



E N A B L I N G A F U L F I L L I N G L I F E

www.alabare.co.uk

Welcome to new look newsletter

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Alabaré News which has a new design and format reflecting reader feedback.

continued on page 3...

The big sleep out...

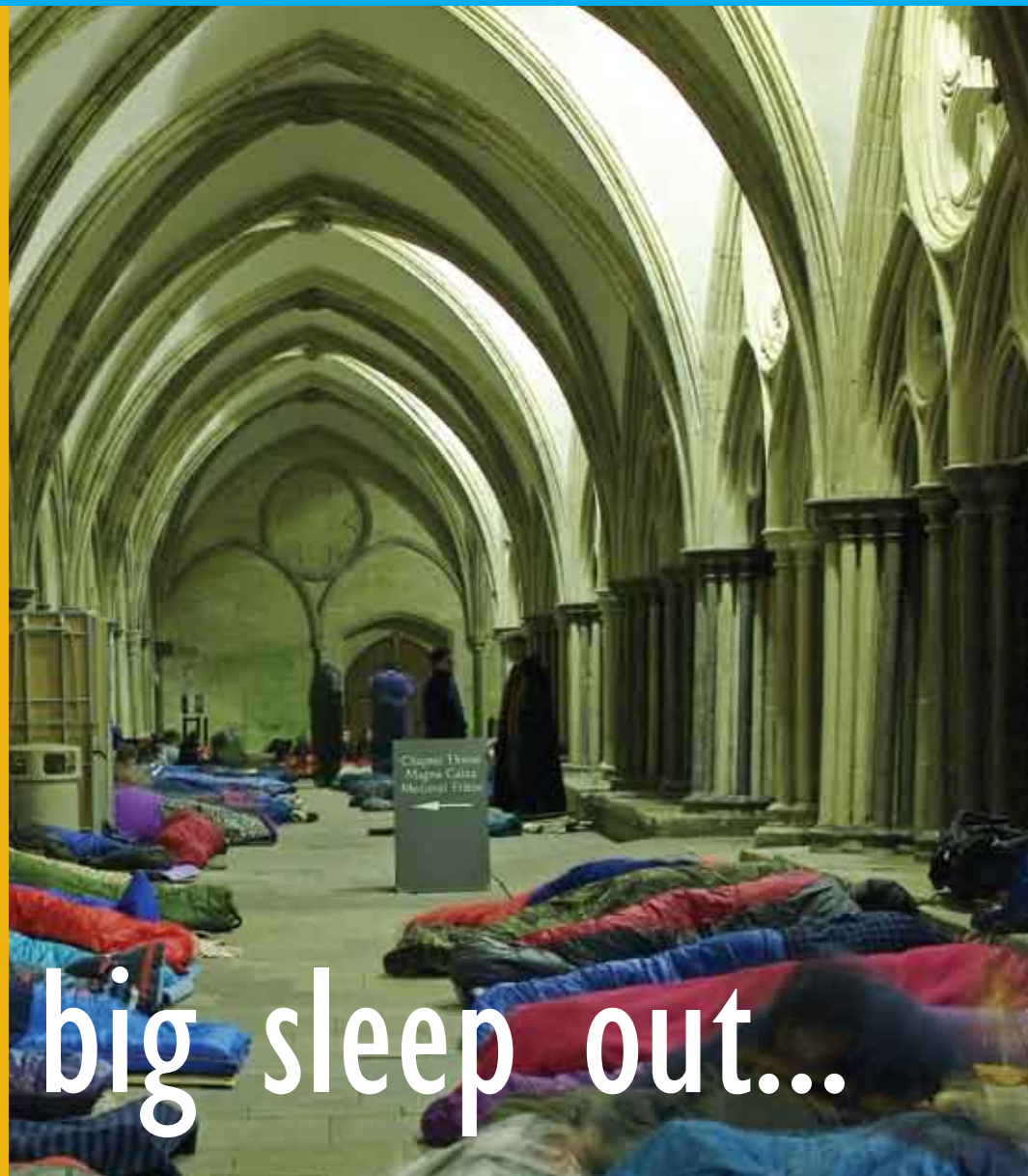


Table of contents

Help for ex-Service men and women

Alabaré in Plymouth

The big sleep out

Moving on

Project round up

Volunteer with us

Fundraising in a recession

Imagine sleeping in the cloisters amongst the tombs of Salisbury Cathedral?

On 27th February 126 people of all ages and from all walks of life braved the cold flagstone floors and were shut into the cloisters to sleep the night away beneath the spire of Salisbury Cathedral.

They were all taking part in one of six sponsored 'Sleep Out' events to raise money for our Homeless Drop In Centres. There was a good atmosphere as the cloisters filled up with sleepers

arranging their assorted makeshift beds with essentials such as sleeping bags, cardboard box insulators, ear plugs and relaxing reading books! Hot soup and rolls were provided to help people warm up before settling down for a cold, draughty night.

Some of those there: students from Wyvern College and St Edmunds School, Stephen Conway, the Bishop of Ramsbury, Ed Probert, Cathedral Chancellor, Archdeacons-Alan Jeans and John Wraw,

continued on page 4...

Plymouth update – new house for ex-Service personnel



Since our last newsletter when we promised an update on our new services in Plymouth things have got even more exciting...

We are delighted to have opened a new housing scheme for ex-Service personnel in Plymouth this February.

With essential grant funding from The Royal British Legion, the new scheme, possibly the first of its kind, offers supported housing with advice to people who are experiencing difficulties after leaving military service.

Having already established services for homeless people in Devon and Dorset, we started providing supported housing services to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in Plymouth in autumn 2008. Alabaré Area Manager,

Chay Robertson worked with local Plymouth and Exeter contacts such as St Petrocks, as well as The Royal British Legion to develop the new project from idea to reality.

For some ex-Service personnel life can be difficult. We are able to offer people not only accommodation but also support with life issues including for some, drug and alcohol dependency. The scheme can help 7 people at any one time to move forward towards a fulfilling life including education and work. A resident stated that "If it was not for Alabaré and the Royal British Legion offering me help I would be dead due to alcohol abuse. I need people to trust me again, to give me direction and this is what I am getting here from my support worker and the rest of the lads in here. I have got to learn how to cope with life without alcohol".

We are keen to develop similar projects to help ex-Service men and women. Please contact enquiries@alabare.co.uk if you have ideas to share with us on this.

Alabaré Christian Care Centres is a regional charity, providing a range of services including supported housing, floating support services, drop-in centres, information, advice and training services and a registered care home. We work with the homeless, ex-offenders, young people, individuals with a learning difficulty, vulnerable women and people with drug and alcohol problems, toward our Vision of "A society where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling life". www.alabare.co.uk

Photos copyright Alabaré, Stuart Griffiths except where shown. Photos are not necessarily of clients referred to in this publication. Names have been changed to respect client confidentiality.



For further information about Alabaré Christian Care Centres, please contact:
Marketing and Fundraising,
33 Brown Street,
Salisbury SP1 2AS
01722 322882

enquiries@alabare.co.uk www.alabare.co.uk
Fundraising and donations 08450 786808

Alabaré Christian Care Centres is a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 2604011 Registered Charity No. 1006504

Printed on recycled paper, elemental chlorine free.



On homelessness

People end up homeless for many reasons but each homeless person's situation is unique and complex. Their plight touched many Alabaré supporters' hearts this year when they took part in our big sleep out events. The Homeless Drop In Centres we run provide vital advice, food and help but with no guaranteed funding we are reliant on your donations to keep these open. It takes £160,000 each year to run the three Drop In Centres.

In these harsh economic times we are sadly seeing people returning to use our Drop In Centres after some years away, and we are also seeing an increase in use.

A recent study* found the reasons most frequently given for being on the streets were:

- **relationship breakdown:** 41%
- **being asked to leave the family home:** 28%
- **drug and alcohol problems:** 31% and 28% respectively
- **leaving prison:** 25%
- **mental health problems:** 19%
- **other:** for example, eviction, problems with benefits payments.

*Shelter, *Reaching Out*, p14, London, 2007.

Meet Chay

Chay Robertson spoke to us about his background and role as Alabaré Area Manager of Plymouth, Devon & Cornwall.

Born in Aberdeen, Scotland Chay joined the Royal Navy in 1971 at the age of 16 where he stayed for "32 fun-packed years" serving throughout many conflicts and wars. He became a Service Police Officer in 1976 and during his term in the navy spent 4 years attached to the Army. Chay is also a Poppy Appeal organiser.

In March 2002 Chay decided that he wanted to be counted as a Christian and was baptised at Roborough Methodist Church, where he regularly worships.

Having been posted to Plymouth Chay decided to retire there and looked for a new profession. In 2005 an advert seen at the Armed Forces Job Finding Service led to Chay's work with the Bruised Reed Trust, a small charity running 3 houses for the homeless.

Despite a steep learning curve in his first 6 months, Chay was pleased to help steer all of the Trust's houses away from the threat of closure and help improve their

management. In Chay's words that was just the start of it..

In 2007 the possibility of a merger with Alabaré was considered and this went ahead last summer, giving Alabaré a presence in Bideford, Weymouth and Plymouth.

After attending a seminar in Exeter last

We are looking for further expansion in Plymouth and Devon

June Chay and a Royal British Legion case worker started discussing ways he could use a property in Plymouth for the benefit of ex-Service personnel.

The idea of The Royal British Legion funding such a project was born.

23rd December 2008 was the day we found out that the Royal British Legion funding had been secured for three years and the house named 'Mon Abri' (meaning Safe Haven) welcomed its first ex-Service residents in February this year.

Even with all this activity Chay is not standing still. Where does he see himself in a year's time? "We are looking for further expansion in Plymouth and Devon. Also we are keeping an eye and



ear open for opportunities in Cornwall. As there is a great amount of interest from other organisations in Mon Abri we are looking as to how best we can spread this good work."

continued from front cover...

During these difficult economic times we are very grateful for the support Alabaré receives from its supporters and volunteers. In February over 200 people took part in the Sleep Out raising £25,000 towards our Drop In Centres for homeless people in Wiltshire. At the same time we opened a new supported housing project in Plymouth for homeless ex-Service personnel. Although it has only been open for a few weeks, one resident commented that the project provided him with "hope, respect and honour".

Alabaré is not immune from the recession. We are seeing increasing numbers of people being referred to our services, a sad reflection that as unemployment and debt rises so does homelessness.

We are sad to announce the death on 26th March 2009 of one of our founder Bristol Ambassadors Mr Louis Sherwood. We give thanks for Louis' interest and support. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his widow Nicole, and his family and friends.

Looking forward we have a busy few months ahead as we continue to work on the planning application for the redevelopment of Damascus House and respond to increasing demand for our personalised care packages for people with learning disabilities.

Thank you for your support

More on Plymouth

We aim to support people living in Plymouth who are either homeless, at risk of homelessness or in need of support to move on to independent living from hostels or supported accommodation. Our Floating Support service there has so far assisted 106 people since last September. The other service that Alabaré provides in Plymouth for the City Council is Supported Temporary Accommodation for homeless people. When we took over this contract in December we inherited 5 houses and are now working to improve their standard. *Read more on page 6.*

We are really pleased that our new Alabaré offices opened on 3rd November at Creykes Court, Millfields, Plymouth with a staff team of 12.

We are setting up a committee of local volunteers to support our services in Devon and Plymouth. If you are interested in its work or in joining please contact: *Chay Robertson, Area Manager of Plymouth, Devon & Cornwall Projects on 01752 262825 or 07813 969834.*



The big sleep out...

...continued from front cover

Andrew Wood – Methodist District Chair, Tim Robertson and David Durston, Alabaré trustees and Sam Wiggs, Chancellor of the Diocese. While at Salisbury's St Thomas church a number of people slept outside in the church porch.

The other events were at Tisbury's Hinton Hall, St George's Catholic Church, Warminster - where the youngest sleeper was only 9 years old and Porton, St Nicholas. At Pip'n'Jay's Church, Bristol a little rain fell on the hardy Alabaré supporters who joined with other organisations there to raise £1500 for our Bristol work.

In all 200 people slept out on the night and around £25,000 has already been raised by the sleep outs in Wiltshire

In all 200 people slept out on the night

to support the essential work of our Wiltshire Homeless Drop In Centres at Devizes, Salisbury and Trowbridge. These Centres provide vital support to people who are homeless or in inappropriate accommodation by providing food, shower and washing facilities, clothes and advice in a safe environment.

Alabaré wish to particularly thank the Dean and Chapter of Salisbury Cathedral, and the clergy, church leaders and volunteers who supported these events. Of course, a really big thank you goes to all those generous enough to give their time and money to raise awareness of the problems faced by those who have no choice but to sleep out.



© Evening Post



You can still support the sleep out at www.charitygiving.co.uk or by donating to Alabaré direct at 33 Brown St, Salisbury SP1 2AS. The next big sleep out will be in February 2010.



What the sleepers thought:

I thought the whole event was well organised and a delight.

The sleep out was fascinating. It gave me a small insight into how vital it is to support the homeless.

Very thought provoking..the floor of the cloisters is very hard.

I learned not to believe the labels on sleeping bags.

We now know who the snorers are!

A remarkable community experience.

And from their sponsors:

Are Long Johns permitted!!!

Sleeping with Bishops - is there nothing this man will stop at to further his career?

'Slumber is more sweet than toil' - however hard the floor!

We are all so lucky not to be homeless on the streets in this horrible winter weather and good of you all to remind us of those less fortunate.

Comments from people using the Drop In Centres:

Always someone to talk to.

Staff are always helpful and go out of their way not to be judgemental, many people would be lost without this support.

The food is great, it fills you up all day, I like coming here as it is a good atmosphere and a safe, non-violent place to go to chat and chill out.

The drop in is like a lifeline as I always know it is here for me.

Would love to see the place open 7 days a week, the staff are an extended family to my needs, thank you.



© Evening Post

Steve used to be street homeless and was a regular visitor to the Salisbury Drop In Centre. He now lives in one of our Move On houses and has just been accepted on V Talent, a voluntary training course in Internet media. He also spends a lot of time helping out in the kitchen at the Drop In. Steve took part in this year's Sleep Out at Salisbury Cathedral....

"The Sleep Out was a great chance to get a small look at what it's like to live on the streets. There was a great turn out. I found it rather cold but overall it was a great night. It's good that there is a chance to experience it, but living on the street is a lot harder because you don't have the feeling of safety and there are no hot drinks! I hope this year brings good fortune to those who are living on the streets."

Homeless facts

Last year we served almost 12,000 free meals at our Homeless Drop In Centres, we handed out nearly 100 sleeping bags and did over 400 loads of washing.

Damascus House



Since 1991 Alabaré has been helping homeless people in Salisbury.

Damascus House, our hostel, provides accommodation and support to individuals and couples who are homeless but the building itself is outdated.



In order to upgrade the hostel we plan to redevelop the site and are seeking planning permission for this. Our proposals include feedback from local residents

and planning officers made in October and November 2008.

This has meant the final plans for Damascus House have been amended to ensure the new buildings are constructed with materials that suit the area and incorporate the recycling of grey water, energy efficient electrical and boiler systems and the inclusion of a bicycle store.

At present we hope to have the plans considered this May. More news will be available on our website where you can also see the plans.

Moving On

You may have realised that Alabaré keeps on growing! From our main Salisbury office, Yvonne Way has the new job of managing all the properties for our many projects across the South West.

We are able to house homeless people in Salisbury in our hostel, Damascus House. When they are ready, we can encourage these people to move out and start living in what we call 'move-on' housing. These are houses and flats where support is provided to ease the transition back into independent living.

In March this year we began leasing 5 flats in Exeter Street, Salisbury from the Roman Catholic Diocese which will have space for 11 people.

In partnership with Westlea Housing Association, who are able to buy property, Alabaré will also be managing an increasing number of move on houses in Salisbury this year: two 3 bedroom houses in April; and two more 3 bedroom houses in May.



Another house is being purchased in Salisbury by Westlea Housing Association and we hope 4 residents with learning disabilities can move in by early May.

In Plymouth, where we started running temporary accommodation for the City Council last December, we are looking at purchasing or renting additional properties to replace those currently in use.

All these houses need good quality household items such as cookware, utensils, crockery and bedding. If you have any spare items you would like to donate please contact Yvonne on 01722 344472 or y.way@alabare.co.uk.

Move On Good News

Peter moved into a move on property from Damascus House in February 2007. He was suffering from agoraphobia, depression and was diagnosed with a personality disorder. He was leading a very isolated existence, barely leaving the house at all and with no social network. Peter was also self medicating with alcohol and cannabis. He was estranged from his family and living away from his home town.

Support from staff initially included escorting him on shopping trips and helping him in reducing his alcohol and cannabis use. During the first few months, Peter suffered deterioration in his mental health, but with the added support from his Community Psychiatric Nurse, things improved. His confidence gradually increased and he began voluntary work. In October 2008 he was reunited with his family and is now living in his home town with his father.

At Christmas Peter contacted staff to wish them a happy Christmas and to say how well he was doing. Peter now works on an organic produce market stall, he continues to live contentedly with his father and is in good health.



Six young people from **involved** got into the team spirit and helped Andover fire fighters raise money for charity by washing cars in March.



Project round up



Mel Greenstock, Alabaré Community Support Manager

Having a super time at London Road



London Road, a supported living project for people with learning disabilities, celebrated in style at Christmas. Staff and service users lived out their childhood dreams as they pulled on the Lycra and spent the evening dressed as their favourite superhero. Superman, the Incredible Hulk, a dalek – now that's an impressive guest list!



Community 4

C4, the consortium of four organisations – ourselves with Westlea Housing Association, Splitz Support Services and the Drugs and Homeless Initiative – won a Health and Wellbeing Award on 25th February. The awards are nominated by the public and celebrate those making a significant contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of people living and working in Wiltshire. The event was hosted jointly by Wiltshire County Council and Wiltshire NHS.

Well awards

Gemma Nokes, Manager of The Well in Bristol and residents attended The Una



Above: from L to R, one of the ladies at The Well receiving a certificate of achievement for 6 months clean and sober from Manager Gemma Nokes & residents from the Well enjoying ice skating in London

Padel Award ceremony on 13th January at King's College, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies in London. Gemma received a certificate, to a lot of cheers from the women, which recognises The Well as outstanding. See www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/luna_padel.html

Mud, mud glorious mud

A fantastic day out was had when house members from Charis House, Bideford, one



of our supported housing projects, pooled resources to organise a quad biking event. Lunch and a trophy to the best quad biker helped make the day. One of the residents said "Today has bonded us all together and it has shown the team work we have in Charis House. If we can achieve this we can achieve anything".

SORTED

This project closed at the end of March 2009 after 7 years of service to the community recycling aluminium.

The project has provided half a day's supported employment for up to 10 people at any one time and their dedication and enthusiasm has helped to spread the message of the importance of recycling. Unfortunately, changing economics meant the scheme had to end but our thanks go out to all who have worked in the project as well as those organisations and individuals who have provided the materials for recycling.

Alabaré Christian Care Centres
run over 40 projects

Fundraising in a recession

The support for many vulnerable people that you will read about in this Alabaré News is vital to their lives but it comes at a considerable cost.

Much of our funding comes from statutory sources but we do need to generate about half a million pounds a year from voluntary donations to maintain and develop the support provided. Please take a few moments to read on about some of the areas where you may be able to help.

We have been very thankful this year to benefit from three legacies which will provide close to £100,000 of funds. It is sad that these benefits are normally known about only on the death of the donor, but it is very good to see their high level of concern for people in need demonstrated in their will.

If you are considering making or reviewing your will, we ask that you consider some level of provision for our work. Your legal advisor can provide information or we can provide a leaflet on request.

Volunteer with us

So much of what we do at Alabaré relies on the generosity and hard work of our dedicated team of volunteers. We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all of our volunteers for the invaluable contribution you have made to our success.

As the charity continues to grow and expand, so too does our need for volunteers. In the current economic climate we know that it is hard for people to give up their time for free, but just an hour or two a week could help make a huge difference to someone's life.

We run more than 40 projects and are always on the lookout for a wide range of volunteers who can help with life skills such as cooking and budgeting or more creative tasks like pottery and gardening.



We are grateful that the levels of individual donations have not dropped away in recent months as we know that many people are finding their personal situations challenged. In these difficult times we see the needs of vulnerable people increasing. We appeal to you to support our work which reaches out to over 1000 people each year, if you can. This could be through a one off donation or a regular payment, all gifts play a vital role in supporting Alabaré. Just £10 could help feed 10 people at our Drop In Centres. You will find a donation form with this Alabaré News, thank you.

Charitable trusts, businesses, churches, community groups and schools also regularly support us and we need this support to continue and grow. If you are involved in any of these groups can we ask that you consider providing support? For more information please call 08450 786808 or e-mail fundraising@alabare.co.uk



Just some of our current vacancies....

In Salisbury we need people to help with our second hand clothing service, drivers to collect local donations and people to offer support to service users with learning disabilities.

In Plymouth we are looking for people for our befriending scheme for ex-Service personnel.

In Devizes and Trowbridge we need help with preparing and serving meals at our Drop In Centres.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering opportunities at Alabaré contact Yvonne Way on 01722 344472 or y.way@alabare.co.uk

Glossary of Terms

Alabaré
Spanish for 'I will praise'.

Complex Needs
A person who has several needs that are interrelated and need to be addressed together.

Floating Support
This kind of support is "attached" to the person, not the property and can follow a service user if they move to another address. It only lasts for as long as the client needs it, then "floats away". The client does not have to live at a certain address to receive the support.

Housing Related Support
Support specifically aimed at helping people to establish themselves, or stay in, their own homes. Examples of housing related support include helping people to manage their money, apply for benefits, keep their home secure, access other services.

Independent Living
A social movement asserting that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights and life choices as people without disabilities.

Move On Support
Housing related support to help people settle into a more independent environment when they are leaving an accommodation-based support or care service.

Move On Accommodation
Low level supported housing to help people manage the transition between high level supported accommodation or care services and independent, main stream accommodation in the community.

Registered Care Home
An establishment providing accommodation with personal or nursing care.

Service User
Someone who is accessing support services.

Supported Accommodation/Housing
The broad term used to describe housing where people receive support to live in their own homes.

This support is comprised of services provided to vulnerable people, which are designed to develop the skills and confidence necessary to live independently without support or to maintain independent living with ongoing support.

Supported Employment
A term used to describe a system of support for people with disabilities to access mainstream employment.

Supported employment provides assistance such as job coaches, job development, job retention, transportation, assistive technology, specialized job training, and individually tailored supervision. Supported Employment often refers to both the development of employment opportunities and on-going support for those individuals to maintain employment.

Supporting People (SP)
Government grant administered by local authorities. The grant is provided for support services for vulnerable people to improve their quality of life and to enable them to live independently.

Temporary Housing
Accommodation provided by local authority housing departments for people who have made an application for housing under homeless legislation, this includes B&B and hostels.

Vulnerable People
A person or group is vulnerable when support is required to enable or promote independent living and safe and active participation in the community.