

Centre

33

*Helping homeless people
in St Albans*

**Summary Report
and
Accounts for 2015**

Published: April 2016

Who we are

Centre 33 is a charity and volunteer-run drop-in centre which provides practical support for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or otherwise socially or materially disadvantaged in the St Albans area.

We aim to help our visitors by providing a welcoming place to meet, offering hot food and drinks, toiletries and shower facilities, and by signposting other services which they may be able to access for further help. We also offer limited supplies of essential clothing items.

The Centre has over 150 volunteers and is a recipient of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to volunteer groups in the UK.

The Centre is managed by the Charity's trustees, who also operate as the executive committee.

Centre 33 is a member of St Albans City & District Council's Homelessness Partnership Board and collaborates with national and local agencies, organisations, and other charities working in partnership to improve the provision of support services in and around St Albans. We help around 300 individuals every year.

Centre 33 has occupied its current premises in Spicer Street for 25 years and, founded in 1977, next year will mark the Centre's 40th anniversary.

Looking ahead

Following 2015's refurbishment of the Centre's shower room, 2016 will see the commencement of wider-reaching refurbishment throughout Centre 33, including ventilation and heating work to counter the humidity and mould issues which have recurred in recent years.

Also, in 2016, St Albans City & District Council will produce a new homelessness strategy, as required by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and Centre 33 will feed into the consultation.

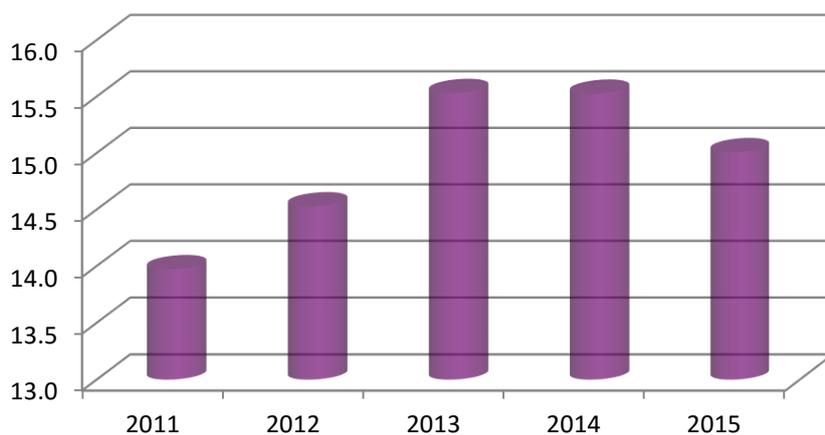
Demand for our services

In 2015, our volunteers again donated over 4,000 hours of their own time to prepare food and open Centre 33 for our visitors on over 500 occasions including Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

7,909 meals were provided to Centre 33 visitors in 2015.

The total number of visitors to Centre 33 in 2015 was down 6% on 2014, partially due to a 65% rise in closures. Of course, numbers don't give an indication of need, and Centre 33 hopes to be able to help those who need our services most.

Average (mean) number of visitors per session



On average, 2015 saw a 3% decrease in attendance per session.

Demand decreased slightly on 2014, with the average number of visitors dropping 3% from 15.5 to 15 per session. In addition, we ran fewer sessions than in any other of the last 5 years. The Centre still remained open for 92% of the maximum 570 sessions, with 43 sessions not running.

July was extremely busy with 855 visitors, the highest monthly number in any of the last 5 years. This was over 48 sessions, 14 of which had more than 20 visitors. There was only 1 closure in July and the average number of visitors per session was 17.8, almost 20% above the average attendance level for 2015.

12% of all sessions in 2015 had in excess of 20 visitors, down from 16% in 2014. July's figure was 29%.

2015 in review

Last year, this report began by saying that the number of people sleeping rough in St. Albans had dropped into single figures.

In 2015, that situation has worsened significantly, with the mandatory local authority estimate, submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in October, reporting an estimated 19 people sleeping rough, whilst an unofficial estimate at the same time put the figure at around 30. Various factors, including changes in benefit entitlements for EEA nationals, may be behind this rise. There also remain many more people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness but are not having to sleep rough.

As demand for the Centre remains high, we have not abandoned our declared interest in finding more suitable premises but, in the absence of anything available so far, we have been concentrating on making the most of the facilities that we are so fortunate to have already.

Building on the successful refit of the shower room at Centre 33, an ambitious programme of refurbishment has been initiated by the trustees, addressing underlying

problems with ventilation to reduce future deterioration, and looking to include flooring, decoration and security systems in the project which is intended to improve the environment throughout Centre 33, both for visitors and volunteers. This work will begin in 2016.

In April 2015, Centre 33 participated in St. Albans City & District Council's (SACDC) submission for the DCLG National Practitioner Support Service's Gold Standard Challenge, which yielded the council Bronze Standard recognition in September.

The Centre continues to take an active role as a member of SACDC's Homelessness Partnership Board, the Homelessness Networking Forum in St Albans and as a member of the STAMP (St Albans Multi-agency Protocol) panel, with trustees and volunteers attending on our behalf.

Volunteers

Centre 33 has no staff and so it is only through the support and goodwill of our volunteers that the Centre is able to open nearly every day of the year.

Volunteers run sessions at the Centre, opening and shutting the premises, preparing and serving food and drink, and handing out towels and toiletries for the shower. Our volunteers also exercise their diplomatic skills, keeping the peace and managing difficult situations on the rare occasions that these occur. Being a volunteer can be a varied and sometimes challenging role.

Centre 33 also has volunteers helping with the recruitment processes for new volunteers, and managing donations and stocks of clothing, blankets and other items. We would like to have volunteers involved in a greater range of the management activities of the Centre and will soon also be looking for volunteers to help with internal and

external communications. The generosity of Centre 33's volunteers with time, energy and, in some cases, their own money as well, is remarkable and not only keeps the Centre running, but embodies the spirit of local people helping those in the area who are less fortunate.

Volunteers' meetings were relaunched in October to provide a forum for volunteers to get to know each other, to discuss issues they faced, to feed back to the trustees and to have more of a say in the running of the Centre.

We always need more volunteers to keep the Centre open for every session – we served around 650 fewer meals than we could have done in 2015 because of session closures – so please spread the word. We are also open to offers of any other skills that potential volunteers could bring, or interest in taking on dedicated volunteer roles in the management of the Centre.

Fundraising & Donations

We are exceptionally grateful to everyone who has given their time, donated money or clothing, or raised money for Centre 33. We could not exist without you. Thank you!

Summary Accounts

	2015 £	2014 £
Incoming Resources		
Incoming resources from generated funds		
Voluntary income	19,944	17,931
Investment income	107	733
Total Incoming Resources	20,351	18,664
Resources Expended		
Charitable activities	21,835	18,432
Governance costs	0	0
Total Resources Expended	21,835	18,432
Net (Deficit)/Income for The Period	(1,484)	232
Funds Brought Forward	48,079	47,847
Total Funds at 31 December 2015	46,595	48,079

Voluntary Income

	2015 £	2014 £
Grants	0	3,665
Donations	19,944	14,266
Fund raising	0	0
	19,944	17,931

Resources Expended On Charitable Activities

	2015 £	2014 £
Volunteer management and support	8,000	8,000
Food and other household costs	3,447	3,295
Repairs and maintenance	7,254	2,404
Heat, light and utilities	2,408	2,572
General administration	2,005	2,161
Accruals no longer required	(1,279)	0
	21,835	18,432

Key Contacts

Centre 33

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Vice Chairman

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Minutes Secretary

Penny Williams

Other trustees

Alley Ashton

Peter Graham

David Grimshaw

Colin Simmons

Volunteer Co-ordinator:

Susan Devi

volunteers@centre33.org

Life President & Patron

Life President: Donald Minter

Patron: The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City & District of St Albans

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Centre 33 is very grateful for the ongoing support and partnership it receives from St Albans City & District Council.



Centre 33 is a member of the Centre for Voluntary Service (CVS) St Albans District and is grateful to the CVS for the considerable support provided to Centre 33.



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

In recognition of the service given by our Volunteers to the community in St Albans, Centre 33 is honoured to have held the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, sometimes known as '*the MBE for volunteer groups*', since 2008.

It is awarded for outstanding achievement by groups of volunteers who regularly devote their time to helping others in the community, improving the quality of life and opportunity for others and providing an outstanding service.

Centre 33 is the trading name of Centre 33 (St Albans) Limited, registered in England as a company limited by guarantee (company no. 7955132) and as a charity (charity no. 1146438)