Newsletter

CHELTENHAM OPEN DOOR

Summer 2025



One of our green-fingered guests looks after our garden and vegetable patch.

Welcome

At Cheltenham Open Door, we provide a warm, welcoming space for people who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or isolated. Our aim is to offer comfort, community and support in a non-judgemental environment where everyone is treated with compassion and respect.

Everything we provide is free of charge. Many of our guests face complex challenges – some have experienced homelessness, time in prison, or issues related to substance misuse. At our centre, they can enjoy a hot, nutritious meal, connect with others, and access vital services such as psychotherapy, podiatry, and NHS care. Whether it's getting help with essential needs or simply enjoying a friendly chat or game of pool, we're here to offer kindness, support, and a sense of belonging.

Goodies to go

We've teamed up with locals who run an ice cream van and a coffee truck who visit the Guest Hub to bring our guests treats. It's a small gesture, but a warm, comforting drink and a sweet treat can really lift the spirits – especially when you're going through a tough time.





We do like to be beside the seaside

Every July, we take a coach full of guests, volunteers, and staff to Weston-super-Mare for a day of pure joy – and this year was no exception.

Over 50 of us spent a glorious day soaking up the sun, enjoying the sea breeze, tucking into ice creams, riding the attractions, and simply relaxing in great company. For many of our guests, this is more than just a day at the beach – it's a rare chance to escape daily struggles, to feel included, valued, and free. For some, it's the only time they get out of town all year. That's why this trip means so much.

Huge thanks to Zurich Community Trust for making it possible. Their support helped give our guests a day to remember, filled with laughter, friendship, and the reminder that everyone deserves joy.





Pool party

Our guests love playing pool, and our old table was always in constant use but, despite being well cared for, it had started to wear out. It felt right to reward our guests with a new, top-quality table. Pool brings people together, and the competitions, organised by our guests, give them something fun to focus on.

It's more than just a game – it's a way to take a break from some of the tougher stuff going on in their lives. As one guest put it, "*It's not just about playing pool. When I'm playing, I lose myself and concentrate on the shot.*"

Guest creativity

One of our guests produces poignant, beautiful poetry inspired by her own life. She wants to share these experiences with others through her verse, so others know they are not alone and there is light at the end of the tunnel. Here are a couple of short extracts from her work:

Do you see the willow tree that sways like water? Well, this is me
I write my story of who I am
Close your eyes you may understand
Beneath my trunk sit my roots of life
They stretch forever far and wide
I stand strong and proud and welcome you in.

I see your sadness and sense your pain
In time I grew and learnt to manage the sorrow of others.
You cannot hide the feelings within yourself
All that's needed is acceptance
Feel the warmth embrace you.
The unkindness in the world spreads like a bush fire
Fires can be put out and kindness allowed to restore faith
and hope once more.

Meet the amazing Arthur

Arthur from Wood's Barbers in Pittville comes to cut our guests' hair every fortnight, sometimes doing as many as 24 haircuts in one session.

Our guests enjoy having a good haircut, which they can get for free at our Guest Hub in Alstone Lane. We are grateful for Arthur's kindness and professionalism.



Serving more guests than ever

The number of meals we serve has grown considerably since we moved premises, with average daily meals growing from 53 in 2022 to 78 to date in 2025, and total meals steadily increasing each year, with a 64% growth from 2022 to 2024. To date in 2025, we are already serving 13% more meals than this time last year.









* Year to date (May)

Our volunteers are superheroes!

We could not do what we do without the incredible team of volunteers who work with us. From helping chef Marc in the kitchen, to clearing tables, sorting clothes and chatting with guests, we are so grateful to all our volunteers for their cheerfulness and willingness to help out – no matter how small the task.



As one of our volunteers shared with us, "*Volunteering at Cheltenham Open Door is a truly rewarding experience, working alongside dedicated individuals, who give their time for the benefit of those in need. Volunteering is a great way to give something back for the good of others.*"



How you can support us

With our new Sunday opening hours, our need for financial support is greater than ever. As we receive no government funding, we rely entirely on the generosity of donors to continue caring for those most in need.

We are deeply grateful for every contribution, big or small.
Your support helps us plan ahead and sustain vital services like:

- £30 for breakfast for all guests
- £150 for a day's food
- £250 for monthly transport
- £1,000 to run our Guest Hub for a day (including staffing, lighting, heat, food and drink costs) or to buy 10 street-starter kits (tent, sleeping bag, rucksack, flask)

Thank you for helping to make life a little easier for our guests – every donation directly supports their daily needs and enables us to offer comfort and practical support.



Our friends from Sewa Day do a kitchen takeover.



Caring for others

Our guests are at the heart of everything we do – and their physical and mental wellbeing is our top priority. Our Guest Coordinator Heather arranges a wide range of activities – including mindfulness sessions, art, karaoke, bingo, chess, and hand massages – to support their overall wellness. Our guests enjoy taking part and say they feel genuinely valued, cared for and important.



Leave a legacy

Your will is a way to care for the people and causes closest to your heart. Once loved ones are provided for, you might consider leaving a gift to Cheltenham Open Door. Even a small percentage – just 1% – can make a lasting difference to the vulnerable people we support.

A legacy helps us continue offering food, warmth, and care to those who need it most. Whether you're continuing a lifetime of support or giving for the first time, every legacy is valued. If you'd like to explore this in confidence, we'd be happy to talk with you.

Cheltenham Open Door
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