

# Newsletter



Christmas 2025



## Welcome

Life is often hard for those we welcome at our Guest Hub. We meet them with kindness, recognising that not everyone has had the care or space to address issues in their lives. Guests have the option of seeing our psychotherapist, volunteer doctors or podiatrist. We also advocate for our guests in medical settings and towards housing solutions, and help them access addiction support and mental health care. To all, we offer reassurance, friendship and a place to belong.



Everyman Theatre Cheltenham

We care for our guests in ways many of us take for granted: providing tasty meals, hot showers with clean towels and laundry washed and dried. Guests can also take part in mindfulness, art sessions, karaoke, bingo, chess and our annual seaside trip.

In April 2025, we began a trial Sunday service. A guest survey had demonstrated a clear need and attendance has shown us we were right to trial it; we've now made Sundays permanent and are open five days a week.

We want to continue to add opening hours and breadth to our services. We welcome your help to achieve this goal. We are grateful for the incredible support we receive from local groups, businesses, trusts and individuals; we receive no government funding and simply could not care for our guests in the way we do without your donations.

From everyone at Cheltenham Open Door, we wish you a happy and peaceful festive season, with best wishes for 2026.

**Jane Sharp** Chair, Cheltenham Open Door



### New for 2025

#### Sunday service

- We're open for an extra day a week.

#### Guest Hub refresh

- Our centre got a fresh new look.

#### More need than ever

- We're feeding between 75 and 105 people each day.

#### A growing team

- Susie, Don and Maple the dog joined the staff team.

#### A glorious garden

- Our outdoor space got a brilliant upgrade.



## Guest Hub glow up!

The Zurich Community Trust (ZCT) Summer In-house Challenge 2025 saw the team taking on the task of decorating our centre at Alstone Lane. Our guests are always keen to help out and once they'd prepped the space, a team from Zurich's Cheltenham office spent the day carefully painting and sprucing it up.

Our kitchen was also in need of redecoration. Chef Marc was delighted when a team from Montel Civil Engineering offered to carry out the work. We pride ourselves on the high standard of food we serve and were thrilled that Montel helped us to maintain our 5\* hygiene rating.

Our guests were delighted when they saw how these spaces have been transformed. These gestures speak louder than words. We extend a huge thank you to the Zurich and Montel teams.

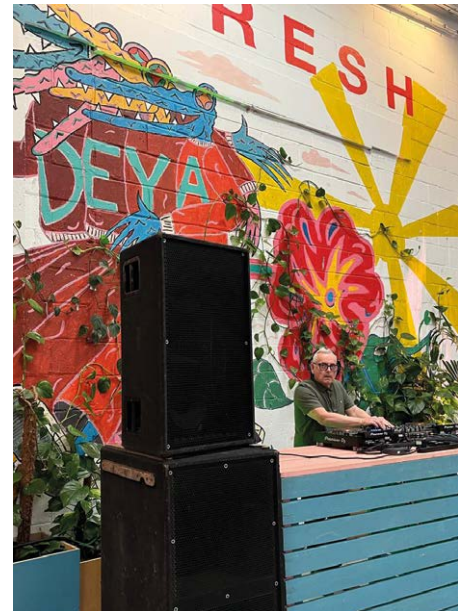
## Festival fun

This year not one but two pop-up festivals brought people together to put the fun into fundraising for Cheltenham Open Door!

Over a weekend in August, The Railway Pub held Off the Rails, a two-day festival of live music, Thai food, raffles and fun vibes. The event smashed its fundraising target, raising £925 for us. In October, Deya Brewery, Ritual Coffee, D'Arcy Wines and The Steam and Whistle threw a multi-site fundraising event, organised by Stephen from Byrd

Out. The Lansdown Block Party (pictured) brought DJs, legendary dance music acts and rising stars to the community – with Morris dancing and yoga in the mix – and raised a whopping £5,974.

Thank you to everyone involved in these events for your hard work and innovative approach to fundraising.



## A breath of fresh air

Our outdoor area has come into its own this year. This relaxing space was especially popular during the heat of summer. Its creation was a team effort, with plants donated by local nurseries and outdoor furniture courtesy of The Samaritans, a Zurich Community Trust fundraiser and a friend of Open Door.

Our guests look after the flower-filled planters and grow vegetables and herbs that are used in our tasty lunches. It's a spot for those who need to take time out when life becomes chaotic – it also means the Guest Hub is less crowded indoors at a time when demand

for our services is growing. The Samaritans donated two beautiful tables, telling us, "When funds are available, we look for ways to remind people of who we are and what we do. A plaque on these seats is a reminder that we're here for anyone who needs us."



## Hello Sundays

**With no other services available, Sunday can be the most isolating day of the week. In April this year, we decided to trial Sunday openings after consulting our guests. We planned an earlier start to enable homeless guests to access showers and laundry facilities before the centre gets busy.**

Our Sunday service has continued beyond the trial and runs from 8.30am until 1pm. We offer a hot cooked breakfast to around 70 people (our weekday meal service in recent months averages 80 people a day). At the same time, we decided to concentrate funds on providing more food to street

homeless guests, given more regularly to lessen the risk of theft and the need to carry it around.

There's been a highly positive response to how we've adapted our provision. According to one guest, "It's the one thing that got me out of bed during hard times."

It costs us around £1,500 to operate for a single day. Our ultimate aim is to raise funds to allow us to support people in need seven days a week.

## Where there's a will

**We are teaming up with Willans Solicitors – who have been supporting us via a charity partnership throughout the past 18 months – to provide a will-writing service for our supporters.**

For a fortnight in January, Willans will generously waive their fee to anyone wishing to make 'simple and straightforward' wills, in favour of a donation to Cheltenham Open Door\*. If interested, please make a note in your diary of the dedicated fortnight: 12 to 23 January 2026.

Appointments are limited, so please book your slot now by contacting Willans on 01242 514000 or by email at law@willans.co.uk and ask for an appointment during the Open Door Wills fortnight.

\* Willans will set aside a quota of appointments in the time period. Recommended donation £150 for a single Will and £200 for a couple making mirror Wills.



## A safe space

**Sometimes it's the simplest moments – a game of chess, a round of dominoes, or sharing a laugh – that can make the biggest difference to someone's day. Our new pool table also provides a healthy focus for our guests in the form of friendly competitions.**

When challenges feel overwhelming, our door is open to a space full of compassion and care, fun and friendship.

**"Genuine help without judgement."**

Open Door Guest

**"The volunteers spend time with you and listen."**

Open Door Guest

# Christmas 2025 appeal

Support vulnerable people in our community



## Food and other items

### Food

We support our homeless guests with food donations all year round. Donating food is one of the most direct ways you can help us.

- Pot noodles
- Tinned ham and corned beef
- Tinned fish
- Tinned hotdogs
- Tinned beans and sausages
- Squeezy cheese
- Tinned ready meals (e.g. macaroni cheese, ravioli, bolognaise, chilli)
- Chocolate spread and honey
- Cartons/tins of custard and rice pudding

- Chocolate and chewy bars
- Crisps
- Biscuits
- Cans and bottles of pop
- Small sugar and coffee sachets

### Comfortable clothing

We need new and used items for men and women who are often on the move.

- Trainers
- Joggers and jeans
- Hoodies, sweatshirts & jumpers
- Men's boxers and socks, new (or washed and as new)

- Women's knickers and socks, new (or washed and as new)
- Warm, thick gloves
- Waterproof coats

### Street kit and other items

- Sleeping bags (in stuff sacks)
- Tents (up to 4 berth)
- Large rucksacks
- Flasks
- Everyday toiletries
- Dog and cat food

*Please note we cannot make use of smart clothes or footwear, household items, children's toys or bedding.*

## Donations for gift bags

If you'd like to help, please make sure any gifts you donate are:

- Unwrapped (so we can make up individual bags)
- Marked as gifts and separated from other donations

**Nice toiletries:** shower gel; body sprays; mini perfume/cologne; safety razors and shaving gel; gift sets.

**Edible treats:** Chocolates; nuts; sweets; savouries; biscuits; food items usually out of financial reach (tinned pies (like Fray Bentos), tinned meats, tinned ready meals such as chilli/curry).

**Gifts for pets:** Edible treats and gifts for four legged friends.

**Small, practical gifts:** tool sets; lighters; notebooks; rucksacks; camping items; usb plugs; charging cables; tobacco tins; head torches; torches; camping lights; hot water bottles; new bed linen; bike pumps; puncture repair kits.

**Brand new clothes (as gifts):** boxer shorts; hoodies; T shirts; jeans; knickers.

We particularly need gifts for men.

*The only items we cannot accept are alcohol, medication or anything with a blade (safety razors are fine).*

## Where to bring donations

Please drop off donations at the Guest Hub:

### Unit 3

**St George's Business Park  
Alstone Lane  
Cheltenham  
GL51 8HF**

### Opening times:

Until 18 December  
Monday to Thursday: 9am – 3pm.  
Sunday: 8.30am – 1pm

From 19 to 26 December  
Every day: 10am – 3pm

### Please note:

**Our Grosvenor Street building is no longer open for donations.**

If you'd rather make a financial donation, please go to: [cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk/support-us](http://cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk/support-us)

