



The Snowflake Trust

Night Shelter Report

for



Winter 2018/19

Report issued on 2nd September 2019

The Snowflake Trust is a charity registered number 1119743 and
a company limited by guarantee number 059503950 registered in England
Registered Office: 25 Boscobel Road North, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex TN38 0NY

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1. Introduction from the Chair of Trustees

This Annual Report for Winter 2018/19 has been prepared for the benefit of all interested parties and stakeholders so that everyone may be aware of the range and depth of services delivered, the immense amount of (mainly) voluntary work required to provide the night shelter on every night of the week during the coldest months of the year, and the important outcomes achieved.

This was the seventh year of operation of the Night Shelter and it has become a highly regarded organisation for the work it carries out in assisting homeless/rough sleepers within Hastings and Rother. The Trust has continued to develop effective relationships not only with the Homeless Community but also with statutory, voluntary and other agencies. This has resulted in the Trust being involved with the Hastings Borough Council's "Rough Sleeper and Street Community Working Group" and "Severe Weather Emergency Protocol" (SWEP), Eastbourne and Hastings Rough Sleeper Initiative, Eastbourne and Hastings Rough Sleeper Prevention Project, Rother Local Strategic Partnership, Rother Rough Sleeper Provision, the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) Complex Needs Forum and STOP THE TRAFFIK (Human Trafficking).

Regrettably, however, Rough Sleeping and Homelessness is still a major problem in Hastings, with the Night Shelter admitting 61 Guests over the winter period. Hastings Borough Council will place eligible homeless people in temporary accommodation, but many rough sleepers are not considered sufficiently vulnerable under housing law, or they fail one of the other tests that local authorities are required to apply when considering a homeless application. Even given the provision of grants for deposits and rent in advance, accessing the private rented sector has become increasingly difficult, with a growing housing shortage and many landlords requiring guarantors and referees. In addition to this, there is a dearth of supported accommodation places in the Hastings area, with applicants typically facing a wait of many months for a vacancy.

The Trust was able to help 61 Guests, who stayed overnight in our Shelters, and the Shelter service would not have been possible without:

- the financial support from various grant-making trusts, local organisations, and many individuals (including some enterprising fundraising initiatives from Trustees and volunteers alike) - the Guests and Trustees thank them all most warmly. The Trustees have been greatly heartened by the range of organisations and individuals who, on their own initiative, have provided funds or helped in other ways
- the enthusiastic support of our 163 Registered Volunteer helpers and the seven Churches whose halls were used without cost to Snowflake. The commitment and energy of our Volunteers has continued to be a real inspiration and strength. Our Volunteers have willingly offered their time for those on the margins of society in our

area to provide a welcoming atmosphere which embodies a caring, calm and safe place for our *Guests*, and for which the Shelter is known. On behalf of the Trustees and *Guests* it is right to pay tribute to all.

I am pleased to announce at last the introduction of our new Website and Database in 2019 which our new providers, FAT Promotions, worked patiently with us to ensure a seamless hand over. The comments on the website so far have been very good, and the new data base will be far more efficient and easier for Staff and Volunteers to use, meaning many jobs that are currently done manually will be dealt by the new system.

A big thanks to the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service who helped us to obtain a new Snowflake Van. The new van was required as we needed a taller van, to avoid excessive bending by staff and volunteers when loading and unloading; doors opening on both sides, to avoid staff/volunteers having to stand in the road to load/unload; and to have one fitted out inside to our requirements.

As stated above it is becoming ever more difficult for *Guests* to move into their own accommodation. Nevertheless, we were delighted that 19 of our *Guests* had been enabled to move on in their lives.

Lastly three Trustees have stood down during the year, John Troughton, who was a founder Trustee, Matthew Thompsett and Theresa Salter. The Board of Trustees would like to express their thanks and appreciation for the contribution that they have made to the running of the Night Shelter.

There is much information about The Snowflake Trust on the website at www.snowflake-nightshelter.org.uk, and further enquiries are welcome via the 'Contact Us' tab or by post to the registered office.

(Original signed)

Andrew Charles Crighton
Chair of Trustees

2. The Night Shelter

a. *The Night Shelter Explained*

The Snowflake Night Shelter is a temporary rolling night shelter based on the 'Shelter in a Pack' model published jointly by *Housing Justice* and the *Church Urban Fund*.

Now in its seventh year, the Shelter ran from 30 November 2017 to 20 March 2018, 110 days, with the following aims:

- To provide a night shelter for genuinely homeless people who would otherwise be sleeping rough in Hastings and St Leonards during the extreme winter months
- With respect and without discrimination, to engage church members and local people generally with some of the most vulnerable people in the Town in line with Christian principles
- To provide a warm bed, non-judgemental hospitality and engagement with willing Volunteers to facilitate wellbeing and positive self-esteem
- Hot drinks, an evening meal and breakfast
- In liaison with specialist agencies, encouragement in accessing relevant longer term solutions to individual housing and employment needs

The Shelter was established in 2012 upon the original initiative of Fr John Cavanagh OFM Cap, a Franciscan priest working with other concerned citizens, when he was allocated by his Order to work in the Borough on Social Outreach among marginalised persons. Fr John remains in touch with the Trust and is its 'Official Visitor'.

b. *Governance*

- The Trust re-employed Lesley Crighton in the role of Project Supervisor, and Biff Mooney as Assistant Project Supervisor. Both Lesley and Biff worked throughout 2018 to enable continued liaison and knowledge of Guests and their needs prior to the Shelter opening in November; liaising with other agencies/organisations to ensure mutual understanding of services provided; and undertaking training as required. Biff Mooney has been offered a management position at Little Gate Farm and the Trust wishes him well in his new role and is very grateful for his contribution in the operational running of the Shelter.
- The Trust, in order to ensure that the night shifts were adequately covered, and to relieve the Chair and Project Supervisor of having to come out too often during the night, employed TMS Protection to provide Night Supervisors. The company works for Hastings Borough Council when the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) looking after people in the Council's emergency shelter, they also work with Street Pastors.

They are trained in conflict management, assisting with vulnerable people and helping to defuse small disturbances. The Guests were happy with their presence and there were no significant problems. The Trustees are looking to use them again this coming winter. The Board of Trustees provided general oversight of the project.

c. Operational Arrangements

During the time the Shelter was open, the Project Supervisor was based in an office at The Seaview Project, Hatherley Road, St Leonards, where she interviewed potential Guests on a daily basis. It is appropriate to pay tribute to Lesley Crighton for her commitment to marginalised folk and the wise counsel and professionalism which has characterised all her dealings. The Trustees are looking to alternative office accommodation in Central Hastings for the forthcoming year.

The normal operation of the Shelter was:

- 6pm Evening Shift Volunteers arrive at the venue to meet the Senior Project Supervisor/Assistant Project Supervisor and Venue Coordinator, set up the accommodation, arrange activities and begin food preparation
- 7pm Guests arrive
- 10.30pm Overnight Supervisor and Volunteers take over, 'Lights Out' at 11pm
- 6.30am Morning shift Volunteers arrive and commence breakfast preparation
- 8.30am Shelter packed up, hall and facilities cleaned, and Guests and Volunteers leave.

The Trust operates its own **NEW** van enabling an effective arrangement for the daily transfer of goods between venues. Stock not required on a daily basis is maintained in storage facilities which is provided by Offerfair Self Storage.

d. Venues

The Shelter relies on the goodwill of 7 local churches to provide the nightly venues, none of which were designed to be slept in - we are immensely grateful for the efforts made by the various communities to ensure that the accommodation is made as warm and homely as possible for the Guests. Everyone is most appreciative of the support of the various Church communities raising awareness, fundraising and covering the hidden costs of heating and lighting.

The actual venues for this winter were:

Sunday	St Matthews Church Centre, Silverhill
Monday	The Salvation Army Citadel, Hastings Town Centre

Tuesday	St Mary Star of the Sea, Hastings Old Town
Wednesday	Wellington Square Baptist Church, Hastings
Thursday	St Leonards Baptist Church, Chapel Park Community Centre
Friday	St John's Church, Upper St Leonards
Saturday	Concordia Hall, Hastings

3. People Involved

a. *Guests*

Again a very different group of *Guests* when compared with previous years was welcomed, and many happy moments have been shared in an atmosphere where *Guests* were not judged but listened to and heard. Whilst unfortunately 3 *Guests* had to be banned for inappropriate behaviour this year, everyone visiting the Shelter contributed to a generally peaceful atmosphere, enjoying each other's company and removing any remaining preconceptions and/or stigma surrounding homelessness.

This year, as with last year, whilst there was an increase in prospective *Guests*, the increase was not as high as expected. This was also reflected in the numbers who used the Council's Severe Weather Shelter.

b. *Venue Coordinators*

Each venue had a *Venue Coordinator*, usually from the community whose hall was being used.

The *Venue Coordinator's* responsibilities are principally the organisation of the cadre of volunteers to set up and run the Shelter that evening, the allocation of their duties, explanation of appropriate health & safety issues (including fire and emergency evacuation arrangements) and to ensure the *bona fides* of *Guests* arriving. The Morning Supervisor would normally organise the morning session for breakfast and for the packing up of the Shelter and the cleaning of the hall and its facilities.

Venue Coordinators were also instrumental in bringing Volunteers from different communities, different faith communities and those of no faith, together into effective teams for the benefit of the *Guests*. It is very appropriate to thank personally the *Venue Coordinators*, namely Ema Vessy (Monday), Kevin Swaffer (Tuesday), Fr Sean (Wednesdays), Roy McGaughey (Thursdays), Janet Clarke (Fridays), James Mellors (Saturdays) and Malcolm Harris (Sundays).

c. Volunteers

163 active volunteers were available this year, a marvellous testimony to the care and willingness of good-hearted local people wishing to contribute to those less fortunate than themselves. That said, and perhaps understandably, availability of volunteers was heavily directed towards the more attractive evening shifts rather than overnight and mornings as in previous years and there were still occasions when emergency arrangements had to be made to ensure appropriate levels of supervision.

This year the induction training for new Volunteers was more practical and hands on, with them having to help unload the van, put up the camp beds and go through what was required in the kitchen. From feedback this worked well as people knew what was to be expected of them.

Volunteers bring their own skills, life experiences and interests to their contribution to the Shelter, and all have ensured a warm and welcoming environment for the Guests (and each other). Feedback from the Guests has been unfailingly positive and appreciative.

d. Staff

The success of the Shelter this year is due in a significant degree to the hard work and skills of Lesley Crighton. As last year, she has shown real commitment and has formed/is still forming excellent relationships with the various agencies/organisations that are vital in enabling Guests to move on in their lives - her relationship with the Guests has been particularly appropriate, professional and supportive, and many have benefited from her wise advice and encouragement. She has been ably supported by Biff Mooney, Assistant Project Supervisor, who has had to stand down for next winter as he has been offered promotion at Little Gate Farm.

The appointment of TMS as Night Supervisors was a success and covered the situations where insufficient Volunteers came forward to cover the Night shifts.

e. Trustees

The Trustees overseeing the operation of the Shelter were: Andrew Crighton (Chair of Trustees), Kevin Swaffer (Deputy Chair of Trustees), John Reid (Secretary/Treasurer), John Troughton, Joseph Cornford-Hutchings, Emma Pepper, Matthew Thomsett and Theresa Salter.

4. Financial Review

It is important that the way Snowflake spends its generously donated income is clearly and transparently explained.

This year, the Trust has been fortunate in obtaining a very substantial income from grant-making institutions (£14,000), from church and other community groups and organisations (£20,698), and £18,027 from private donations and fundraising, including contributions made via *Localgiving.com* & *Wonderful.org*. The continuing and very generous monthly contributions from a number of supporters is particularly helpful, and the many and various fundraising initiatives this year have been particularly inspiring.

The trust's financial year ended on 31 May 2019. The annual accounts, having been examined by Holland Harper LLP on a *pro bono* basis, have been made available on the website. In summary, income and expenditure for the year is given below:

a. Income

From Grant-Making Trusts	£14,000
From Church & Other Communities	£20,698
Personal Donations Direct to Snowflake	£8,230
Personal Donations via websites	£8,947
Sale of Van	£3,500
Other Income & Bank Interest	£580
TOTAL INCOME	£55,955

b. Expenditure

Salaries, National Insurance & Pension Costs	£18,808
TMS Protection (Overnight cover)	£14,389
Office Supplies, Leaflets, Volunteers' Handbooks, Fees etc	£1,111
Website & IT (inc new website £11,530)	£12,060
Office Rent to Seaview	£1,000
Laundry, Bedding, Transport, Storage etc	£2,798
Food	£4,361
Insurance	£2,361
Grants	£3,155
Depreciation on new van	£4,513
Other	£1,699
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£66,255

Excluding exceptional items (purchase of the new van and the cost of the new website), the excess of income over expenditure for the year amounted to £5,743. Net Assets at 31 May

2019 were £49,916 (£60,216 at 31 May 2018) of which £31,703 was in cash, £18,052 being the depreciated value of the new van, and £161 being prepayment of storage costs. The Trustees therefore consider it appropriate that a 'going concern' basis of accounting be adopted. It is clear that to ensure the future of the Shelter, further fundraising will be required for the foreseeable future.

c. Hidden Costs

Churches provide their halls free of charge, also covering the utility and any extra insurance costs which might be levied. One local restaurateur provided bacon for Saturday mornings! Truly impressive contributions to the project.

Volunteers provided their services free of charge. Were they to be paid the living wage, then costs would increase by about £50,000 - this is a similar amount to what the trust would have to pay to hire the various Church halls were they not donated free of charge.

JM Waste Management generously provided wheelie bins at no cost to remove rubbish from the venues.

Many individuals, communities and organisations donated much-needed toiletries, socks, scarves, hats and gloves which were very useful and well received by the Guests. If supporters wish to make a donation please see our website to see what our requirements are.

5. Feedback

a. From Guests

The Night Shelter is not just about a bed for the night and food, it is much more; it helps Guests move forward in their lives, as the following comments from Guests illustrates:

"Has given me time to assess my options and get support needed to move forward in the right way."

"I am still alive".

"Has given me time to think without the stress".

"I have made progress this time as I received more help from other sources (Homeworks) following assistance from Snowflake in moving things forward".

"Has helped find home and pull myself out of my shell".

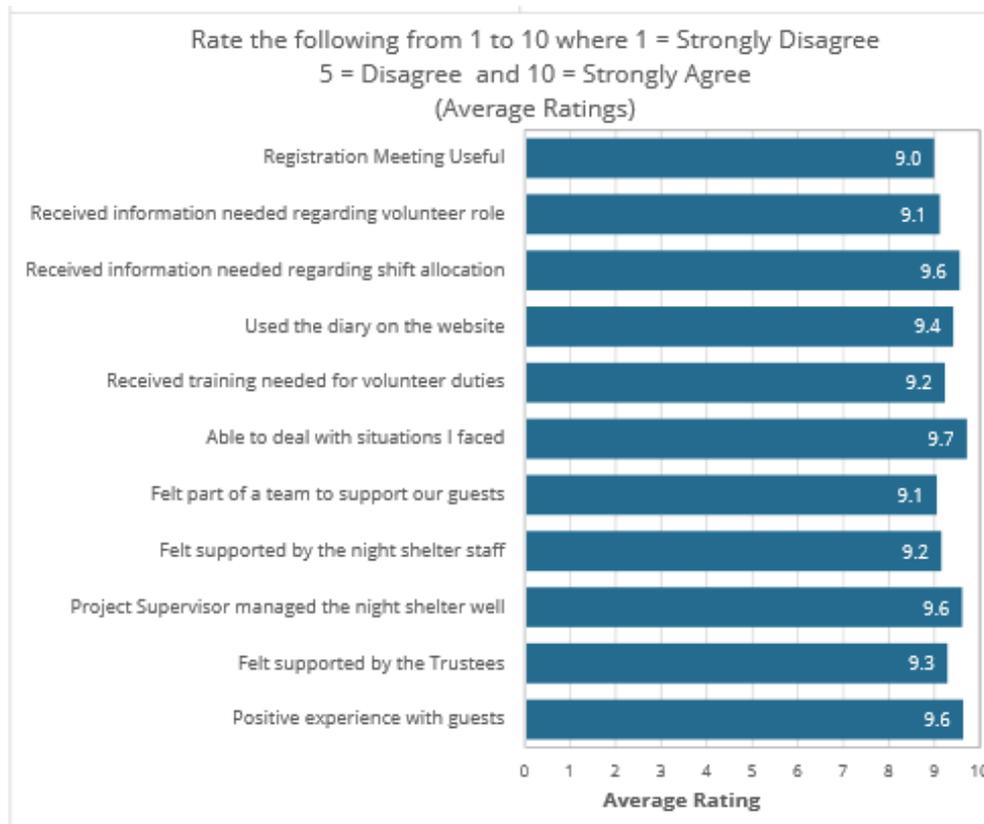
"Put me on the road to housing".

"Saved me sleeping in the open or relying on old drink/ drug associates for shelter and very likely temptation".

"Most definitely- I have not been worried about rough sleeping which has enabled me to

secure accommodation when the shelter closes and attend appointments”

b. From Volunteers



7. Objectives

Including unresolved Objectives from earlier years:

- Improve continuing communication with Volunteers, especially over the Summer - **ongoing**
- Employ appropriate levels of staff to ensure proper supervision and management of the shelter operation - **in hand**
- Revise the Volunteers' Handbook in the light of experience and any change in legislation, such changes also to be reflected in an updated website - **in hand**
- To continue to liaise and work well with other relevant agencies and to develop relationships with them further - **ongoing**
- To make Snowflake's services even better known - **ongoing**
- To confirm the availability of venues and Venue Coordinators for winter 2019/20 - **in hand**

- g. To review our recruitment arrangements with a view to obtaining more Volunteers and their availability for the more unpopular shifts - **partially achieved**
- h. To maintain an appropriate level of financial reserves - **more work to be done**
- i. To build up the skills available to the Trustee Board by the appointment of more members, and to ensure key succession arrangements are in place - **in hand**

Appendix A - Guest Statistics

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Number of days Shelter open	110	110	116	95	94
Number of potential Guests registered	85	83	59	57	72
Number of Guests welcomed to the Shelter	61	63	56	52	54
Number of Guests assisted/ enabled to 'move on' to suitable accommodation	19	24	16	12	26
Average occupancy per night	12	14	16	14	13
Average length of stay	22	24	31	25	23
Maximum occupancy on any one night	18	18	20	18	18
Number of male Guests	51	55	47	43	44
Number of female Guests	10	8	9	9	10
Guests' Age Analysis 18 - 20	2	(4)			
21 - 30	12	(14) 18	8	15	12
31 - 40	17	17	20	11	16
41 - 50	14	17	14	14	12
51 - 60	10	11	11	10	12
61+	6	1	3	2	2

Appendix B - Grants from Trusts

The Magdalen & Lasher Charity

The Isabel Blackman Foundation

The Francis & Eric Ford Charity Trust

The Sussex Community Foundation

(In addition, The Silver Lady Fund contributed substantial bedding)

Appendix C - Donations from Organisations

The Police & Crime Commissioner for Sussex

St Barnabas, Bexhill

Sackville Road Methodist Women's Group

St Helen's, Ore

The Friends of 73A Centre

King's Church

Mount Pleasant Court Retirement Home

St Mary Star of the Sea

St Clare's Fraternity

St Matthews PCC, Scarecrows, Smarties & Friendlies

Section 5 Hastings Drummers

Hastings Catenians

One-Stop, Sidley

St John the Evangelist

East Sussex College Group Hastings

Little Common School

Knights of St Columba

St Ethelberga's

Battle Muffins

Hastings Old Town Christmas Raffle

St Helen & St Barnabas

St Peter & St Paul

Battle Baptist Church

St Leonards Bridge Club

Hastings Lions

Rye & Winchelsea Rotary Club

Hastings Unitarian Church

St John's, Hollington

Union of Catholic Mothers, Battle

Derwent Lodge

All Saints' Monday Wives

St Leonards Baptist Church
Senlac Rotary Club
Sainsbury's
St Anthony of Padua, Rye
Charters Ancaster School
ASDA
Uckfield Bonfire Society
RC Parish of The Good Shepherd
Claverham College
RC Diocese of Arundel & Brighton
Youth Offending Team, Hastings
St Leonards Bridge Club
Rye & Winchelsea Rotary Club
Old Town Carnival
Little Common School
Hastings Miniature Railway
Let's Do Business Group
Claremont School
Bexhill Town Forum on Housing
McPhersons Chartered Accountants
Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre
Future Vision, Bexhill
Purefit & Stacks Gym, Bexhill
Caple Court
5Fostering
McMath Accounting Services
Beulah Church, Bexhill
Brewing Bros Ltd
Hastings Scottish Dance Club
Trinity Methodist Church
Crowhurst Drama Group
Sacred Heart School
Hastings & St Leonards Muffin Club
Hastings Old Town Carnival Association
Ashburnham & Penhurst WI
Claverham Community College
Green Insurance
Senlac Rotary
Herringtons, solicitors, staff
Department of Transport staff