



Relieving poverty, hardship and distress

Tel: 01242 577418

www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk

Email: info@cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk

Reg Charity Number: 1063434

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2020

Rising to the Covid-19 challenge

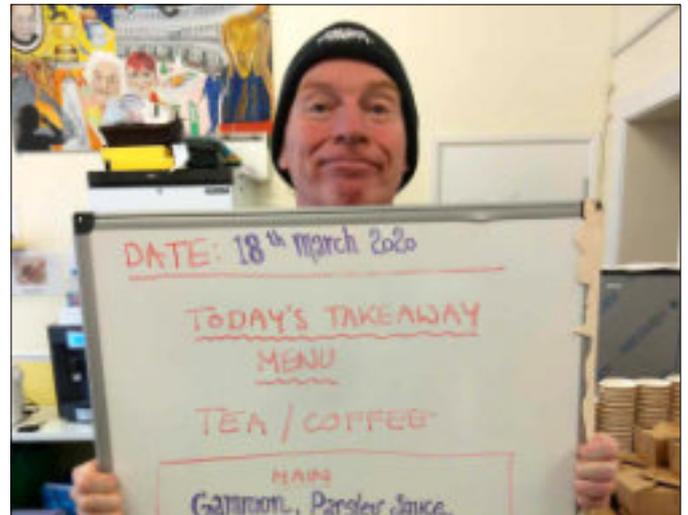
We're in this together – and we're still helping those who need us most

We've always enjoyed welcoming guests to our Grosvenor St base, but the coronavirus has forced us to adapt and keep adapting.

In early March, we reorganised our premises to offer takeaway meals and when more stringent measures prevented our guests from gathering, we changed to delivering food parcels. With an aim to always support those in 'poverty, hardship or distress', we're achieving this in new ways.

Many of our regular guests have struggled to access food and support during the pandemic. They may be physically unable to go out, have had mental health issues exacerbated by the crisis or be struggling with complex or drawn-out benefits processes. Some need a chat, by phone or at a distance. We have also helped many people who are new to us, people who may have difficulty accessing shopping or have new financial worries or housing issues due to the pandemic.

Open Door is a big family, and our guests, new and regular, appreciate knowing we're here, we care and that we can help. When the government implemented a strategy to house those experiencing homelessness, we started delivering food to all 50 in their new, temporary accommodation. These guests have only kettles and fridges, which forced us to think creatively.



In the eight weeks from the end of March, we delivered 2,250 instant noodles and soups, 752 loaves of bread, jars of jam and peanut butter, 14,400 butter portions and 1,128 pieces of fresh fruit, plus much more. We also send toiletries, books and treats.

LOOKING FORWARDS

As measures begin to ease, we hope to move to a blended service, serving hot, takeaway meals from our base (with social distancing and extra hygiene practices in place) and supporting regular and new faces who remain isolated through deliveries in the community.

We've always cared deeply about 'our people' and now we show this in different ways. We miss our guests so much and we look forward to a time when we can serve them hot meals here again, sing along together in the music round of our quiz, give hugs, listen and offer advice, and signpost to life-changing support.

We'd like to say thank you to everyone who has helped us make this possible.



We regularly update our website with details of the kinds of help we need. If you'd like to help, visit: www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk/donate

IN THE HOT SEAT

Julie Kent, Cheltenham Open Door's new Chair, explains how she came on board and why she's so proud of the organisation at this challenging time



My first involvement with Cheltenham Open Door was about three years ago, when a pupil of mine at Dean Close School, asked if we could raise money for Open Door as part of our Charity Action Group.

We started by collecting food at our Harvest Festival and I brought the teenagers with me when we delivered the

donations. We visited during lunch and could feel the warmth of Rosie, Sara and Den from Open Door's frontline team, as well as the friendliness of the guests. I soon got to know them all and we continued to spring into action whenever Sara rang up with a request!

Eventually, Sara suggested I might consider becoming the Chair and last November I proudly took on the role. It is a fantastic organisation that has been a lifesaver for many for nearly 30 years. Everyone is made to feel welcome at Number 39, Grosvenor Street. There is no judgement – only support and friendship. It feels like a family and everything is done with the minimum amount of fuss.

“This fantastic organisation has been a lifesaver for nearly 30 years”

I am very proud of the fantastic achievements of the team during the pandemic; they have put themselves on the frontline for others. Open Door's role could become even more essential as we look forward and the number of guests possibly increases. As the year progresses we will continue to provide food, the use of our facilities and, most importantly, a listening ear.

Finally, thank you to all who support us: those who drop in to deliver food or clothes, those who donate money personally and to the businesses of all sizes who choose to support us at a corporate level. We really do appreciate every single gesture, large and small.

**Julie Kent, Chair,
Cheltenham Open Door**

LOCKDOWN LETTERS FROM OUR GUESTS

I hope and wish to see you and hug you wonderful people again, and I will. You are all strong people and you are what keeps us going. See you soon...

Thanks for my 'Christmas hamper' (it'll last that long)!

Ta 4 being super, smashing, great...!

Thank you very much for the food parcel, the support and all the nice little packages.

I really felt like someone was there for me at the end of the phone and that was absolutely priceless...



A BIG THANK YOU...

Open Door relies entirely on the donations made by you, our caring and generous supporters. Together we work to make a difference to the lives of people in our community. Every single donation and gesture is received with gratitude and makes a difference to the support we are able to provide.

You've all been so generous that we have added a new page to our website, to thank those who have helped us: www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk/thank-you

To those who have organised fundraising for us: you've shaved your heads, slept in car parks, sung Christmas carols, organised events, and run, walked and cycled crazy miles. We're amazed!

To those who support our fundraising efforts: you've rattled tins, manned stalls, delivered leaflets, counted change. You helped us make it work.

To those who have bought clothes, donated socks, brought sleeping bags, ordered tents. You helped our guests stay warm and dry.

To those who support our food drives: you've read our website and brought us shopping, responded to emergency shout-outs for Pot Noodles and tinned fruit, used your lockdown daily exercise allowance to bring us carrier bags and tins. We can only feed people because you help.

To the businesses, large and small, local and national: you've chosen us as Your Charity, you've hosted us, you've collected tins, you've delivered goodies. Big and small, we know many of you by name. Thank you for continuing to be there for us.

To the schools and churches: thank you for your support, especially at Harvest. Our guests love the meals we conjure up from the fresh veg and the extra items in their food parcels. Thank you for your fundraising, your deliveries and your invites to address young people.

To the charities and organisations who bring us surplus food that would otherwise be wasted: our guests only have the fabulous meals they do because you make sure we have things we could never buy. You prevent waste and you make our guests happy.

To everyone who supports us financially: big or small, regular or one-off, you've shared your bonuses, your fuel allowances, your pocket money, your good fortunes and the estates of sadly missed friends. We quite simply wouldn't be here without you. We receive no central funding. When you give, you give us confidence that we can keep offering support into the future. Thank you for giving our guests the knowledge that support will continue.

To the organisations with whom we work closely: YMCA, P3, CGL, CCP. We are stronger together.

To everyone who offers help, asks what we need, checks up on people they've seen struggling, sends emails full of positivity, bakes cookies for the guests, knits blankets, posts us pictures their kids have drawn: you make us realise the world is a good place and we're not the only ones who want people who are struggling to live happy lives.

To all of you, thank you. We couldn't do it without you.

With your support, in the past 12 months we have....

received donations from 336 individuals or organisations

got through 5,512 pints of milk



served 8,217 hot lunches and 2,891 Sunday fry-ups

TOASTED 21,528



And in the first two months of lockdown, we drove at least...



HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Cheltenham Open Door receives no central funding and relies entirely on donations to operate. We are hugely grateful for every donation we receive.

If you are over 18 and would like to support our work, we would be grateful. There are several ways to make a donation:

- Go to www.justgiving.com/cheltenhamopendoor
- Go to www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk/donate and click on the link to Virgin Money Giving.
- If you would like to make a **one-off bank transfer or a regular standing order**, our banking details are: Payee name: Cheltenham Open Door; sort code 40-52-40, account number 00002620
- Or you can send a **cheque** to 39 Grosvenor St, Cheltenham GL52 2SQ

To make a Gift Aid declaration, go online at www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk/gift-aid or fill in the form below and send it to us.

If you wish to send us a Gift Aid declaration and/or you would like an acknowledgement of your donation, please tick the boxes below as required then complete the form and enclose it with your donation. Through Gift Aid we can claim up to 25p extra for every £1 you give, at no additional cost to you

Please treat my donation of as a Gift Aid donation to Cheltenham Open Door.
 I am a UK taxpayer and I pay enough Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax to cover all my charitable donations in the current tax year.

Please acknowledge my donation, contacting me using the details below.

Please indicate how you have made your donation

Cash Bank Transfer Other (Please specify)
 Cheque Direct Debit / Standing Order

Your details

*Title *Full name

*Home address including postcode

Email

Date *These details are required to make a valid Gift Aid claim

Receiving communications from Cheltenham Open Door

We would like to keep in touch with you about the vital work we do by sending you information from time to time. We will keep your details safe and secure, we will never sell your data and will only share your details with the contractor specifically engaged to distribute our own communications.

Please tick the box if you do not wish us to keep your data for this purpose
If you change your mind and wish to opt out, email info@cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk or write to us to be removed from our mailing list



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