

**Hope 4 Media Release: Monday April 6<sup>th</sup> 2015****Review of the Rugby Winter Shelter 2014-15**

Team Leaders from the churches participating in the 2014-5 Rugby Winter Shelter met, as the project drew to a close, to review this year's shelter with the Hope 4's Chairperson Revd Dr Michael Bochenski and Support Workers, Pete Wayman and Sarah Malone. The general consensus was that, given inevitable tensions and some difficult personalities at times, the project had again gone well and had again met a very real need in the town. The Hope 4 Support Workers agreed, reporting that, in practice, they had been called out rarely over the course of the project. Pete Wayman spoke of it having been "a joy this winter" and "a great ministry" and Sarah Malone found herself "amazed by it", describing the scheme as "great for Rugby".

Michael Bochenski, who has co-ordinated the town's Rugby Winter Shelter for the past four years, commented: "This has been another remarkable year of interchurch and community partnership. Because of it we have been able – again - to respond compassionately to the needs of some of our Borough's most vulnerable people. What price can be put on a hot meal, a warm bed and hall, and a good breakfast in a winter as cold as this one has been at times? Compassion and hospitality such as this is priceless."

The overall statistics for this year's Rugby Winter Shelter, collated by the Hope 4 Support Workers, are as follows: The Rugby Winter Shelter 2014-5 served **68** registered guests during the project period. The seven local church venues were able to provide **1033** bednights for these guests. **41** of the guests were British-born, **23** came from EEA countries and **4** guests from Portugal Ghana and Jamaica were also welcomed. **7** of this year's guests were female. The oldest guest welcomed was **64**, and the youngest **18**. The average age of the guests was **32**. From 1st December – 31<sup>st</sup> March there were **35** nights when temperatures fell to 0c or below. To date **16** of these guests have been helped towards more permanent housing with the help of the RBC housing team, and other housing agencies.

As Pete Wayman, Senior Support Worker at Hope 4 observed: "The Hope Centre is often a first port of call for people who are needing winter shelter in the town. Most guests are first referred to us by staff at the Council or the Citizens Advice Bureau and we then seek to offer them help which is free at the point of need. Without the donations of volunteer time, food and money from hundreds of people across our town we just would not be able to do this."

Towards the end of the review meeting each Team Leader was asked in turn whether they felt able to commit in principle to being a host venue for the 2015-6 Rugby Winter Shelter. With one exception all present agreed in principle to continue to serve as a venue again next winter, subject to ratification later in the year. **ENDS**

**Further information:**

**The participating churches in the Rugby Winter Shelter 2014-5 were:**

St John the Baptist, Hillmorton, St Maries, St George's, Hillmorton, Rugby Baptist Church, The Rugby Christian Fellowship, Rugby URC, the Salvation Army and the Rugby Methodist Church Centre.

**Hope 4 (Rugby) Ltd.** is a Registered Charity (no. 1126487). It is also a Private Company, limited by guarantee, (Companies House no. 06614898). Hope 4 was established in 2004 and is a charity for relieving poverty - especially among people who are homeless and badly-housed - in the Borough of Rugby. Hope 4 (Rugby) Ltd has a number of strategies for this:

- Operating a day centre for homeless and badly-housed people in Rugby - **The Hope Centre**, (8 Newbold Road) which is open at the following times: Mondays to Fridays: 11am to 2pm / Saturday: 9am to 11am / Sunday: 1pm to 4pm. In 2014 the then Hope Centre welcomed some 120 referred guests on 5237 occasions and served some 5514 hot meals.
- Running **Hope4U**: these are sessions providing hot food & drink in the town centre to anyone in need in the Hope Centre at the following times: Mondays Wednesdays & Fridays 6pm to 7pm. On average around 25 guests a night attend this open cafe style food ministry.
- Overseeing the inter-church **Rugby Winter Shelter** - which is open every night in a local church hall between December and March. This year's project saw more individual guests use the shelter than in any of the previous three years. 68 different guests used the shelter - which is based in seven church halls across the town each hosting the shelter for one night a week – this winter.
- Working with local churches and the national Trussell Trust to deliver the **Rugby Food Bank** (RFB) which has now helped over 7000 local people since its launch in March 2012.
- Networking with, and supporting, local agencies and charities who help homeless and badly housed people or those who are in danger of becoming so.

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