



# St Petrock's Newsletter

November 2018

We'd like to **thank you all for the generous donations of Harvest Festival** we have received in the last few weeks. As some of you will know, we were fortunate, again, to have the services of Phil and Andy from the Exeter office of Arconic (pictured below) for a week's collection of donations and our crypt storage area is now full!

With the numbers of people in need of our services rising, we now see between 55 and 65 individuals a day, your donations will make a vital difference.

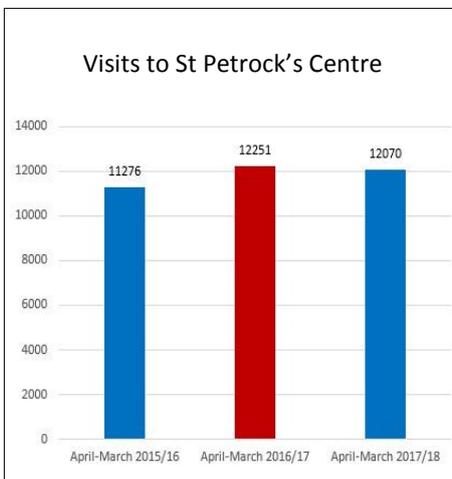
When sleeping rough, everyday actions that we often take for granted – keeping clean, getting enough food and rest, staying warm and dry – can become a huge daily challenge. Our rough-sleeper survival services seek to meet these fundamental needs and enable clients to improve their health and wellbeing in a welcoming space.

Survival services are available from 8am weekdays in St Petrock's centre and include access to showers, laundry, telephone and internet facilities as well as hot meals.

The Harvest Festival donations, you generously donated, will help us provide hot drinks, cooked breakfasts and lunches each weekday throughout the year. Last year, our dedicated kitchen volunteers served 9,218 meals!



Our kitchen team



Arconic staff helping with Harvest Festival

We are also able to offer clothing, sleeping bags, rucksacks, toiletries and other necessities to those in need, thanks again to the generosity of the local community.

Over the course of the last year, we have continued to develop new services to fill the increasing gaps in provision. In August 2017, to complement our existing supported, private rented housing service, we opened our first house to provide emergency accommodation for clients with low-medium support needs, in order to assist them away from the streets as quickly as possible before private rented accommodation can be found.

Our housing projects provide a personalised approach in environments where people feel safe and settled. This route has proved to be highly successful with around 90% of tenants sustaining their accommodation for 6 months and beyond.

As a result of this success in supported accommodation, in the summer this year, Exeter City Council awarded St Petrock's 5 flats to provide supported accommodation to 11 individuals. Among our tenants are 2 long-term entrenched rough sleepers, a male and female with around 20 years rough sleeping between them. One of them was happy to share their story with us, on the next page in red.

*"I'd lived in Exeter before, between 2005 – 2007, and I wanted to come back to somewhere familiar. A lot had changed in the city while I was away though. I used to work in Exeter as a bus driver but I didn't see many homeless people on the streets back then. I didn't know St Petrock's existed and I had no idea then about the support network that's here to help.*

*I'd had bad experiences with the benefit system and when I got back saw others struggle with it too. Lots of people had their money stopped for reasons they couldn't do anything about – you can't rely on benefits for income, it's really stressful. I couldn't face going through that process again, so I decided to live without money. I had my own site by the bus station where I felt quite safe, and I slept there each night for around 4 years. I went to St Petrock's during the day and used the soup runs at night. I liked reading the newspapers every morning at St Petrock's – you learn so much. I also love books, so spent a lot of time in the library when St Petrock's was closed. I once read a 450 page novel in one 12-hour stint! I lived that way for just under 6 years in all.*

*In the winter I'd come inside overnight with the emergency shelter scheme and got to know the staff there really well – but I always went back to my site when things warmed up. Last winter when I was in, St Petrock's offered me a place in one of their new flats. It's a nice flat, with a TV, shower and good central heating to keep you warm in cold weather, so I decided to go for it – it's more of a normal way to live.*

*I was in the flat on my own for a bit before other flat mates moved in. It was strange getting used to sharing space, but it's alright now and we have some interesting conversations. I'm still able to read my newspapers in St Petrock's each day and use the Internet there. I've been in the flat for about 5 months now and haven't used the soup runs at all since I moved in – I have my own food to use in the kitchen instead. It was a good thing, moving indoors."*

Overall, St Petrock's supported 243 people into accommodation last year.

In order to help our clients navigate the increasingly complex benefits system, we set up a specialist welfare service last year and since its launch, it has worked on 550 cases, achieving an 88% success rate in re-establishing claims and winning over 90% of appeals.

As over 70% of people accessing St Petrock's have serious suspected/ diagnosed mental health conditions, often as a result of experiencing complex trauma in early life, we now offer weekly mental health sessions with a clinical psychologist to enable clients access to specialist support in familiar surroundings.

It is thanks to you, our supporters, that we are able to develop these services.

While the environment in which St Petrock's operates continues to be uncertain, we believe that St Petrock's record of innovation and the support it receives as a local, independent charity means that it is well placed to meet these challenges.

If you would be **interested in having a talk at your church** on the issues surrounding homelessness and the work of St Petrock's then please do get in touch, they are free.

Thank you, again, for your support.

A room in St Petrock's  
Emergency House



*You have received this newsletter because you are on our list of supporters and we believe you may find it helpful to understand more about the work that your support makes possible. We typically send newsletters / wish-lists to supporters twice a year, in addition to our annual report. If you do not wish to receive further newsletters, wish-lists or annual reports from St Petrock's, you can unsubscribe, or update your preferences, at any time by emailing us at [info@stpetrocks.org.uk](mailto:info@stpetrocks.org.uk) or phoning us on 01392 422396.*

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