third of the Trustees (or the number closest to a third) will retire.

Any person who retires as a charity trustee by rotation or by giving notice to the CIO is eligible for reappointment. Following a change to the constitution at the 2022 AGM the constitution requires that “a charity trustee who has served for six consecutive terms may not be reappointed for a seventh consecutive term but may be reappointed after an interval of at least one year”. This change to the constitution was shared with the Charity Commissioners in 2022.

Trustees reserve the right to appoint additional trustees for the period to the next AGM provided this does not exceed the number of trustees stated above.

Further details on the appointment of trustees, their responsibilities and the structure of the Charity can be found in the Charitable Organisations Constitution, a copy of which can be made available to any member or trustee who requests it.

Members

Individuals can become a member of the Medway Night Shelter by:

- Requesting to join the membership and expressing an interest in the workings of the shelter and a care for those it seeks to help
- Volunteering at the Medway Night Shelter

At the end of each shelter season, existing volunteers will be asked if they wish to continue to be contacted by the shelter for volunteering opportunities in the next season. Any volunteers who wish to cease to volunteer will be given the opportunity to remain a member of the Shelter and have a right to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting.

There are currently 36 registered members of the Medway Night Shelter.

Name: Martin Earle

Designation: Chair of Trustees

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ME', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dated: 9/6/2024

Medway Night Shelter - Independent Examiner's Report

This report on the financial statements of Medway Night Shelter for the year ended 31 December 2023, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and examiner

As trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements; you consider that the audit requirements of the Regulations and section 144 of the Act does not apply and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiners report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mr Keith Scudder
42 Frobisher Way
Gravesend
Kent
DA12 4RA

Date 15th April 2024

MEDWAY NIGHT SHELTER
1/1/23 TO 31/12/23
CHARITY NUMBER 1180990

RECEIPT & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2023

RECEIPTS	2022	2023
	£	£
Church Donations	1468	7147
Anonymous Donations	0	0
Firms Donations	0	394
Other Donations	835	1695
Grants Watts Charity	10000	5400
Just Giving	925	147
Medway BC Grant	0	0
Homeless Link Grant	0	0
Total Receipts	13228	14783
PAYMENTS		
Drop In Food	796	1060
Shelter Food	2042	2234
Insurance	705	771
MNS Equipment	0	716
Cooking Equipment	0	0
Admin Expenses	4129	790
CCPAS	932	656
Phone	120	120
Employment Costs	15752	15643
Payroll Services	143	83
Training	180	294
Just Giving Cost	216	216
Homeless Shelter	28529	0
Total Payments	53544	22583
Income/Expenditure	-40316	-7800
Funds Carried Forward	30082	22282
Represented by -		
Bank Account	30082	22282
Total	<u>30082</u>	<u>22282</u>

**MEDWAY NIGHT SHELTER
1/1/23 TO 31/12/23
CHARITY NUMBER 1180990**

BALANCE SHEET

	As at 31/12/2022 £	As at 31/12/2023 £
Receipts as per schedule	13228	14783
<u>Total Incoming Resources</u>		
Payments as per schedule	53544	22583
<u>Total Outgoing Expenses</u>		
BALANCE	-40316	-7800
Funds b/f from prior year	70398	30082
Funds c/f to new year	30082	22282
BANK STATEMENT	<u>30082</u>	<u>22282</u>