

Practical help for the homeless

The need for night shelter for the homeless is increasing. Will you do something to help?

The HGS Free Church has been approached by the charity Together in Barnet who run a night shelter project across the Borough every night of the week at different venues. The project runs in the winter months from October to April, and each

venue hosts one night a week for ten consecutive weeks.

Together in Barnet works with Homeless Action in Barnet (HAB). Clients from HAB are vetted and referred to the night shelters; only those registered with HAB are accepted in the shelters. People who have problems with alcohol or drugs or who have complex needs are not referred.

Prior to the host night a list of the guests expected is sent out by HAB to the venue, and they sign in on arrival. No alcohol or drugs are allowed in the venues and HAB do carry out spot checks.

On average 17 guests, mainly men and a few women, are accepted each evening. The guests eat a meal and sleep in the building and have breakfast before leaving; the Free Church would use the Hall in Northway.

During the day volunteers from the previous night shelter deliver the mattress 'rolls' to the Hall. This roll is a thin mattress, sleeping bag and pillow all in a bag with the client's name on it. The following day our volunteers take these rolls by car to the next night shelter venue.

Each evening we would need a team of five or six volunteers who would run a shift system.

The first group of volunteers start at 6pm to set up, laying the table for supper and setting out drinks. Guests arrive at 7pm. They are provided with an Oyster card by Together in Barnet. Supper is served at 8pm.

Volunteer cooks prepare the evening meal in their own homes for delivery to the Hall.



Menus consist of a hearty main course (with a vegetarian option) and a hot pudding. Volunteers eat with the guests.

At 9.30pm the night shift arrives, one male and one female

volunteer who sleep the night with the guests. The doors shut at 10pm and lights out is 11pm.

At 7am breakfast is served and guests leave at 8.30am. Breakfast is cereals, fruit and toast with a hot drink. There are facilities and services at HAB and clients can go there to shower and have a hot breakfast.

Whilst many may not be able physically to help with the shelter, support may be offered by making a donation towards costs of food. The Church will hold a dedicated night shelter fund.

Together in Barnet are coming to talk to a group at HGS Free Church and anyone is welcome to join us and perhaps to consider supporting us. We will form a committee to organise our night, and training (two hours) for volunteers will be held at HAB in Woodside Avenue N12. Together in Barnet will check our H&S policy, fire procedures and carry out a risk assessment.

Next winter the plan is to have three, 10-week cycles: October 8 to December 16, December 17 to February 24, and February 25

to May 5. We would be in the second cycle starting December 18 as HGS Free Church has agreed to host Tuesdays.

If you would like to become involved please e-mail either itutton@aol.com or jo_morris@btinternet.com or ptrafford07@gmail.com.

JO MORRIS

STOP PRESS:

The initial meeting about this Homeless Project will take place in the Free Church at 8pm on Tuesday, June 5. Anyone interested in helping or supporting us either come along to the meeting or get in touch using the e-mail details above.



Pets Corner: Holly Golightly – a tabby cat

Following in the 'paw steps' of 'Tudor' the marmalade cat who appeared in a previous issue of Suburb News in our Pets Corner feature, we are delighted to introduce Holly Golightly.

Holly Golightly, who is known mostly as Holly, with nicknames Sweet Pea (when she's being adorable, which is most of the time), and Smudgy (when she's being a little naughty!) came to live with her owner, Debra Young, who has lived in Hampstead Garden Suburb for 20 years. Debra was asked to adopt Holly by a family friend of her original owner in November 2010. At the time Holly was 10 months old, very timid and a little traumatised. Debra adopted her because sadly, her original owner died. Originally called Molly, Debra renamed her after the iconic character that Audrey Hepburn played in 'Breakfast at Tiffany's'.

Holly's routine: she wakes early – usually around dawn, and in fine weather goes outside to check out the garden. When the weather is cold or rainy, she shimmies behind the blind in the bedroom and looks out over the garden.

Holly used to wake Debra by

sitting on her or tapping her face with her paw until she woke her up, but has learned to be patient until the alarm goes off. Holly waits with Debra until they are ready to go downstairs just to ensure Debra does not forget to give her some breakfast.

After breakfast, if the weather is good, Holly will stay outside for hours, if not a quick visit outside, then a lot of napping in the sunniest spot, interspersed with requests for attention and some play. As Debra works from home and is usually in her office, she finds keeping Holly keeps her company, while Holly sits on office papers and types badly as she walks across the keyboard.

Originally only a downstairs cat with a limited realm, she was allowed the run of the house some time ago. She rules over every room now.

Everything about Holly is special; she's sweet and feisty and owns Debra, her home and everything in it!

What are Holly's particular quirks and habits? Well, she has lots of toys to play with, but her favourite game is played at the top of the stairs with a ball of string – the simple things in life!

Given half a chance, she will be found in the airing cupboard snuggling in the freshly washed and ironed linen. When this princess has had her fill of being tickled under her chin, a favourite occupation, she will use a paw to push away Debra's hand!

Holly's pet hates and dislikes: She hates fish! She's not keen on dogs either!

What does Holly like about living in the Suburb? She loves being outside in the summer. Her favourite places are sitting on top of the garden shed, snoozing in the sun on the garden bench, and visiting the neighbours' gardens.

A special thank you to Debra Young for relating this story to her neighbour Daphne Berkovi.



Welcome to St Jude's

Sundays:
8am Said Eucharist
10.30am Sung Eucharist

All Welcome

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