

## Engaging Steering Group: Project planning notes

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| <b>Project Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Homeless project in Flintshire</b> |
| <b>Brief description (50 words):</b><br><p>To set up a homeless project.<br/>         The idea was developed from the churches within the Mold Mission Area to establish and run a charity to house and support homeless people in the Flintshire area.</p> <p>At present we run one house, housing up to 4 people who require temporary accommodation and they sign up to a 6-month license agreement.</p> <p>We work with Flintshire homeless to identify residents who match our criteria and are able to live independently. They must present as low risk but may need some support in the community.</p> <p>We have rented a local house which has now been decorated, furnished and renovated to a good standard.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                       |
| <b>Why was this project needed and how did you establish that need? (150 words)</b><br><p>The issue of homelessness has been highlighted within Wales over the past few years and the problem appears to have increased rather than decreased during this time.</p> <p>Within the Mold Mission Area there were several discussions about outreach to the community and the role of the churches to those in need. From these discussions emerged people who felt called to respond to this need as Christians.</p> <p>A small group of 5 people was set up each having specific skills, knowledge and expertise to take these ideas forward in a professional way.</p> <p>We had discussions with other organisations involved in homelessness, we met with housing justice Cymru and Flintshire homeless department.</p> <p>We were able to establish that there was a need in the area so put forward a plan to address this.</p> |                                       |
| <b>How did you run the project? – include information about the number of volunteers required, any special skills needed, the costs and time commitments involved (300 words)</b><br><p>We were offered a suitable property which required repairs and alterations. Planning permission to change the use of the property was required and this caused significant opposition within the local community.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                       |

We set up a charity, known as The Wellfield Charitable Trust and completed necessary documents which highlighted the plans and intentions of the charity with very specific aims and objectives.

In starting a charity we had to raise funds of £5000 which was offered by the churches through fund raising events and generous donations.

The project opened in March 2019. Prior to this date we had to register as a charity and consider policy and procedural information. We also had to register with Rent Smart Wales.

Meetings were held with Flintshire homeless to discuss referrals, process, criteria and support roles.

The charity has 5 trustees each with experience in social care, mental health, after care support and knowledge and experience of working with homelessness in the community.

The commitment in setting up the charity was high.

The setting up of the house for 4 people took many weeks of decoration, sourcing furniture and furnishings. This required involvement from groups of volunteers from the churches who were keen to help and support and offer time and skills as required.

Much of the items required were donated and most of the effort in working towards a house which was comfortable, clean and well furnished was provided for us.

There were, however, some significant costs incurred to the charity who own the property who had agreed to make alterations, make changes as required under an HMO registration. (we are not an HMO under current registration).

We had considered using volunteers to support the project but to date we have one in a pastoral role.

We pay for an administrator when required.

As a group of trustees, we work together to visit, attend meetings and each person has designated roles within the charity.

#### **How did you promote/publicise the project so people came along? (100 words)**

The project is publicised for Flintshire homeless and regular emails are exchanged when we need referrals.

**What sort of impact do you feel the project had? (150 words)**

The project is in its early stages. We are working toward full occupancy and have so far had 3 residents.

There have been several males who have been interviewed but have either not met our criteria or have themselves felt they did not want to live in the house.

The biggest impact has in fact been negative in so far as one resident caused upset in the community and with the police. However, this has been a good learning experience for the charity and has enabled us to build up and build better bridges relationships with the community, the police and Flintshire housing. The residents have been able to move in without a deposit and the rent in below other providers.

There has been a generosity from the churches and the wider community in providing support including food parcels each month.

**If you were to do the project again, what would you do differently? (100 words)**

I think at this time we are reflecting on a project which was harder than we had imagined to set up and some of the issues and difficulties we have experienced have created opportunities for us to learn.

We might have been more realistic in the timeline from the start to the opening of the project.

We might have even opted to join in with established charities who are undertaking similar projects.

We might have established links with other diocesan projects which have been temporary over the last few years which may have created more stability for the homeless.

**Any other advice?**

Anyone who has similar ideas please use trustees who are very experienced in areas of social care and housing etc as the knowledge is invaluable in presenting a professional organisation.

**Who can people contact if they'd like more information?**

**(please give name and preferred contact option – remember this information will be shared publicly, including on the diocesan website and other social media.)**

Rev'd Kathy Stewart in the Mold Mission Area.