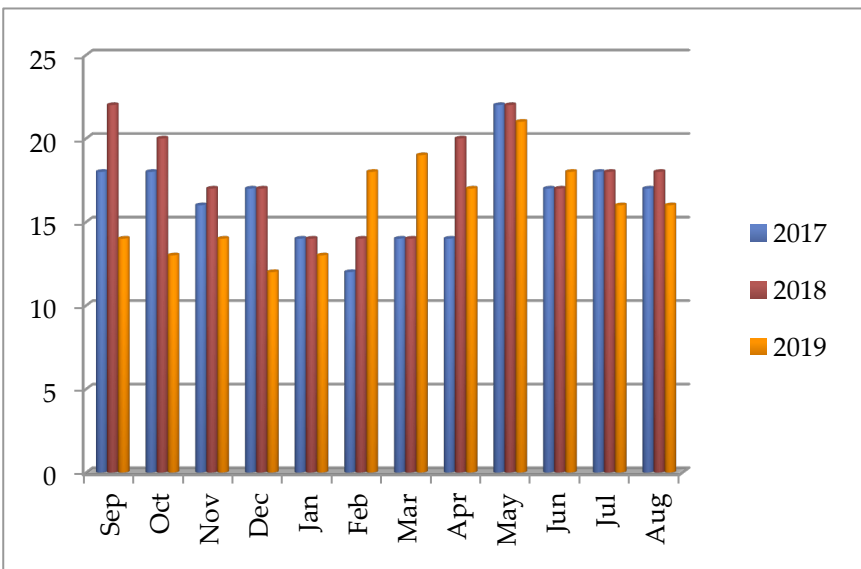




**Annual Newsletter for the year ended
August 31, 2019**



Monthly average visitors per night



This past year we
have served
around 150
different guests

Note to graph above – year runs from Sept 1st through Aug 31st

From the desk of the Chairperson

Hello Everyone

A huge thank you to everyone for your valued time, food, clothes and financial donations, they all keep Street Teams going.

We have good news! Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) has secured funding from the Government for the *Housing First Project*.

Housing First Project works on the principal of getting people housed, and then with the stability of a roof over their heads, other issues can be tackled. For example addictions or mental health issues. Previously, homes were only offered once any issues were sorted and people were deemed "house ready".

Housing is a matter of right not a reward.

The funds are paying for two full time employees to provide support to rough sleepers in ten properties, to assist them in sustaining their accommodation and to move on from rough sleeping to a long term housing solution. As well as staffing costs the council are buying furniture, flooring and white goods needed for the flats.

TWBC are trying to secure a further ten properties as the project is going so well. Unfortunately landlords willing to rent their properties to rough sleepers are hard to find.

Due to the success of the *Housing First Project*, the Winter Shelter will not be running this year. Help will obviously still be available for those guests engaging with the necessary agencies and Street Teams will continue as usual.

More information on the *Housing First Project* can be found at www.homeless.org.uk

We will continue with Street Teams as long as people need us. Sometimes it is simply a chat our guests need. It can be a very lonely world out there and if we can help in anyway we will.

It is with sadness I share the news that two guests passed away this year, Jane Johnson and Graham Hunter. Graham had a lot of problems over the years but had started to turn his life around; he was housed and getting back on his feet.

Finally, we are always looking for volunteers so if you are interested please email me at twstreetteams@yahoo.co.uk

Vicki Stewart

Chairperson



From the desk of a team leader

Our guests, who we meet in the car park, come from a variety of backgrounds and defy popular stereotypes of homelessness - some are street homeless, some are sofa-surfers, they may have undergone family breakdown, may have mental health problems, may have fallen on hard-times. All need love, care and respect. One of our stated aims is '*Help reduce the number of people sleeping rough and reduce the number of homeless suffering from malnutrition in the town of Tunbridge Wells*' – the question is often raised “ you have been striving to achieve this now for over 20 years but there are still people coming to you every night, what is the point?”

As Our Lord told us in Matthew 26:11 – ‘the poor you will always have with you ...’ but this is not an excuse for ignoring these children of God who are so in need of love. Yes we do see people recycle through all sorts of challenges – drink, drugs, homelessness, relationship breakdown, poverty – but just by someone being there who ‘cares’, who treats the sufferer as a human-being, strength is gained to move forward. There is **SUCCESS**, not that the Street Teams can claim responsibility but we play a part in the wonderful jigsaw of services that knit together to provide support for the Street Needy – Tunbridge Wells Housing Department (Gateway), Community Safety Unit, Kent Police, Porchlight, Look Ahead, Bridge Trust, Salvation Army, YMCA, Soup Bowls, Crisis Recovery, Winter Night Shelter, Citizens’ Advice Bureau , Food Banks, Mental Health Hub, Change Grow Live, General Practitioners, Job Centres, Local Churches and many other loving people.

Just at this moment we know of two people who have spent years on the streets suffering from severe depression and alcoholism but are now making wonderful progress through rehabilitation despite having failed several times before – they have been encouraged to pick themselves up and try, try again; one has now been dry for over 20 weeks through his own efforts and is making wonderful plans to move forward.

We have volunteers in our teams who once were our guests – they have been supported through their ‘challenges ‘; they are now working, have flats and are returning the **LOVE** that they received to those who are still struggling.

In the last year, through support from Government Rough Sleeper Funding, Tunbridge Wells Housing Department has been able to provide ten flats for Rough Sleepers and fund two support workers. They also have a budget to establish ten more flats by the end of the financial year. People who only a short time ago were sleeping in the Town carparks now have a home and several are actively seeking work while the others are engaging with support groups to address their health issues. Despite all of this **GOOD NEWS** the Street Teams are still seeing 15 to 20 guests each night, and **LOVE** is still flowing on the Streets of Tunbridge Wells for those who need it.



From the desk of the treasurer

Charity giving in the UK has dropped for the third consecutive year and Street Teams share this worrying trend. Our donations fell 23% from last year bringing in £3,845 (2018 - £4,994 and 2017 - £7,600).

Our payments this year increased by 7% to £5,314, which exceeded our receipts, and saw us deplete our reserves by £1,469. Our cash balance is £3,994.

Almost all of what we spend, 94% (2018 – 93%) is returned to our guests directly in the way of food, beverages, clothing, sleeping bags and other essentials. Our average monthly expenditure has risen to £442 per month (2018 - £420). We continue to be insured under Churches for Tunbridge Wells although we did not make a contribution towards their premium this year. We plan to do so in the coming year.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Cash in bank £3,994

94% of donations spent directly on our guests

Average expenses £442 per month

Receipts and Payments for the years ended August 31, 2019 and 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Donations received	3,845	£4,994
<u>Payments</u>		
Consumables for guests	5,000	4,659
Insurance	-	150
IT and training	72	72
Paypal fees	5	42
Office admin and miscellaneous	<u>237</u>	<u>116</u>
Net movement in funds	<u>(1,469)</u>	<u>(45)</u>
Balance at start of year	<u>5,463</u>	<u>5,508</u>
Balance at end of year	£3,994	£5,463

WONDERING HOW TO HELP?

1. Volunteer for a couple of hours one night a week – we are often short on male volunteers.
2. Donate essential items or money – every bit helps. We would be happy to share our current wish list.
3. Set yourself a challenge and fundraise for Street Teams.
4. Keep an eye out for our soon-to-be launched Instagram account. Please follow and share.

Please do get in touch or visit our website. We would love to hear from you.

Website www.twstreetteams.org

E-mail twstreetteams@yahoo.co.uk

**Thank you to
our donors
and
supporters**

Karen Murdoch	St Augustine's
Paul Byrne	St John's Hildenborough
Christine Wood	St Mary's Church, Leigh
Dr M and Mrs C Clugston	Paddock Wood Lioness Club
David Bennie	St Mary's Church, Speldhurst
William Wormald	Christ Church, Southborough
Gerald Chew	Rapid Relief Team
Arlene Hassell	Lightrock
Iain Edwards	BNP Paribas
Southborough Girl Guides	The Hygiene Bank
My Homecare	Waitrose Tonbridge
Skidders Kent Academy Year 13 IB Students	Tesco Metro Tunbridge Wells
	Tesco Express Southborough
	Tesco Pembury
	Pret a Manger Tunbridge Wells

To all of our wonderful volunteers who come out each night with a smile and a loving heart.
Thank you. We appreciate all you do.