



HUB NEWS

VOLUME 11 • SPRING 2024

"The man who moves a mountain, begins by carrying away small stones."
- Confucius

MOVING A MOUNTAIN

JO DOLBY, HUB LEADER

When I first started this job, I remember feeling overwhelmed at the scale of the task in front of me, particularly with our building, which was (and still is!) in need of a major refurbishment. My initial plan was to do it all in one go, which we found out would cost us around £1.5 million. No wonder I felt overwhelmed!

Lots has changed since then, and what I've come to realise is that we're not going to do it all in one go, and that's ok. This is a mountain and we will move it, but maybe not in the way I thought.

In the last few years I've watched our building transform 'one stone at a time' as we've refurbished and upgraded several spaces and systems. This spring we've seen huge changes to our main community space, with new lights and acoustic softening panels installed. That's a pretty big chunk of the mountain!

We also see this same metaphor in ourselves and the people we work with. Transformation is rarely instant or dramatic, it's just one small step or stone at a time. I hope you enjoy reading about some of the things we're doing to enable change and transformation through our community work, in this edition of Hub News.

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BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

As mentioned on the last page, we've been so excited by the recent improvements we've made to our community hall. It can be very challenging to find money to pay for some of the more 'boring' aspects of what we need to do, but without basic systems and facilities that work and work well, we can't do anything!

Our hall benefits hundreds of people a year through our food pantry, Oasis Kitchen and Living Room projects, as well as the many different addiction support groups who meet throughout the week. The feedback we got from those using the space was that the lighting was harsh, yellowy and too bright, and that the room was noisy to the point where it became difficult to hear anyone or have a conversation. These issues have been particularly frustrating for our neurodiverse community, and we've been longing to improve things for ages! As a charity we also really want to improve our energy efficiency both to reduce utility costs and our carbon footprint.

We're so very grateful to Community Matters charity shop (more on them below!), the National Grid's Community Matters Fund and the Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund (CCLF), whose funding has enabled these changes to happen. Check out the pictures below!



THANK YOU COMMUNITY MATTERS!



Community Matters is a not-for-profit shop in Bath. They exist to raise money for and awareness of independent, local charities and we were lucky enough to be their chosen charity for 2023, receiving all of the profits made through the shop. We're delighted to announce that the total is now in, and they have raised an absolutely incredible £57,190.89! We're so thankful to Michelle and the team at Community Matters for their incredible support, and we're also thrilled that in 2024 they'll be raising money for our friends at Bath Mind!

WINTER PROJECTS

CLAIRE HENWOOD, COMMUNITY WORKER

In October 2023 we were awarded a grant from the Government's Community Cost of Living Fund (CCLF). This has enabled us to run several winter projects, employing a fixed term community worker to run them, Lucinda Niel (see Spotlight on p.6!) and also make some improvements to our community space, which will transform the experience of the people who use it.

Our city centre pantry was at capacity for much of 2023, and this grant enabled us to open up a second 'pop-up pantry' on another day, in order to increase the number of people we could support through the winter. This pantry has run from the beginning of December until the end of March, and has supported an additional 30 households over that time. In addition, we ran two Living Room sessions (warm spaces) each week, one on a Monday evening, and another alongside the pop-up pantry session on a Friday.

On a Monday evening, we commissioned Bath Community Kitchen to cook meals twice each month, with the aim of engaging the community in helping to prepare those. We've seen very similar numbers of people attending as we did last winter, with between 15 and 20 people attending each session, with 40 individuals overall.

On Fridays, lunch is a very chilled out affair, with a core group of people coming for both the pop-up pantry and lunch, and 20 of our Thursday pantry members coming to enjoy lunch and a chat too. We've been loving having more time to sit and talk to people, alongside sharing meals together, and this is very much the vision we had when we started the pantries back in 2020.

Running these extra sessions has meant we can invite more volunteers who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to join us. It's been fantastic seeing the team expand while retaining such a brilliant sense of belonging.



One of our pop-up pantry members was so anxious on her first visit. The reassurance of her Mum that we were so welcoming, and (in her Mum's words) "everyone is lush here", alongside some targeted support from one of our community workers, meant she was able to overcome her anxiety. She even stayed for lunch! We were also able to refer her to a couple of other local organisations who can provide support for her particular circumstances.

TRAUMA INFORMED YOGA



Active
Stillness



This spring will see the start of a new partnership project between Oasis and Focus Counselling, whose office and counselling practice is based in our building. A new, ten week 'Trauma Informed Yoga Class' will offer a safe, supportive space where people can learn emotional regulation skills through connection with the breath and increased body awareness. This supports people to move out of survival mode, to a place where they can begin to heal. Places will be via referral only, primarily through our partner organisations.

The yoga class will be delivered by Anna Caldwell from Active Stillness (visit www.activestillness.org to find out more), and supported by a Focus Counsellor who will participate in each class and be present for anyone who needs support or signposting. We're really grateful to the Bath Half Marathon Fund for funding this project.

Very often mental health services and wellbeing activities are not affordable or accessible for those on low incomes. We really want to change that and we're really pleased that because of the funding we've received we'll be able to offer ten significantly subsidised places for participants.



Four of our team recently became qualified mental health first aiders, and we're also delivering a mental health awareness course for our volunteers soon. We really want to be a hub that can support people if they're experiencing poor mental health, and this training has really equipped us to do that.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA...



Our cooking course Oasis Kitchen is running again, facilitated by the brilliant Lydia and Anja from Bath Mind's 'Food for Thought'. Just look at the delicious food they're making! We're running another course after Easter at the Roundhill Hub in Southdown.



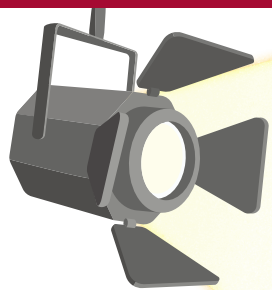
We were pleased to welcome MP Wera Hobhouse to our city centre pantry recently. Wera spent time hearing about how we're using government funding, as well as talking to pantry members about their experiences and how the pantry helps them.



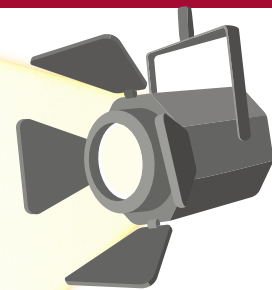
At a recent pantry session during half-term, Zoe from Wellbeing Services BANES came along to chat to families while making some healthy and delicious snacks for any children who were there. We love working with other organisations and services!



Impact Report 2024 - We usually publish an annual impact report at the start of each year. Due to staff workload and the rhythm of our year we've now decided to move to an academic year rather than a calendar year. So, you can expect our 2023/2024 Impact Report in the summer. We can't wait to show it to you!



SPOTLIGHT



In this regular Hub News feature we interview someone involved in or connected to the work of Oasis Hub Bath.

HELLO
my name is

Lucinda Niel

Fixed Term
Community Worker



What does your role at Oasis involve?

My role as Community worker involves running the living room on a Monday night and pop-up pantry on a Friday. My role is paid for with extra funding Oasis received from the government cost-of-living grant.

What do you enjoy about it?

I love the fact that sharing a meal with others can make it easier for people to connect. The space is warm and welcoming. Sharing a meal together helps people to relax and has encouraged people to feel a sense of belonging and community. Since the living room started its been wonderful to see friendships develop.

What's challenging about it?

The most challenging part is that the extra funding for the pantry and the living room over the winter finishes at the end of March so my role will come to an end. I will miss all our members!

What impact do you see the projects you're involved in having in people's lives?

The projects I have been involved in, particularly the living room, have helped people feel part of their community. They've also helped people feel less lonely and isolated. The pantry has quality and choice which makes its members feel respected and have dignity.



To find out more about our community projects visit www.oasisbath.org/projects



Join Us!

There are loads of ways to get involved in the work of Oasis Hub Bath. Reading this newsletter is a great way to stay in touch with all we're up to so if you want to make sure you receive this direct to your inbox, three times a year, let us know by emailing welcome@oasisbath.org. Here are some other ways you can be a part of what we're doing...



Volunteer...

There are a variety of opportunities at Oasis Hub Bath to use your skills to benefit others and get to know new people. Even a couple of hours every few weeks could make a real difference to someone in need, so if you've got some time to spare get in touch and we'll find the perfect role for you. Just email welcome@oasisbath.org.

Give...

There are lots of ways to give financially to the work of Oasis Hub Bath. You can give regularly through online banking or by completing a standing order form, which enables us to claim Gift Aid on your donation. For all the information you need about different ways to give, visit www.oasisbath.org/donate. Thanks so much.

Don't forget to follow us on social media too!



Donate by text

Text the word 'OASISHUBBATH' and the amount you'd like to give to 70450

This will cost your chosen donation amount plus a standard message rate. You can give any amount up to £20.



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