



Christmas
2020



FAITH
Christian Group

Working among the homeless, poor and needy of Reading



Season's Greetings

Well 2020! Enough said? Not quite.

Oddly for ReadiFood this could be described as an amazing year. Amongst all the challenges of operating under COVID restrictions and an unprecedented increase in demand, generosity has been at an all-time high.

We managed to complete the B4N Night Shelter all bar a couple of nights before lock-down 1 started and no-one caught COVID.

With extra government funding we were able to keep our B4N co-ordinator on once more throughout the year and are now supporting a good number of people who are not entitled to benefits because of their UK status.

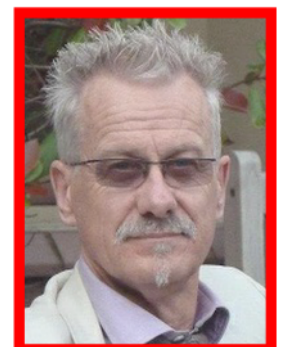


Our street outreach had to be put on pause for a while but has been active for most of the year with extra precautions in place.

And in **breaking news** we have obtained funding to run a COVID friendly day centre for rough sleepers put in temporary accommodation from January through to the end of March. This is a challenging new venture for us.

So we come to the end of a troubled year but with much to give God thanks for.

Malcolm Peirce - Director





Despite a break caused by Lock-down, our distribution of food at Reading Minster continues to help up to 70 people Tuesday to Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons.

ReadiStreet

Feeding the Homeless and Poor

It has been a very interesting year requiring some ingenuity to be safe yet still provide our much needed service.

We always need more volunteers to enable this work to continue safely and effectively. If you can offer even one evening a month, do contact **Wendy** on 0793 684 5301.



Thankfully we have still benefitted from the donation of sandwiches by

★ **PRET A MANGER** ★

We also continue to be grateful to St Mary's for the use of the premises and their support

B4N a bed for the night

Our **winter night shelter** this year ran for 81 nights and we were able to provide meals and a bed to 37 guests, mainly men. We were joined this year by **English Martyrs Church**.

A Bed for the Night is now seen by the Council as very much part of the regular provision for rough sleepers and homeless in the winter months.



Sadly due to COVID we had to shut a couple of days early, but thanks to Council and Government funding all the guests were found accommodation in B & B's, a few being permanently housed straight away and others gradually over the months that followed.

Many thanks once again to **Street Pastors** for providing door security and a friendly welcome to guests.

Stepping Stones off the streets

We have also been able to keep Mary on in her role as a "**navigator**", supporting guests who had been with us in the shelter as they move on into accommodation and try to "normalise" their lives. This has branched out into a role of supporting people who have "no recourse to public funds" (NRPF). Many of these are from Eastern Europe and came here for jobs which they have subsequently lost.

This ongoing new role has led to us re-instating the name "**Stepping Stones**" which was our housing project until a few years ago. Though we can't any longer actually house people we can assist and support them into housing.



Donation from The Hill School, Emmer Green

There have had to be big changes for ReadiFood this year due to Coronavirus and we've had to quite radically change the way we do things.

We started by reducing down the number of staff and volunteers in the building to lower risks. Then we've been putting each daily batch of food donations into quarantine.



Sadly demand has rocketed from around **180** per week to **250** putting pressure on both our packing teams and our delivery volunteers, not helped by having to wear masks or visors.

People have been incredibly generous and we have had **no shortage of food** donations, with many people coming to the warehouse to donate.





A corporate team from last year

We have also enjoyed increased **donations** from **generous shoppers** at most of the **supermarkets** in town.

One area where we have struggled is that we have been unable to have **corporate teams** coming in to help sort, except in very small teams, and we have missed the fun of those days as much as the practical benefit they brought to us.

Financial Support



We always need funding, particularly for our street outreach and support work. Monthly gift-aided payments help us to budget responsibly, whilst one-off gifts enable us to invest in specific items.

You can donate in various ways go to fcg.org.uk and click on "Giving"

If in doubt contact **Amanda** on 0118 9872672 or email amanda@fcg.org.uk

Thank you for reading this update and for your continued prayers and support of FAITH Christian Group



So after a very challenging year

It only remains to say



Merry Christmas

