Cheltenham Open Door

A local charity founded for the relief of poverty, hardship and distress among persons of a rootless way of life.

Newsletter Summer 2017



From Humble Beginnings



We are sad to announce the recent death of one of our founders, Flip Thornett-Roston. Flip noticed that homeless people would congregate around Royal Well. She decided with the help of a couple of friends to make up sandwiches and flasks for them. She soon realised that there was a significant homeless issue so she looked for premises to provide a base for the type of support that carries on to this day. She found Grosvenor Hall in Grosvenor Street and thus Cheltenham Open Door was started. She initially opened for Sunday breakfast and a Christmas Shelter in 1992.

Flip was born Marianne Felicity Hedwig Filipp (hence Flip) on 23rd December 1922 in Germany. When she was 10 or 11 she came to England with her mother and sister to seek safety as her mother was Jewish. Her father, who was a barrister, stayed in Germany and was never able to join them. Flip was nursing in London when she met Ernest Basil Charles Thornett with whom she had a son Paul. Ernest worked for GCHQ so they moved to Cheltenham. Flip and Ernest split up when Paul was a young child and Flip then met and married Ben Roston. Flip, who was a humanist, was a very humble, stubborn yet inspiring person who was incredibly determined and committed to any cause she championed. Flip remained in Cheltenham until her death last year. Cheltenham Open Door is the legacy of this remarkable lady.



Cheltenham Open Door
39 Grosvenor Street, Cheltenham GL52 2SQ 01242 577418 (please leave a message)
info@cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk
Charity Registration No. 1063434
Company Registration No. 3379241

Art Club

The Art and Craft afternoons were introduced in January this year. They are run on a Tuesday afternoon between 1.30pm and 3.30pm at number 39. We wanted to give anyone the opportunity to have a go at something they might have done previously, or else something that is totally new to them. It is a very informal afternoon just getting people together, talking laughing and experimenting with all different mediums paints, fabrics and wools crayons chalks glitter anything anyone feels they might enjoy. Tea, coffee and biscuits are also available! The interesting thing that has so far emerged is the confidence that has built within the group. People talk to others they might not have really spoken to before. This helps because many of us often tend to stick with people that we already know. We have already been lucky enough to have received donations for the club by various people, and Asda has provided us with paints, paintbrushes and plant pots. We also had a visit last week from Synita, an Asda representative, who joined in with our afternoon session and took pictures for their website. Something like this is invaluable to confidence – building and expression for our guests, and hopefully the group will grow. We would be very grateful for any art or craft donations – or please just pop in one afternoon!



The winter breakfasts



There has certainly been a greater demand for winter breakfasts this year. We have been catering for 20 or more each morning. We open at 9.30am as opposed to the normal 10.30am, and we provide a variety of cereals, fruit, cereal bars , toast , tea and coffee. The service provides a warm, dry and friendly atmosphere which has been welcomed by many of our rough sleepers! The "Breakfast Club", as it is affectionally known, has a tranquil atmosphere – it definitely doesn't reflect the chaos and uncertainty that some of our guests might have to face for the rest of the day.

Summer Outing to Drayton Manor

We decided to have a change and to go further afield for our annual guest trip and spend the day at the theme park Drayton Manor in sunny Staffordshire. It was an early start but our guests made it in time for the coach to take us there. On arrival everyone took their picnics and spread out across the vast area that the park spans. The adventurous ones went on the thrill seeking rides whilst the staff chose more sedate options! There was also a zoo with many different animals to admire from meerkats to monkeys, reindeer to snakes as well as many beautiful birds and reptiles. When it was time to leave we waited with some nervousness to ensure all our guests made it safely back to the meeting point. Happily they did not disappoint and we had a smooth trip back. It was a great day out and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.



Kitchen development at Open Door

With the help of a grant from the Gloucestershire Community Foundation, Open Door has been able to renovate a major part of the kitchen.



A full renovation plan for the kitchen was developed and discussed with Staff, Volunteers and at Trustees meetings over a number of months, and once we had agreed what we thought would be the most suitable arrangement, a grant bid was made, with which we were successful. Over the weekend of the 21st April, H & N Catering Equipment Engineers from Gloucester worked hard with Chef Andy, with other staff members and with volunteers to install it, and the pictures and comments that we received indicates that it will be successful and will bring benefits to all our guests at Open Door well into the future.

Christmas Shelter 2016

We opened our doors again at St Luke's Hall at midday on Christmas Eve to welcome guests for the 25th Christmas Shelter. The Shelter runs for four days and three nights, for not only the homeless, but also for anyone who is vulnerable, disadvantaged or lonely. We provide not only cooked breakfast, lunch, tea and supper, but also shower facilities, clothes, presents, bingo, games, love, kindness and a "family" (albeit a fairly large family!) atmosphere. We have always been lucky enough to have been inundated with support, and this year was no exception. Our Christmas boxes were again donated by Dave Banyard and his great team at Cotswold BMW, and the tree was decorated by Syrita from Asda. The Mayor and Consort arrived on Christmas Day to serve up Christmas Lunch. Our opening meal was a surprise for everyone, because Simpsons Fish and Chips generously donated and delivered 60 portions of fish and chips. It was then very professionally served to our guests by a great team, Alex Chalk and Martin Horwood. We are always truly astounded and quite humbled by the huge generosity of people and companies volunteering time, money, cakes, clothes, toiletries, sweets and turkeys to our charity, especially during this festive period. We could not provide the shelter firstly without the loan of St Luke's Hall, and secondly without the general public. A HUGE HUGE THANK YOU.



Can you help?

After many years of invaluable support for Open Door, our Company Secretary Jeanne Flanagan is stepping down this year. She is going to be missed by her fellow Trustees, Associates, Staff, Volunteers and Guests alike. She is involved in so many aspects of the Charity and brought her many and varied skills to each role. We are fortunate in the wide support we have across the Community and we should be able to cover most of her different roles with the exception of that of the statutory role as Company Secretary. This involves completing our annual returns and notifying the Charity's Commission and Companies House of changes in Trustees. Jeanne also takes minutes at our Committee meetings which are held every 2 months on a Wednesday afternoon.

Ideally this role would be filled by an individual who would be prepared to become a Trustee and attend Committee meetings in order not only to take minutes but also to understand the current issues and feel part of the team. Some of our current Trustees also volunteer for a shift so they meet our guests and see things first hand. Whilst desirable this is not essential. If you can help please contact us via email at: info@cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk

A Big Thank You

We would like to say a BIG 'thank you' to all of you who have supported Cheltenham Open Door in so many different ways. There are too many to mention you all but please be reassured everything you do is much appreciated. Some support us at Christmas and others throughout the year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our donors who donate a regular sum throughout the year by standing order.

We are also supported by many local businesses including the Spirax-Sarco, Charitable Trust, the Nancy Keynon Trust, the Gloucestershire Masonic Charity Association, the Charles Irving Trust, Richard Pate and St Edwards junior schools, the Nationwide, Asda, Sainsburys, Waitrose, Suffolk Traders and the Sunrise Rotary Club are among the many. Cheltenham Borough Council continue to provide us with a substantial grant for 39 Grosvenor St. Fareshare supply us with healthy food throughout the year and the Citizens Advice Bureau comes in every week to help. At Christmas the Gloucester Event Hire Company supplied the equipment and Simpsons provided fish and chips on Christmas Eve. BMW continue to give each guest a present which is much appreciated, as are our hairdresser and chiropodist. A special thank you this year should go to Tara Papworth who completed a cycle ride to Chile to raise funds for us. Thank you too, to all who have donated clothing, toiletries, bedding, food and household goods - these items are always extremely welcome. Finally a huge thank you to our fantastic year-round volunteers at No 39 and to the amazing people who do the Christmas Shelter shifts. You all play an integral role in the running of Cheltenham Open Door and it could not happen without you.

Email Newsletter

If you would like to receive this Newsletter via email instead of a paper copy, please let us know by emailing us at **info@cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk**

Would you like to help?

If you would like to support our work by making a donation, we would be very grateful. Use the form below or our online option at www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk Just click on the donate page for the link to Virgin Money Giving.

Title ..... Full name .....

Full address including postcode .....

.....

1. I enclose my cheque for £ made payable to Cheltenham Open Door. Donations over £50 will be acknowledged by post unless you tick this box ☐ We could, instead, acknowledge by email. If that is acceptable, please give us your email address here:

.....

2. Your donation can be increased by 25% at no extra cost to you if you are a UK taxpayer. Please would you tick the Gift Aid box below and add your signature and the date.

By ticking this box ☐ you confirm you want Cheltenham Open Door to treat the above as Gift Aid donation and reclaim tax on it, 25p for every £1 donated. You also confirm that you pay enough UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax to cover all your charitable donations in this tax year (6th April to 5th April), and understand that Council Tax and VAT do not qualify.

Signed .....

Date .....

Send to: Cheltenham Open Door, c/o Mrs Heather Turner MBE, 6 Wards Road, Up Hatherley, Cheltenham GL51 6JW