 Colchester Korban Project

Working with young people in crisis

Reg. Office: Bethany Place

St Anne’s Vicarage

Compton Road

Colchester

CO4 0BQ

**Manager’s report: 1st September 2017 – AGM 2018**

**Bethany Place**

* House has been full from 1st September – 18th December 2017, 29th January – 20th February 2018, and from 12th March onwards. When the 2 residents moved to Bethel House on 18th and 19th December ‘17, there was a gap over the Christmas/New Year period while existing residents moved rooms and no new residents moved in due to low staffing due to the season: 1 rooms empty for 3 weeks; 1 empty for nearly 6 weeks due to complications with eligibility for benefits for next person on waiting list.

There was also a gap when another of the residents moved to private rented on 20th February ’18, as 2 on the waiting list decided not to come (1 got alternative accommodation and 1 stayed put). A new resident moved in on 12th March, delayed by a week due to personal circumstances.

* In December a resident’s partner was made homeless unexpectedly so we agreed he could stay in her room on a short-term licence as she was planning to move out in the new year. This meant we had 6 residents in the house for about 2 weeks.
* Currently 1 young person is in part-time work,

3 in college,

1 looking for work.

* 2 of the residents are up to date with rent/service charges, 1 is nearly up to date (1 large payment due this Friday) and 2 are awaiting housing benefit claims to come through.

1 resident left with arrears and as yet has not paid any off.

* Our current longest serving resident will be ‘nominated’ for social housing meaning they get priority bidding for accommodation available through the council.
* 1 new referral received through JRP but no form yet and referrer has been unable to make contact with young person.
* 3 new residents (since January): 1 will go to Bethel House due to not needing much support and being semi-independent already; 1 has been needing a lot of support around different benefits; 1 has just arrived is settling in well and keen to do some gardening.
* Overall there is a good atmosphere and residents seem to be getting along.

**Bethel House**

In December 2017 Korban completed the purchase of our new move on property in Whaley Road. We immediately worked on furnishing and preparing the property  for the new residents. Sadly, after seeking further clarification from the council they decided that bedroom three is not big enough for us to charge rent on, let alone pay housing benefits for a resident in that room.

(We already knew about housing benefit but were unaware that this applied to private rent).

We moved two residents from Bethany Place into Bethel House. One resident has fully embraced their new found independence and has been blossoming with the extra freedom and responsibilities. Unfortunately although the other resident engaged with support initially and attended a gym session, overall he spent less and less time in the house and engaged with staff on a less frequent basis.  This resident has since moved on from the project and has moved in with his long-term partner.  This presented us with the opportunity to move the wall, and therefore gives the opportunity for two new residents soon.  Work starts on moving the wall on 26th March and will take approximately two weeks.

We are planning on moving a resident from Bethany Place into one of the rooms and a resident new to Korban into the other room. This will be a time of transition for our residents as they get to know each other and experience a different housing and social dynamic. Your prayers for this period will be appreciated.

**Tesco food scheme** continues to go well – we’ve had 1 week without any food available, 1 week with nobody available to collect, and we were advised not to collect during the snow. There was a mix up on the rota while I was on leave for a week in Feb but the food still got collected.

**Staff**

Daniel has settled in well at Korban and is making a significant contribution. He is proactive and has lots of energy and the young people respond well to him.

Jo is now working 4 hours on a Tuesday morning which is a real help. She has been averaging about once a fortnight due to issues with child care and other commitments.

Susy has decided that her time with Korban has come to an end after nearly 5 years. This is mainly due to wanting to free up some time as she has a new grandchild on the way. We will miss her but she has offered to come back and do the communal meal if we are ever short–staffed.

**Funding**

* In this period since the financial year end, we have received the following significant donations:
* £228.40 raised from the Barn dance
* £146.45 Colchester High School. Korban was one of their Christmas charities and they also collected presents for the residents.
* £400 St Margaret’s Church, form their annual giving
* £264 St Albright’s carol service collection
* £210 Waitrose Community matters
* £55.08 from Winsley’s Charity (Almshouses). The Bishop recommended Korban to be the recipient for a collection at an event at which he spoke.
* £400 Kingsland, from the mission budget.
* £tbc St John’s Choir subscription!
* Final bike grant monitoring form completed in October for Get Active.
* Leeds Building Society didn’t make contact for the report on the carpet, despite a follow-up call.
* We have also received some very generous donations of furniture and supplies from a variety of people.

**Finances**

* Tony and I reviewed the accounts produced by Community 360 and I queried a number of points and had several conversations to ensure the accounts were correct.
* Julie is now working on the finances including reconciling the bank statements, but due to demands of her new job Jo has been doing some work on this in her general admin hours at Bethany Place.
* I am now a fully authorised signatory on the bank account and am finally able to set up payments and have a working debit card. Due to delays we experienced in this regard we were awarded £75 compensation by the Coop.
* The set up of Bethel House was significantly under budget and even with the alterations to the wall for the third bedroom it will still be within budget. Long term the staffing costs are less

**House Maintenance**

* Chelmsford Diocese came to do an inspection earlier this month after realising the house had not been inspected for many years! Various items have been raised and an asbestos inspection is taking place on Monday 26th March.
* I replaced the shower sealant when it got mouldy and started leaking.
* Downstairs toilet sink started leaking again and has just been fixed.
* One of our new residents is interested in gardening so hopefully this will help to keep the garden under control and make it look nice!

**Links and events**

* Our barn dance was really successful, thanks to Sue for all the work she put in.
* The Bishop, the leader of the council, several councillors and the deputy mayor and his wife attended our New Year’s party in January. Lyn Rabett, the Tesco Community Champion helped Susy to produce a fantastic buffet.
* Mark spoke at St Anne’s Church men’s breakfast on Sat 14th October.
* The Christmas meal for residents was a highlight of my year. Sharing a reflection about the message of Christmas, God’s love and inclusiveness, with amazing food, presents and a brilliant family atmosphere. All 6 residents attended and one brought a guest.
* I met with our ward councillors recently including the leader of the council and they are very keen to support our work.
* Stella and Mark continue to pray once a fortnight on Thursday lunch time, and Daniel has recently been joining us.

**Notes from the manager**

Since Christmas it has been a challenge to clear the backlog of work after focusing on the move on house for such a long time. However, I am enjoying the work and excited to see how the move-on house develops. I am focusing more on Bethany Place and I am determined to increase the amount of housing benefit Korban is able to claim per resident, which should make the project even more sustainable in the long run.