

## Salisbury MP gets stuck in for Alabaré

MP for Salisbury John Glen was up to his elbows in washing up when he volunteered at Alabaré for the day in January! He helped out at Café Alabaré in the morning, before visiting our Salisbury Drop-In and providing some admin support at our head offices in the afternoon.

John said, "I have had an extremely profitable, informative and rewarding day, learning about the vital work that Alabaré does in Salisbury. My time at Alabaré allowed me to get to know the volunteers and understand the challenges encountered by some of Alabaré's service users."

**If you would like to find out more about volunteering for Alabaré, please call Jo King on 01722 333946 or email [j.king@alabare.co.uk](mailto:j.king@alabare.co.uk)**

## All Change for Ambassador Groups

In February 2011 Simon Firth stepped down as chairman of Alabaré's Bristol Ambassadors. Since the formation of the Bristol Ambassadors in 2007, Simon has worked tirelessly raising the profile of Alabaré and funds for our projects in Bristol. More recently Simon has provided much support and guidance in shaping our work with veterans.

Andrew Lord, Chief Executive says: "Simon has been a wonderful friend and supporter of Alabaré. Although he has stepped down from chairing the Bristol Ambassadors, he will continue to act as a roving ambassador for our work with veterans. We warmly welcome Mike Motum as the new chairman"

Earlier this year Richard Lord became Chairman of our Wiltshire Ambassador Group, replacing Bishop Stephen Conway, and at the end of last year Julia Elton replaced Edward Shaw as Chair of our North Somerset Ambassadors. In addition we are now recruiting to Hampshire and Devon Ambassador groups.

## High praise for Alabaré

The High Sheriff of Hampshire Alan Lovell paid a visit to Alabaré's Andover Supported Housing Project – Sarum House on Tuesday 18th January. The High Sheriff and his wife were shown around the project which provides accommodation and support for up to 18 young people, and met some of the residents living there. He said later, **"We were delighted to come and visit and were most impressed with what we saw, especially the linked double rooms. You clearly run an excellent operation and the young people we met bore that out."**

## Where's there's a Will, there's a way...

At Alabaré we are extremely grateful for the donations, legacies and other forms of financial support that we are fortunate in receiving. Without these donations many aspects of our work and support could not continue.

Leaving a donation to Alabaré in your will can make a huge difference to us and our service users. Bequeathing a gift can be done when making a new will or by adding a codicil to an existing will. When looking at either option, do take professional advice from a qualified solicitor and talk it through with your family and friends so that they are aware of your intentions.

**For more information about leaving a gift to Alabaré, please call Tony Richmond on 01722 322929.**



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### Alabaré's Place of Change

The building of Alabaré Place has been really taking shape over the Winter months. January saw the steel frame go up and since then progress has been very fast.

*Turn to page 6 to read more...*



# Forces for Change


**Alabaré Christian Care & Support** is a regional charity, providing a range of services including supported housing, floating support services, drop-in centres, information, advice and training services and supported living houses. We work with the homeless, ex-offenders, young people, individuals with a learning disability, vulnerable women and people with drug and alcohol problems, towards our vision of "A society where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling life".

[www.alabare.co.uk](http://www.alabare.co.uk)

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### Inside this issue...

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Alabaré's work to support vulnerable Armed Forces veterans continues to gather pace across the South West, with new homes opening in Bristol and Weymouth in the last few months.

#### In Bristol...

Two houses in Filton, Bristol were opened in November and January thanks to funding from ABF – The Soldiers Charity, RAFA and

The Society of Merchant Venturers, plus a number of smaller charities. Our Bristol project is already full and supporting eight men who have been struggling to adjust to civilian life.

#### The need is startling...

The Royal British Legion reports that each week in Bristol, at least six veterans are referred to them needing accommodation and support.

*Continued on page 2...*

# Forces for Change, continued...

**Derek a former Lance Bombardier with the elite 29 Commando Royal Artillery Regiment and 148 Battery Special Operations was one of the first residents in Bristol. "The real problems didn't manifest until I left the army," he says. "I didn't fit back into civilian life. It was very hard... I found it very difficult accepting that I couldn't cope. I was in bits when I arrived... Unless you get help, the mental scars don't heal. Talking is a massive help. I have been really lucky to be able to come here. I have found security and a stable platform to rebuild my life."**

## In Weymouth...

Recognising the urgent need to respond to the welfare of vulnerable veterans across our region, Alabaré has pushed forward with a programme of support in Weymouth as well. With help from the Royal British Legion, Alabaré's Weymouth Home for Veterans opened last Winter. The project, which is run from two houses, accommodates up to seven men. Both houses are full to capacity, highlighting the existing need. An estimated 1 in 10 of the prison population is an ex-Forces veteran, and staff have been working with local prisons and agencies to support those leaving prison and break the cycle of offending.



## In Wiltshire...

Thanks to a grant of more than £5,000 from Plain Action, Alabaré is now delivering a series of ten week training courses to Servicemen and women and their dependents across the Salisbury Plain area.



**Alabaré Home and Money – Take Control** is a tenancy and housing related programme of workshops aimed at preparing Armed Forces families for this aspect of civilian life. Modules include Housing Options, Budgeting and Bills, and Dealing with Debt.

The first course started in Tidworth in February and has already received great feedback.

**"...I didn't realise what a potential minefield being a tenant is. I now feel a lot more confident and better prepared if I was to enter the rental market" said one participant.**

## Why do some veterans find it difficult to adjust to civilian life?

The majority of service men and women leaving the Forces make the transition back to civilian life successfully and without too many problems. For some, however, the change can be catastrophic. When in the Forces bills are paid directly from salaries so there is no need to learn how to budget.

Dave, former gunner and tank driver in the King's Royal Hussars, and now resident at Alabaré's Weymouth Veterans project, said "In the Forces everything is done for you. You get paid and you have millionaire's week where everyone spends all their wages then you could just go and eat food in the canteen for the next three weeks. I didn't have to pay a bill till I was 21."

For those who marry whilst serving and spend long months away from their families, families left behind learn to cope alone. This often causes friction and can lead to breakdown in relationships and marriages.

Such scenarios can be compounded by the loss of personal identity and confidence experienced by some veterans leaving the Forces, as well as the mental and physical wounds many have sustained whilst serving.

## Do the Forces prepare their personnel for the transition to civilian life?

Personnel are offered a resettlement package in line with the length of their service, aimed at helping them with the transition to civilian life. Unfortunately, this course isn't always used to its full potential, especially if a person has had to leave quickly or unexpectedly.

The MOD is working to address this issue, and Alabaré is working alongside them to deliver programmes such as *Alabaré Home and Money – Take Control* to help prevent veterans becoming homeless or vulnerable and better equip them to manage their new lives successfully.

## New Alabaré support for young care leavers



**Alabaré's Young Peoples' Services have expanded through the opening of a new six bedded home in Trowbridge. This is the first Alabaré project offering specific support to young care leavers.**



Meeting the needs of a new client group is always challenging – the individual backgrounds of young care leavers mean that each brings with them barriers to break down and personal mountains to climb, all at what is an emotional age in anyone's life. Staff are working closely with each individual to identify and meet

their needs, and ultimately to help them make a successful transition to independent living. This project has been made possible thanks to funding from Wiltshire Council. Alabaré Area Manager for North Wiltshire and Hampshire Mel Hurley said: "Towpath House is providing an invaluable service to young people who are

leaving care – not only does it enable them to develop essential life skills, it also allows them to experiment with increased levels of freedom whilst still receiving an appropriate level of support. This is vital in ensuring a smooth transition from care to living independently."

## Helping families in Somerset

Alabaré is also developing new projects in Somerset, expanding our expertise in floating support. Floating support is accommodation-focused help that a person or family receives, regardless of where they live, and once they no longer need it, it simply "floats away".

Working in partnership with DHI (Developing Health & Independence), we are now providing a specialist floating support service to families and teenage parents in Somerset.

The new scheme brings together two separate projects into one county-wide service which can support a total of 200 families at any one time, 30 more than previously.

**The service can help by giving families support and advice on issues such as:**

- **Finances and housing rights**
- **Accessing education and childcare**
- **Moving to a new home**
- **Resolving problems with neighbours**

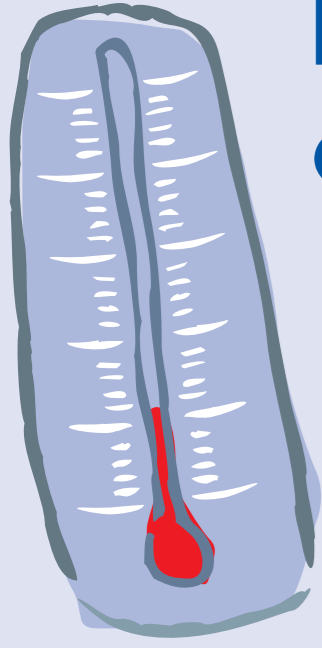
Families can receive the support in their own homes or by telephone, and the service offers a rapid response system for those in immediate need.

Alabaré's Senior Manager Rachel Wetton said: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with Somerset County Council and DHI to deliver this new initiative. The Somerset Families Support Service will be an invaluable resource for the local community that will help improve the lives of many marginalised families in the local area."

## Think Green



Back in Wiltshire, Alabaré has been working with BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) to launch a new project called Environment in Mind. The aim is to encourage people with mental health issues to get involved in a range of countryside activities that will improve their mental and physical health, at the same time as benefiting local communities. The group meets every Monday and takes part in activities such as path clearing and hedge laying. Funding for this project has been secured from Ecominds, a funding scheme run by Mind on behalf of the BIG Lottery Fund. Anyone interested in joining the group should contact Alabaré Include on **01380 738602**.



# Fundraisers brave the cold in aid of Alabaré

**Alabaré's wonderful, hardy, supporters again overcame freezing temperatures to raise thousands of pounds to help vulnerable people in their communities. Our annual Sleep Outs again proved a huge success with eight events taking place on the night of the 4th March. Sleepers at all locations faced freezing outdoor temperatures, dipping as low as -4°C in Westbury.**

For some this was their first Alabaré Sleep Out, others have joined us every year for the last four years. For everyone it was a chance to reflect on the plight of homeless people living on our streets, and to feel very grateful to have a warm home to go back to once the event was over. More than 170 people took part this year, raising in the region of £25,000 for our Drop-In Centres and other projects. This is a huge achievement and we would like to say a massive thank you to all those who took part and those that sponsored them.

In Weymouth we held our first sleep out at Nothe Fort, the famous military venue in the town. Twenty hardy individuals camped out on the parade ground, braving the elements. Reporter Catherine Bolado from the Dorset Echo took part and she said,

**"I hate the cold so the thought of spending a night out in -3°C temperatures filled me with dread. But after reading that one in ten homeless people is an ex-serviceman or woman I was so shocked I decided to face my fears and get involved. [The night] made me realise just how much we all take for granted – safety, warmth and shelter..."**

Salisbury MP John Glen and Canon Chancellor Edward Probert took part at Salisbury Cathedral for the second year in succession. Over 90 brave volunteers slept out, including many young people from around the area.



Daisy from St Osmund's Youth Group said, **"I'm taking part because I've seen a lot of homeless people around and I feel bad because I take so much for granted and so I am doing this for them."**

**Other Sleep Outs/Ins were held in:**

**St Thomas Church Salisbury, Wilts.** This was a smaller scale event which saw a dedicated few curl up in the porch for the night.



**Porton Church Porton, Wilts.** This event was organised by young people from the Bourne Valley Churches.

**"The sleepover at Porton was an experience the youngsters will remember, which was relevant, Christ centred and fun. Adding to the authenticity the youngsters even asked for the heating to be turned off!!"** said one of the organisers, Reverend Mark Perry.

**All Saints Church Westbury, Wilts.** A group of supervised young people camped out in the porch.



**St Peters Church Codford, Wilts.** 16 people including 4 children slept in the church.

**Pip n Jay's Church Bristol** Organised in conjunction with Bristol Christian Action Network Homelessness Forum.



Jonny Treloar, Project Manager for Alabaré said,

**"I decided to take part again this year as the plight of Bristol's street homeless is set to get worse under current circumstances and a heightened awareness of this needs to be conveyed to Bristolians at every level."**

**King Arthur's Hall Andover** 11 people took part in this the third year that the event has been held here. Our thanks to local fundraisers John Cockaday and Iris Anderson who organised the event.

Our thanks as well go to bands **Dogs Without Collars** and **Unlawfully at Large**, who held concerts in Weymouth and Salisbury respectively earlier in the evening on 4th March. Both concerts were great warm ups to the Sleep Out events being held later that night, and each raised much needed funds for projects in their areas.



Dorset Echo staff

## Major Gift Campaign flying start

**In the last edition of Alabaré News, we unveiled our plans for a Major Gift Campaign. Campaign Director, Geoffrey Willis updates us on how the appeal is going...**

The Major Gift Campaign, launched in April 2010, has had an enormously encouraging start and during the past 12 months we raised over £850,000. We've concentrated on expanding our work with homeless Armed-Forces veterans, and around half a million pounds has been pledged by over a dozen charities. The breadth and depth of the support is particularly encouraging, and we now have sufficient financial support for homes in Plymouth, Bristol and Weymouth for the next 3 years, enabling us to open projects ahead of schedule. We are determined to press on and achieve our goal and open two more veterans' homes in Portsmouth and Wiltshire. But the fundraising doesn't stop there – we need to plan ahead and ensure a continuing source of funding to guarantee the long term sustainability of these vital homes.

While rejoicing at the support for veterans we are always conscious of the need to maintain support for other projects which are perhaps less in the

limelight. We were therefore thrilled with a grant of £164,000 from the Sarsen Trust, of which £100,000 will be spent on a major refurbishment of Alabaré's Salisbury Supported Housing Project – Barnabas House. The grant will also help fund Café Alabaré.

As you will read, supporters from across our region turned out to take part in our Sleep Outs and responded to our Cold Kills campaign during the snow. Our next focus is to provide fixtures and fittings for the rebuilt Alabaré Place (the replacement for Damascus House). Please help us to provide for residents of the new hostel by responding to our appeal on page 6.

With this kind of start the hugely challenging target of £6 million raised over a five year period looks achievable. However we remain utterly dependent on, and are hugely grateful for, your continued support.

**Geoffrey Willis**  
Campaign Director

### Is the value of your donation about to drop?

When basic rate income tax was reduced in 2008, the government introduced a temporary 'Transitional Relief' to compensate charities for the resulting loss of Gift Aid income. The government has confirmed that transitional relief has not been extended beyond 6th April this year. The impact of the change is the equivalent of a 2.5% reduction in the total value of a gift aided donation at a time when inflation also reduces the true value. Please consider whether you can adjust your level of giving to Alabaré to help reduce the impact of these changes on our donation income, on which many of our projects rely for survival.

*giftaid it*

## Thank you!!

We would like to thank all our supporters for the wonderful gifts and welfare boxes that you have donated to Alabaré and especially our Drop In Centres this Winter. We were able to distribute Christmas gifts and essential items such as toiletries and sleeping bags which are vital to so many using our centres. Our thanks too to those people



Gifts donated by the United Reformed Church in Salisbury at their Advent Gift Service.

who donated Winter coats through our collection at Tesco's in Salisbury.

# Alabaré's new 'Place' in Salisbury

As those readers who regularly visit Salisbury will be aware, Alabaré Place, our new homeless hostel in Barnard's Street, has been really taking shape over the Winter months.

January 2011

In January the steel frame started to go up, and since then progress has been very fast. Contractors Morgan Sindall have also made great progress inside the old Emmaus House, transforming Alabaré's previous care home into eight self contained move on flats, some of which have two bedrooms.

The scheme is on track to complete in time for the Autumn with plans for a grand opening towards the end of 2011. Alabaré is working in partnership with Housing group Greensquare on this project.

Behind the scenes, a consultation process has been taking place to ensure that the new hostel provides an inspiring service that truly meets the needs of its service users. Current residents using Alabaré's homeless services in Salisbury and service users from the Salisbury Drop-In Centre, have been asked to contribute their opinions through questionnaires and an open-day event.

We have been able to gauge opinion on various aspects of the new service, such as what facilities potential residents would like to be provided in the new

hostel, what type of support they would like and what attributes and skills a Key Worker should have. Many service users have taken part and have been very positive about the proposals, offering some interesting and useful comments.

In February, staff and residents met up with the architects of the new hostel. Residents were able to input into decisions on flooring, colours and kitchen and bathrooms fittings for the hostel. Our consultation process has provided much vital information that will ensure the hostel really is a 'Place Of Change'.



Newly fitted kitchen in one of the Move On flats



April 2011

## What makes a home a home?

Building Alabaré Place is just the start when it comes to helping our residents on the road to independence and a positive future. Many of our service users have had traumatic pasts, have lived on the streets, faced homelessness, or sold their personal belongings to pay debts.

Alabaré Place gives us the opportunity to help around 50 people per year who otherwise might not have a home... and to provide a place for change – somewhere to begin, to build bridges and a brighter future. We are, however, very aware that a home is much more than a building, and we are asking for your help to make Alabaré Place a warm, welcoming and secure home for everyone needing our support.

A donation from you could buy, a place setting of crockery, a pack of bedding and bed linen, or a wardrobe and bedside cabinet... you can rest assured that we will ensure your donation is spent in the best way possible to make Alabaré Place a home. Please give online today at [www.alabare.co.uk](http://www.alabare.co.uk).

## Young mum's success

Jenny moved into Alabaré's Salisbury Mother & Baby Project in August last year with high support needs exacerbated by her reluctance to be involved with other agencies. The situation was not very positive, with local social services concerned about Jenny's parenting skills, and financial problems resulting from her benefits being stopped as she hadn't been submitting information on time.

Belinda, her Alabaré Support Worker, has worked closely with Jenny to help her attend all her necessary appointments, and to give Jenny the confidence she has needed to start a parenting skills course.

The great news is that Jenny and her daughter have now been signed off by social services as they are happy with how much she has achieved and that she has proved herself to be a good mum. They have recently been allocated their own property and have now moved in. Jenny says that she is very excited about their future.

Alabaré's Salisbury Mother & Baby Project has been highly commended in a national competition run by Aviva Insurance and won £1,000 for the project. Belinda, along with Alabaré Chairman John Proctor attended a gala award ceremony on 30th March in London. Congratulations to everyone at the project!



© Simon Difazio



## Panto fun packs a punch!

St Mark's Church, Salisbury was packed out on Friday 4th February for a special performance of Cinderella.

Staff and service users from Alabaré's Learning Disability projects pulled on their costumes and took to the stage to give a unique rendition of the well-loved pantomime which was written and narrated by Support Worker Steve McAuliffe.

The 100 strong audience enjoyed all the classic fairytale characters – Cinderella, Prince Charming and the ugly sisters – as well as a few modern day additions – the evil

Health and Safety Officer and the Fairy Godmothaz.

Ruth Telford, Alabaré's Supported Living Manager, said after the performance: "I am so pleased with how well the show went; despite having limited rehearsal time, everyone did really well and we've all had a brilliant time."

The money raised through the pantomime will go towards an activity fund that will be used by Alabaré's Learning Disability support services.



All images courtesy of Salisbury Journal

## Taking time out

Three residents and a member of staff from The Well were excited to be offered the opportunity to take part in a spiritual weekend in Bristol in February. The places were generously donated free of charge by New Generation Music (a Christian arts and music organisation).

Jo, Liz and Chloe were accompanied by Project Team Leader Donna to the Bristol Marriott hotel and through the weekend enjoyed some pampering and spiritually enriching workshops and worship. There was the opportunity to get involved with aerobic sessions as well as listening to motivational speaker Nancy Goudie. On Friday and Saturday nights there was live music to enjoy.

Donna said, "It was lovely to be able to spend time with the residents in a different setting. We were surrounded by laughter and music. Jo, Liz and Chloe enjoyed meeting the other attendees and reached out to support others whom they had only just met. The weekend has been such an empowering and positive experience. We really appreciated the opportunity to take part."



## Gone fishing!

On Saturday 24 January 2011 two service users and a member of staff from Alabaré's Salisbury Supported Housing Project – Exeter Street, enjoyed a day out fishing on the lakes at Watergate Farm, Bulford.

The residents enjoyed the use of some loaned equipment and advice from other anglers. Everyone had a great day out, and it is hoped this morale boosting trip can be repeated again in the near future. If you have any fishing equipment that you would be willing to donate to our project, please call us on **01722 410820**.