

Week 2: Croydon

The projects being supported by the Bishop's Lent Call in Croydon Episcopal Area in 2022 are Nightwatch, a charity which works with people who are street homeless in the area, and Renewed Hope, a Redhill-based charity which runs a drop-in centre throughout the year and co-ordinates a winter night shelter provision in East Surrey.

Nightwatch

Nightwatch was founded in 1976 by members of the community in Croydon who were concerned about homelessness after a man had died of exposure in the borough. Today, it operates 365 days a year. Its core activity is a meeting point where, every evening, volunteers offer basic help with food and clothing as well as addressing more profound needs. The work is time-consuming and labour-intensive; the charity is the largest volunteer organisation in the borough.



Nightwatch volunteers getting ready to set up.

Nightwatch works with those who are street homeless, in squats and other inadequate accommodation, in hostels, in bed and breakfast accommodation, those who are housed but still need support to help prevent them from again becoming homeless, and those who are not homeless but are too poor to be able to afford food as well as their household bills. Interventions are tailored to individuals' needs and aspirations, with the charity working to encourage independent living.

Nightwatch also refurbishes new accommodation. When a formerly homeless person is given accommodation by a housing association or the local authority, there is often nothing in the flat to make it a home. Nightwatch's resettlement project ensures that those being rehoused have the basics for living – at least a bed, cooker, fridge, sofa and table. The charity's hardship fund helps clients with rent, utility bills and such random items as spectacles and presents for their children. It also helps with grants for those returning to education and work.

Nightwatch worked every day throughout the pandemic and the lockdown, drawing on a group of new younger volunteers as many of the existing volunteers had to step down in order to care for elderly relatives. COVID-19 prevented the Croydon Churches Floating Shelter network from providing their usual winter shelter to homeless people and they turned their resources over to supporting Nightwatch with sandwiches and other food which could be easily distributed.



*The Bishop
of Southwark's*

LENT CALL 2022

*"My people will live
in peaceful dwelling
places, in secure
homes, in undisturbed
places of rest."*

— Isaiah 32:18



*Raising money for
the dispossessed*



Lent Call 2022

The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Fund Registered Charity No 1075122
southwark.anglican.org/lentcall



Nightwatch does not receive support from Government or local government sources. Everything that they receive is from donations and they hope to use the monies they receive from the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call to ensure that those who are in need of peaceful dwelling places and secure homes can be helped to find them.

Renewed Hope

Renewed Hope was established in 2015 and since then has run a drop-in centre throughout the year and co-ordinated a winter night shelter provision in East Surrey. Founded on Christian values, it seeks to provide practical solutions and emotional support to the homeless, vulnerable and isolated of East Surrey, fostering independence and improving the quality of life of its guests through understanding their needs and offering support and guidance with the help of partners and other agencies.

In January 2020, after several years of operating from a single room in Redhill town centre, a new day centre was opened in Shrewsbury Road in Redhill. The drop-in operates every Monday to Friday between 11.00am and 3.00pm, providing a warm and welcoming place for the homeless, vulnerable and isolated to come and chat, have a free meal and form new friendships. There are also free snacks and endless tea and coffee. Everyone is welcome.

Volunteers and staff offer help and information concerning engaging with council housing departments and housing associations and other agencies. They also help with completing paperwork and anything that might be needed to help visitors move on to secure housing and employment.

The centre has been open every day despite COVID-19. From March to August 2020, takeaway meals were provided – 374 of them between 1 July and 31 August. The centre fully reopened from September. In the last 12 months, Renewed Hope has welcomed 196 guests into the Day Centre and served 3,700 meals.

Sadly, the East Surrey Winter Night Shelter has been suspended because of the pandemic. It usually runs from December to March and is hosted by churches across the Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge area providing a warm evening meal, a safe place to sleep, companionship and a good breakfast the following morning. During the closure, the charity has worked with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to offer other services to support the people being housed in temporary accommodation. From February 2022, Renewed Hope will offer its first four guests temporary help with support whilst working with the council to find them a more secure home.

Renewed Hope receives only 10% of its annual income from the council. Your donations will enable it to help more people to find a place in which to feel secure and at home.

In Isaiah 32:18, God's wish is for all his people to "live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest". Your donations to the Bishop's Lent Call will help Nightwatch and Renewed Hope to provide security and a route out of homelessness for the many people in Croydon who lack a place to call home. Find out more at southwark.anglican.org/lentcall



Project Co-ordinator Anna Coe with the keys to Hope House.



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Walking
Welcoming
Growing