



Winter Provision And Beyond April 2022

*Today's Monday, today's
Monday*

*Monday is Grace Chapel is
everybody happy?*

Yes, thank God we are!

If you are of a certain age, you may remember the song on which those words are based on; it went through the week listing the jobs, food or significant events

that marked each day: Monday was washing day, Friday was fish and chips, Saturday was pay day and Sunday was Church! At the end of each verse, it asked: is everybody happy? And the answer came back, "You bet your life we are". As we mark the end of Winter Provision for 2021/2022, we cannot guarantee that everyone is happy, but we certainly are full of thanks.

This newsletter will try to give you a flavour of the different "days" of each week in the provision programme. It will give you different perspectives on what has happened and will celebrate the work of everyone involved. We hope you will find it informative and stimulating – perhaps prompting you to ask how you could be involved next winter – or maybe even before...

Ian Macleod (volunteer, trustee, and committee member) says "Thank you".

Thank you to: the cooks; those who delivered in the meals; the washer-uppers; those who served our guests; all of you who made our guests welcome and spent time with them; the session leaders; those who cleaned and kept us safe; and everyone who prayed for the project.

Thank you to the leadership of Grace Chapel and Holy Trinity who opened their doors. Thank you to those organisations who donated food and useful items: Greggs, Tesco Extra, local shops, Gussies Kitchen, Fairshare and St Anne's Baslow.

Between December 1st and March 31st, 104 volunteers have taken part in 132 sessions, led by Church on the Bus (CotB), of the daily meals service within the Winter Provision (WP) programme. The annual "Lunch on Jesus" event meant that we had Christmas Day off. We also cancelled the last six Thursday lunchtime sessions, where guests could meet with agencies, when it became clear that they were no longer needed.

Our total expenditure was £5,852. The food provision project was underwritten by Church on the Bus, which represents the donations from churches, individuals and organisations who support the ongoing work.

Church on the Bus AGM

**Tuesday July 5th at 7pm
St Thomas Church, Brampton**

Refreshments will be available for those attending.

There will be an opportunity to attend online.

Email churchonthebus@gmail.com for more details.

Special thanks go to the following congregations: Baslow Methodist; Hasland Baptist; Pilsley Community Church; St Anne's Baslow; St Giles' Killamarsh; St Matthews' Renishaw; St Giles' Matlock; St Lawrence North Wingfield; St Peter's Calow, St Mary's Sutton Scarsdale; St Thomas' Brampton.

The details of guest numbers attending are:

Session	Total Guest meals	Individuals who attended	Total sessions
Monday *	283	77	17
Tuesday	173	67	17
Wednesday	124	50	18
Thursday Lunch	41	18	12
Thursday *	280	76	18
Friday	121	46	17
Saturday	105	36	16
Sunday **	107	30	17
Totals	1,234	123	132

* Joint events for WP guests and those who would normally attend CotB events.

** Joint events for WP guests and those who would normally attend the lunch at Grace Chapel.

During the programme we received donations of £4,298 from individuals and organisations to specifically support the Winter Provision programme. We had individual donations and gifts from the following groups: Bainbridge Hall Elderly Self-help Group; Chesterfield Christadelphians; Chesterfield Satellite Rotary Club; Holy Trinity Church; Lifehouse Church; St Mark's Brampton.

Can we apologise for not thanking individually those who have given using **Just Giving**. It is not that we are not grateful, but we utilise the free membership on this service and therefore do not receive any reports. If you use **Just Giving** could you please tell us that you have done so by emailing churchonthebus@gmail.com so we can then express our gratitude.

Will there be a Winter Provision programme next winter? Yes, God willing.

What form will it take? We don't know but we are working with partners and waiting to see how the year develops and any new Government guidance that emerges.

Sunday lunch at Grace Chapel

Grace Chapel hosted Winter Provision events on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. This view of the provision at the start of each week was written by Keith, a volunteer:



Grace Chapel is in Chesterfield town centre. Each Sunday afternoon I went to help at the Chesterfield Winter Provision Project. These Sunday sessions were slightly different to the rest of the weekly schedule provided by the Project as they were open to regular Winter Provision guests and other visitors as well.

I believe that, as followers of Jesus, we are called to be involved in the life of the world; not to be conformed to it, but to transform it. After all, Christ came among us as a servant of all, his example shows love and compassion for the poor and those who find themselves on the margins of society.

The Winter Provision Project was a great example of outreach with this in mind – to make people's lives better now, and to provide hope for the future. There was a core of seven or eight volunteers who covered the Sunday session, on either a weekly or fortnightly basis. There was always plenty to do to prepare to welcome the guests, be it helping to prepare and cook the warm meals offered, cleaning and preparing the room where the guests eat and drink, directing guests when they attend to ensure they get their dinner tickets and cutlery, serving warm drinks, and being there for a chat, a friendly, familiar face. All the guests were offered support from one of the regular team or by visitors from some of the support agencies operating in the Chesterfield area.

The team of volunteers were all passionate about doing a good job for the guests; their approach was always non-judgemental, showing great respect and care. Over the last few weeks, the team was looking for ways to improve and enhance both the running of the soup kitchen and the culinary offerings provided to guests, thus increasing the sense of service to those who need it the most.

Since December, there were the regulars (between three and fifteen guests) who turned up most Sundays, and with whom relationships grew. Others came and went, as is the nature of this community. We have been pleased to learn that many of the guests were able to secure accommodation, whether locally or in the surrounding areas, and continue to access the vital support services that were made available to them. I am grateful to those who provided financial support to the Winter Provision Project, to the good people at Grace Chapel who facilitated the soup kitchen. and to those who offered their time and presence to the successful running of the Sunday sessions, which always seemed to be appreciated by those we served.

Finally, and most importantly, let's hope that the Project continues to be a light in the darkness to those in our community who find themselves out on the margins of society as we keep them in our thoughts, going forward into the summer months and beyond.

Thursday evenings were obviously warm and welcoming in many ways. Here is what the team remember:

So, we have come to the end of this year's Winter Provision. Thanks to Laura, Donna, Neil, Eileen, Ellen, Kylie, and Cara for joining our Thursday evening team; it's been great to have you on board. Elaine and Alison, and Chris and Cathy appeared regularly, bringing delicious meals for our guests: pasta Bolognese, cottage pie, and chilli con carne, amongst other culinary delights. These were much appreciated by all. Together with the regular donations from Greggs, our guests have been well catered for in the food department.

Thanks also to Pam, David and Pete who regularly collected the Greggs donations, and to Sam who has faithfully served drinks most weeks and has made a great impact on our guests.

An added blessing was to have Wojtek and Faith with us each Thursday; we loved Wojtek's prayers at the end of some of our sessions. Several of our guests were open to listen to testimonies of what Jesus has done in our lives and believe for what he could do in their lives; it has been good to pray for and with them.

Volunteers Still Needed

**Did you enjoy the Winter Provision work?
Would you like to continue volunteering?**

**Church on the Bus (Monday & Thursday in
Chesterfield, Tuesday afternoon in Matlock) and
Grace Chapel (Sunday lunch) still need your help.**

Email churchonthebus@gmail.com

Holy Trinity – Thursday lunchtimes and Saturday evenings

This view of the provision at Holy Trinity was written by Roger Green, Churchwarden for Holy Trinity Church, and Winter Provision Volunteer

Holy Trinity has been privileged to host the Saturday evening meals for our homeless and vulnerable guests throughout this winter. We also hosted the Thursday lunchtime sessions, providing a base for agencies offering help and advice to guests, who could also enjoy a lighter meal.

Three members of our church, augmented by volunteers from other churches, supported this practical expression of Jesus' love, welcoming people sometimes viewed as outcasts. Our congregation also contributed food, clothing, and money towards the on-going work of Church on the Bus.

Every Saturday night guests were welcomed into the coffee lounge at Holy Trinity, with hot food and warm greetings, in warm surroundings. We asked about their day, how they were coping with the, sometimes, bitterly cold, and wet weather, and, if it was what they wanted, how their efforts to find longer term accommodation were moving forward.

Some nights were very quiet, with only one or two guests; others were much busier, with maybe a dozen. The busier nights were often marked by lively banter, some of which we understood and some, it was perhaps best, that we didn't!

Over the weeks relationships were built up so that, during our day-to-day activities, there would be conversations in the street with familiar faces from Saturday nights.



We were under no illusions, however, about the difficulties facing the men and women we welcomed off the streets. Many were facing challenges because of addictions; some wanted to break free of these while others intended to continue them, as a lifestyle choice. We knew that these addictions could cause many problems: the potential involvement in criminal activity to sustain the habits; the illnesses and accidents resulting from the addictions; and the insecurity for some of continuing to live on the streets, despite the efforts of the Borough Council and other agencies to house most homeless people in the town this winter. We were also saddened to hear of their

estrangement from families, arising from lives that were often precarious and chaotic. All these issues gave us not only much cause for thought but, more importantly, for prayer and intercession.

Yet despite all the difficulties there was a camaraderie among our guests which was striking; they showed a caring attitude for each other, which is sometimes absent in other walks of life. There was camaraderie too among the highly efficient kitchen team, who prepared delicious food, and the friendly front of house crew, who made everyone welcome. Working together in this group, made up of Christians and volunteers with no church connections, was both enjoyable and rewarding.

We're grateful to Church on the Bus for giving us the opportunity to serve God in this way, and especially to Ian for his support and encouragement throughout these four months. If (*I think you mean when...Editor*) the call comes again, in the autumn, I'm sure we'll be ready to help once more.



Reflections from the Friday Team

Hubby is a Quaker, there's nothing wrong in that,
He felt the need within himself to give God something back,
He met a man, called Ian, who gave a general chat,
A handbook came home with him, inside his green rucksack.
That handbook drew my attention; I read it from cover to back,
I wanted to be in as well, you see, and that, as they say, was that!

I could not allow my hubby to go it all alone,
Driving in the winter months through freezing ice and snow.
I rang this man called Ian; I said "I'd like to come,
Shall I bring an apron? It couldn't do no harm."
That apron sealed our fate, how little did we know,
As we donned our aprons with pride that night,
Put in charge of the ovens at one blow!

It became obvious and clear to me "mug" was etched upon our face.
We accepted the challenge cautiously and tried to deliver with some grace.
It wasn't easy, it was hard at times, battling excruciating pain,
I carried on despite this; it was about what the guests had to gain.

We took a dive about halfway through, felt a low ebb, felt a bit blue,
The Yorkshire puddings had burnt, and the sausage had dried out too.
We could not give up, we could not bail out we had integrity you see,
Because by this time the guests and crew had entered our hearts most importantly.
But when Emma and Gary joined us two, with smiles across their face,
We knew we could continue to serve in the chapel named as "Grace".
There was a connection, a bond, right from the start,
To provide guests with food straight from the heart.

My passion's not just for mothers and babes, for the young whose needs are keen,
Having worked on this project I feel every day the plight of the homeless in each gene.
We know the horror of drug abuse, it came knocking at our door,
Unconditional love we gave, that and so much more,
We've done that, got the T shirt, more than you would know.
But to save that one life it's worth it, you just have to have a go.

It's unlikely we will do this again, our lives on a cusp of change,
We've done our bit with love and kindness, had a blast along the way.
We will never forget the guests and crew of Winter Provision 21-22,
It's with a heavy heart we say "goodbye" and part,
Thank you, Winter Provision, Church on the Bus from the bottom of our heart!



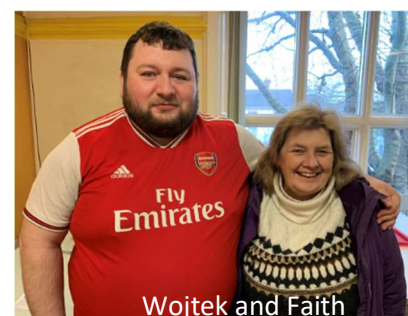
Church on the Bus did not do this alone. It has been all about partnership. Here are two perspectives from our partners. First of all, from Mark North, CEO of the Freedom Project.

The Freedom Project and the Winter Provision

Freedom have been privileged to have been working with the local councils and organisations on the Derbyshire Winter Provision. Our support workers, Wojtek and Faith, have been out and about around the Chesterfield area(and Rebecca and Michelle around the Derby area) offering support to the homeless. You can read more about our work at <https://freedom.charity>

Through Freedom's role in the Winter Provision programme, we supported 61 people of whom 22 were still active at the end of March. The summary to date is shown in the table:

Reason	39 cases closed	22 cases still active
Placement failed	3	6
Did not arrive at allocated B&B	2	
Supporting (never allocated B&B)		2
In B&B		14
Housed	28	
Moved back to family	1	
Opted to leave Winter Provision	5	



To give you an idea of our work, here is Wojtek's account of working with a guest called 'Martin' – not his real name.

Martin was referred to the Winter Provision through Chesterfield Borough Council. Our first contact was not very encouraging as Martin had a cold and was withdrawing from heroin; he was very demanding, aggressive, and often used offensive language. Immediately I decided that I would not take offence at his behaviour, and I became determined to do my best to encourage Martin.

Assessment and Change of Behaviour

Martin was staying in a B&B; Faith, my working partner, and I supported Martin with food parcels from Freedom's food bank and delivered his medication to his door. Because we managed to meet his immediate needs, Martin warmed towards us and this helped with further communication as well as his willingness to work with the Winter Provision Team. We managed to befriend him, and as we got to know him, I realised that using swear words was Martin's default language style, so I could not expect him to eradicate it overnight. As Martin's health improved, he decided to go forward with our initial assessment. We met in Pathway's charity office and immediately I could see the difference in his behaviour. During the assessment, I learned that Martin had a range of drug addictions and mental health issues.

Losing Accommodation

As happens very often with people using drugs, Martin got involved in breaching rules with others staying in the B&B; this resulted in him losing his accommodation. Over the next four weeks Martin was sofa-surfing or sleeping rough. In this period, I advocated for him to *P3 Out of Hours Service* and managed to secure him a couple of nights in one of the hotels. Church on the Bus also helped Martin to spend some nights in the hotel. Unfortunately, this was not always available and sometimes Martin had to sleep rough. At times I lost touch with Martin, for a few days at a time, as his mental state was declining. He mentioned that suicidal thoughts had come back.

Dramatic Turn of Events

News came from Pathways that Martin had secured a house through the council. I was so happy when I heard this news since I was becoming really worried about Martin's situation. A couple of days later, Martin turned up to a food provision session in the local church; he was happy and in a completely different mindset. He told me all about his new flat and some of the furniture he managed to get from one of the charities. During our conversation I encouraged him to look after this property; his answer was that he was not going to let anyone with a bad influence into his house; he said that he would keep his address private and was really determined to look after his new accommodation. Our support for Martin ended here, however I phoned him a couple of times to check on him.

Wojtek's thoughts

When I first met Martin, he seemed like hard work and one could be very easily discouraged when working with him. However, in my opinion this sort of job is not a career but a calling, and we can't judge people. We only receive God's free gift of mercy because Jesus Christ was willing to work with difficult people!

Working with Martin, I learned that he is a very funny, gentle, and kind man. He had needs that required meeting, and he had lack of self-belief that needed to be overcome. One of Freedom's aims is to empower. I thought it only fair I tried to speak words that built Martin up. I tried to encourage him and engage with him. I told him that I believed in his success.

I can see that there is a long journey ahead of Martin, but I deeply believe that he has learned his lesson based on previous failures with accommodation and he will look after this one. I also deeply believe that he will succeed in breaking his addictions and overcoming his mental health issues. but Faith and I, Shaun from Pathways, and other volunteers from Church on the Bus, prayed for Martin on many occasions..

Jesus Christ said in the Gospel of John Chapter 14:13-14: *"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."*

It was an honour and pleasure to work with Martin. It was awesome to work for Freedom learning new skills and gaining experience in homelessness sector from a completely new angle. So, if you are reading this, I urge you to pray for Martin, for his future journey to success, and for him to experience life in abundance through Jesus Christ.

And finally, the view of Phil Morton, Safe Space Manager and Head of Crisis Support for Derby City Mission. Derby City Mission coordinated the provision across the whole of the City and County.



The last few winters have been very different for us all, and that has included our homeless community. Before the Covid pandemic, Church on the Bus was involved with Chesterfield Churches Night shelter, led by Derby City Mission. In March 2020 Covid altered this as the shelters had to close a week early for the safety of guests and volunteers.

In the winter of 2020/21 Church on the Bus supported a county wide initiative in partnership with Derby City Mission, YMCA, and the local authorities of Derbyshire; also involved were Pathways, P3 and various other agencies. This was a four-month project, held at Mount Cook Wirksworth an activity centre, where we were able to accommodate up to 35 people each night. Over the course of that winter, we saw many people who otherwise would have slept rough in Derbyshire; it enabled them to be off the streets, fed, cared for, and looked after until a more permanent solution could be found.

Because places offering accommodation had returned to their normal business, a different solution had to be found for the winter of 2021/22. Across Derbyshire the local authorities decided to place people in B&B and hotel accommodation. Derby City Mission was asked to help coordinate support for those individuals placed across Derbyshire. We approached Freedom and Church on the Bus, a charity already active in Chesterfield and the surrounding area, to provide meals, community and support to the rough sleepers who were being accommodated by the local authorities in the Chesterfield area.

I just want to say thank you so much for all the prayer, finance, care, and support that has been given by Church on the Bus and its volunteers; especially I want to thank to Ian Macleod, who has coordinated all the food and volunteers over the four months. Each of you need to know you have made a difference in the lives of the people you have fed, sat and chatted to, and given up your time to be around. Thank You.

'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.' Matthew 25:37-40

Ways You Can Help Church on the Bus

Please Pray For:

Homeless and Disadvantaged People in Derbyshire and Derby - they face economic difficulties, with many multiple and complex needs

Local Councils – for wisdom in the use of finances and other resources. That they may value all the people in their area.

The Trustees - that God may grant them true vision, wisdom, and compassion as they lead CotB.

Volunteers – for strength and safety as they, and for others to join our teams.

Partner Organisations – that we may see how we can best work together to serve the needs of the homeless and disadvantaged.

Consider Giving Financially

Regular or one-off donations – can be made to our Co-Op Bank Account: The Church on the Bus. Sort Code 08 92 99 – Account 65923339

Just Giving Page - <https://www.justgiving.com/church-onthebus> - please email us and let us know if you use this method.

Amazon Smiles – if you use Amazon please login to your account through smile.amazon.com this allows you to purchase your goods in the same way and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to your nominated charity, which could be CotB.

Give As You Live – this website gives you access to many major retailers and high street stores. When you shop through this site a nominated charity receives a donation from the retailer – you can nominate CotB <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/>