



The Hub@BA15 Newsletter

Issue 8: Spring 2020

Please feel free to pass the Hub newsletter on.

Happy Birthday

At the end of March the Hub will have been in existence 5 years. Back in 2016 we celebrated our first birthday by inviting all those who had helped set up the Hub or contributed in any way. This birthday it is volunteers that we want to celebrate, as without them we couldn't provide any services.

It doesn't seem 5 years ago that we were setting up a charity, moving surplus furniture donated by Wiltshire Council and creating the community space we now call the Hub. Since then the Hub has become a valued part of the Bradford on Avon Community. It has proved invaluable offering debt and benefits advice alongside the foodbank, computer access and a social space.



During this period we have partnered with various agencies and charities and seen our services needed by people from all parts of the local community. In addition to local residents we have assisted a number of people sleeping rough in the town (see Gene's Journey below). We have also found that there are many boat-dwellers who live in challenging circumstances and who need both food and other assistance, including access to computers and a correspondence address.

In an attempt to further help those in need we have been able to provide hot lunches during the winter months of the year.

However the Hub is for everyone, so we are looking to establish other activities- let us know if you are interested.



Easter Boxes

Once again we plan to offer a holiday food parcel to families in receipt of free school meals. These will include normal non-perishable foodbank items plus Easter chocolate if available. They will be delivered to the schools at the end of March just before the holidays begin, so help with food items would be appreciated. A box and bag will be supplied to each family. Schools and agencies are invited to identify the need to the Hub. We need to ensure we have 75 paper boxes, many of the local business as well as St Laurence School are helping by saving them and a volunteer will pick them up. So we are collecting Easter chocolate and other non-perishable foodbank items.

Trustee & Management Group

During the past year we have sadly had to say goodbye to Sue Glanville who has served enthusiastically as a trustee since the set-up of the charity five years ago. The three way partnership with Town Council, BoACAN and the Churches Together all contribute trustees to the charity. We welcome Alison Wells from St Nicholas Church, Winsley as her replacement. Karl Wiggins has stepped down from the management group having also supported the Hub since its inception. We want to thank both for their contributions. Robert Beesley is his replacement bringing fresh ideas, already having made contact with the food tech department at St Laurence, resulting in food available for students finding to provide ingredients.

Thank you and welcome.



Volunteer Training

There have been two recent, three session welfare benefit training sessions run by Jim Clarke (October and February). So an increased number of Hub volunteers have now been trained to enable them to cover the drop-in welfare support and other basic internet, form filling and housing enquiries which are available Monday through to Friday mornings.

Also in February training was offered by Lucy Duffy from Trussell Trust which was both interactive and forward looking. It identified what a wonderful and loyal group of volunteers are at the Hub



Gene's Journey

Gene found himself without a home 6 years ago after a relationship broke down. He spent many months camping near Barton Farm until his tent was burnt down. He then regularly slept at the railway station as there is a CCTV that gave him a sense of security. He heard about The Hub and came to us for help, advice as well as food. He says that he really appreciates the welcome, friendship, good company and help (not to mention the coffee, breakfast usually comprising beans on toast!) offered to him.

The Hub was able to contact the Rough Sleepers' team where Monica has done an amazing job of supporting him, first getting a place at a hostel in Chippenham and subsequently getting him his own flat in Bradford on Avon. So now he has a home where he says that he can relax. He particularly enjoys watching Top Gear and eating a hot meal on his own sofa.

He is beginning to feel positive about his future. He loves nature and the countryside and hopes to be a horticultural technician which is a job he enjoyed doing in the past.

We, at The Hub community, wish Gene well and will continue to support and advise him on his journey.



Hope Debt Advice Service

Hope Debt Advice continues to work out of the Hub, where Jim Clarke & his growing team of trained advisors are available Tuesday and Wednesday mornings (other times can sometimes be available) for appointments to see clients with debt issues. We welcome Chris and Elsie to this team which will allow an increased number of appointments to be fulfilled. Clients can also make appointments for budgeting help where they struggle to manage their finances. An initial discussion has been had to run a budget course which will be open to all.

Drop-in welfare support and other basic internet and form filling enquiries including PIP are available Monday through to Friday mornings.

There is a meeting room that can be hired and the Trustees would be happy to make the space available to groups at a very reasonable rate.

Additional information about The Hub can be found on the website www.boahub.co.uk or follow us on facebook.